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Open Sky Community Services Honors “Legacy of Courage” Awardees at 2019 Safe Homes Gala

Worcester County’s only peer-led LGBTQ+ teen program recognizes key supporters

(Worcester, MA – April 18, 2019) [Open Sky Community Services](#) is pleased to announce the 2019 recipients of the People of Courage Awards to be awarded at the [2019 Annual Safe Homes Gala](#) scheduled for May 3 at the AC Marriott in Worcester. The 2019 theme is “Legacy of Courage,” with all of the awardees demonstrating the willingness to stand up in support of respect, recognition, and inclusion for LGBTQ+ communities in Central Massachusetts.

This year, the award recipient for the Public Service Award is Jordan Evans, Vice Chairwoman of the Charlton Public Library Board of Trustees, who also serves as a town constable and is a Dudley-Charlton Education Foundation board member. Using her personal experience of coming out as transgender, Evans has become a sought-after advocate for the LGBTQ+ community. As part of the “Yes on 3 Campaign,” she was instrumental in having the Charlton Board of Selectmen and Library Board adopt resolutions formally joining the coalition to uphold transgender public accommodations.

2019’s Young Adult Award recipient is Tatalia Hamilton. A peer leader at Safe Homes since 2015, Hamilton is a tremendous asset to the Safe Homes community as she regularly runs groups focusing on topics such as racism, beauty standards in our society, and coming out.

The Worcester Historical Museum is the recipient of the 2019 Corporate Award. The museum has been the recipient of a \$15,000 grant for a project on the history of the LGBTQ+ community in Worcester County. This program includes the collection of oral histories, the creation of an LGBTQ+ archive, and educational programming to complement an exhibit on Gay Worcester. The exhibition will run at the museum from April-October 2019.

Michael Patrick Lyons, teacher and administrator for the Worcester Public Schools is the recipient of the 2019 Volunteer Award. Whether volunteering for a cause or serving on a nonprofit board, Lyons has successfully brought diverse groups of people together to support the causes he believes in and raised millions of dollars in the process. He has been recognized with the Thomas S. Green Public Service Award, Hometown Hero Award for the City of Worcester and many others. In addition to numerous boards and committees, Lyons also serves as a corporator for Open Sky Community Services.

Worcester native Rushelle Frazier is 2019’s Social Justice Advocacy and Action Award recipient. Rushelle was a field organizer with the “Yes on 3 Campaign” and in 2018 was the co-Grand Marshall of the Worcester Pride Parade. Frazier is currently a New England field organizer for Amnesty International.

Safe Homes is an Open Sky Community Services program providing a drop-in center and peer-led services and supports for LGBTQ+ youth ages 14-23. Safe Homes relies on donations and grants for all of the program's funding. This year's gala presenting sponsor is Fallon Health. Other sponsors include Hanover Insurance, Rockland Trust, Arbor Associates, Revelation Productions, Reliant Medical Group, Comprehensive Benefit Administrators, MSG Staffing, People's United Bank, 401KQuote, Ehana, AAFCPAs, Lincoln Financial Group, Saint Gobain, HEARD Strategy and Storytelling, UMass Medical School, the College of the Holy Cross, Philadelphia Insurance Company, LUK, Chandler Pediatrics and Interior Resources.

For more information on Safe Homes, gala tickets or to sponsor, visit www.safehomesma.org.

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About Open Sky Community Services

Open Sky Community Services is dba for Alternatives Unlimited, Inc and The Bridge of Central MA. Open Sky offers a wide range of services for adults, adolescents, and children with mental health challenges, developmental and intellectual disabilities, substance use disorders, brain injury, homelessness and other challenges throughout Central Massachusetts. Open Sky Community Services has over 1,300 dedicated employees and an annual budget of \$83M with more than 100 programs throughout the region. For more information, please visit www.openskycs.org.