



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **YMCA OF GREATER LOUISVILLE RECOGNIZES 2020 YOUTH CHARACTER AWARD HONOREES**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (November 13, 2020)** – The YMCA of Greater Louisville announced the 2020 YMCA Youth Character Award honorees on Thursday, November 12, presenting awards to 13 outstanding youth from the Louisville area.

Recipients of The YMCA Youth Character Awards were selected for exemplifying exceptional leadership and commitment to strengthening our community, embodying the Y's core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. The honorees were also recognized for their contributions to academics and athletics, as well as their roles in volunteer and leadership-related activities.

"We are honored to work with these young people," said Steve Tarver, president & CEO of The YMCA of Greater Louisville. "Their talents and abilities are inspiring and we look forward to watching them achieve their goals."

The YMCA Youth Character Awards, which celebrate exemplary teens ages 13 through 17, come with a \$2,500 scholarship for either secondary or postsecondary education. Brief profiles of each of the honorees can be found below:

### **Sarah Burbank – age 17, South Oldham High School**

Sarah is a young community leader, participating in multiple programs, groups and efforts to benefit the city of Louisville. She has been involved in Metro Youth Advocates, Go For It, KYA, KUNA, and recently partook in cleanup efforts throughout the city. Sarah is described as an exceptional role model and a servant leader.

### **Sophia Calvert – age 17, Assumption High School**

Sophia participates in several extracurricular activities, such as Beta Club, Green Dot and Peer Mentors. She also holds a part-time job at the Northeast Family YMCA Kids' Club and volunteers at the Louisville Nature Center and the American Red Cross.

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**Richard Chandler – age 17, Waggener High School**

Richard is a Whitney M. Young Scholar, an ambassador at his school as well as an ambassador for the Commonwealth of Kentucky. He is actively involved as the teen senate president for the YMCA Black Achievers Program, a member of Metro Youth Advocates and led a community service event at the Chestnut Street Family YMCA. Richard is known for encouraging others to become actively involved in their community.

**Andrew Dunn – age 17, DuPont Manual High School**

Andrew has a strong focus on food insecurity, refugee students, homeless outreach and tutoring. His passion led him to form Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Louisville, where he and an established Student Advisory Board lead and encourage students to become world changers. RAK has provided thousands of meals to the homeless, as well as established a community pantry at Byck Elementary School. During NTI, RAK distributed thousands of meals to various dinner sites.

**Amiyah Hawkins – age 14, Central High School**

Amiyah is an emerging leader who is sensitive to others and encourages her peers to speak up for themselves. She enrolled in the Y-NOW program and jumped in headfirst. She now volunteers her time with the Y-NOW mentoring program and attended her first retreat as a Youth Leader. Amiyah hopes to become a veterinarian one day.

**Claire Lindemier – age 17, South Oldham High School**

Claire is an active member and role model in her church. She is compassionate and demonstrated strong leadership skills during mission trips to the Dominican Republic and west Louisville. A devoted student and captain of her field hockey team, Claire is described as inclusive and a great listener.

**Jacob Marsili – age 17, Butler Traditional High School**

Jacob is a strong leader inside and outside the classroom. He has served two years as KYA and KUNA delegation president. He is also involved in National Honor Society and BETA Club, and volunteers at St. Paul Catholic Church, the Louisville Zoo, American Legion and Kentucky Boys State Bingo. This year, Bellarmine University selected Jacob as a Governor Scholar.

**Abdullahi Otun – age 16, The Academy @ Shawnee**

Abdullahi is a gifted student and recognized leader. Actively involved in Shawnee's Aviation program and Young Eagles Program, he is also among the leaders of JROTC, Student Government, Men of Quality and is a Student Ambassador. He has also earned the Yarmuth Book Award from the University of Louisville Alumni Association.

**Brooklyn Roller – age 17, Thomas Nelson High School**

Brooklyn is a published author with a passion for children in need. Her children's book, *The Adventures of Buddy Luv*, donates a portion of each sale to Build A Bed with Benji Langley. Brooklyn is also involved in several charitable efforts such as Blessings in a Backpack, Dream Factory of Louisville, and Random Acts of Kindness Louisville (RAK).

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**Allie Senn – age 16, duPont Manual High School**

Allie is a passionate advocate for children of St. Joe's. She created a program, Santa's Workshop, that allows children to select gifts from a donation drive to give to others. Allie also participates in Middletown Christian Church's annual choir mission trip. She is a member of the church's Youth Leadership Team where she helps with the annual Back to School Backpack Drive. In addition, she is the sports editor of the yearbook, is a candidate for class treasurer, and participates in the Environmental Club, National Honor Society and Metro Youth Advocates.

**Maleah Spaulding – age 17, duPont Manual High School**

Maleah is an enthusiastic member of her school and church. After volunteering with the Salvation Army, she created her own charity called Blankets of Hope by Maleah and Friends where members of the community make blankets for those experiencing homelessness. Maleah also works with Youth In Action, which collected and distributed children's books to the YMCA summer camp during COVID-19. In addition, Maleah worked as a script writer for the Summer Works program making a documentary about COVID-19, racism and Breonna Taylor.

**Ryan Wiseman – age 17, Trinity High School**

Ryan started a food and personal hygiene drive to collect items for Jeffersontown Area Ministries (JAM). He also enjoys sharing his gifts with children on the autism spectrum by collecting toys, books, and participating in autism-friendly community events with Hopebridge. He is passionate about animals and speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves. In addition, Ryan is a student athlete, and is an ambassador to the community where he attends summits to share his perspective and input on youth violence, drugs and alcohol.

**Lily York – Age 16, North Oldham High School**

Lily is a growing leader who has completed hundreds of hours of volunteer work with Kentucky Humane Society Pet Project and the United Nations Give a Girl a Future Campaign. She is a determined leader in her community through her work as vice president of Prospect Girl Up, North Oldham High School Student Y as communications chair and Kentucky Youth Climate Strike as communications and creative director. She is passionate about her Student Y chapter and strives to be a strong role model for others.

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**About the Louisville area YMCAs**

The Y is the nation's leading nonprofit committed to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The YMCA has been listening and responding to the needs of our communities for more than 165 years. The Y is dedicated to building healthy, confident, connected and secure children, adults, families and communities.