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Unify Against Bullying's Annual Grant Awards Ceremony a huge success!

Longmeadow, MA- On October 23rd, Unify Against Bullying held an event to award \$16,000.00 in micro grants to 13 deserving recipients. The event was located at the Twin Hills Country Club, 700 Wolf Swamp Road, Longmeadow. Twin Hills generously donated the venue and delicious Hors d'oeuvres that the 163 guests enjoyed. Ashley Kohl, owner of Ohana School of Performing Arts in South Hadley, served as Mistress of Ceremony for this truly emotional and inspiring evening. CJC Lighting and Production and Robert Charles Photography donated their time and talent to make the event a huge success!

Unify Against Bullying's mission is to end bullying through the celebration of true diversity. "One of the ways they accomplish this is to seek out individuals and Organization's that understand this epidemic and have committed to make this a part of their mission. The guests heard from some of these individuals on how they have integrated anti-bullying efforts into their curriculums; or from those who have launched programs specific to this important effort" says Christine Maiwald, Unify Against Bullying's Executive Director.

The organization believes our youth are the answer to ending this pervasive bullying issue and works at empowering children and teens so they don't feel like victims. The guests were treated to hearing from some of these young people who are making a difference such as **Anastie Charles**, a sophomore at Putnam Vocational High School who, on her second day of school heard that some freshman were being bullied. What did she do, she talked with school administrators and decided to create a group to spread awareness and educate younger peers on bullying. **Daishany Miller**, a young woman who is striving to make a difference after being terribly bullied. She spoke eloquently about her experience and she made a real impact on the audience. Daishany is making a difference and now works for the Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee and had the honor of accepting their grant award. **Matt Walting** created a film "Just Say Goodbye" to bring awareness to the issue of bullying and suicide. Other recipients; **Deborah Ashe**, teacher at the Dean campus of Holyoke High School will start a Unify Against Bullying club to help empower students to stand strong, spread kindness and acceptance of others. **Square One** besides working on basic needs for their children, focus on character building, health and socialization with emphasis on anti-bullying behaviors. **Kelly Phillips**, special needs advocate working to empower people to reach their full potential by helping to develop their range of motion, strength and agility as well as their self-esteem and confidence. Patrick Ireland, **Neutral Corner** created an in-school program to combat bullying by building self-esteem; improve fitness and mental agility through NON-CONTACT boxing training and conditioning. **Wayne Soares**, public speaker who offers youth tips and strategies on how to deal with bullies and brings this message to schools and communities.

Jennifer Young, **Be-a-Friend project** organizes surprise delivery of mail to severely bullied children to empower them with the love and encouragement from kids and adults across the country. Kati Gray Sadler of the **FSP Against Bullying** organization creates workshops to help students and educators build confidence and increase awareness about cyber, physical and verbal bullying. Jaime Mueller, **Tween to Teen Girls Group** created an art therapy based curriculum designed to build self-esteem, relationship skills and empathy with the girls. Authors **Sandra Howell and Courtney Vail** created the Angel Club series that embrace inclusion and combat bullying and have a message of kindness, inclusion and inclusion. **Crystal Senter-Brown**, author of *AJ* and the Magic Kite about a little Afro-American boy who is bullied but learns about his history and returns to school with a newfound sense of pride.

Tina Lankowski, Regional Director for John Paul Mitchell Systems, presented a \$1000.00 grant from their Paul Mitchell Neon product line which is taking a stand against bullying to **Emma Guillotte**. Emma, a sophomore at Somerset Berkley Regional High School, is involved in the Anti-Bullying Coalition which gives presentations throughout their district. She just relinquished her crown this month as Miss Bristol County Outstanding Teen 2018. Having experienced bullying herself, Emma chose Unify Against Bullying as her platform and has become a strong Ambassador for the organization.

Susanna Zemba, co-founder of Unify Against Bullying presented their first ever “Hero” award to high school senior **Cheyenne Capella**. The beautiful etched glass award was generously donated by Donna Tyburski, account executive for New England Promotional Marketing. The “Hero” award is given to an individual who exemplifies the strength and spirit to overcome adversity. When Cheyenne took the stage and spoke from the heart about the bullying she endured in school, there was not a dry eye in the room. The pain everyone felt from her as she spoke was palpable. When she thanked her Unify family for being there for her and inspiring her to help others who are being bullied, it was a testament to the work the organization is doing. That is why anyone involved with Unify always says, “When we stand together, we stand as one”!

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