

NEWS RELEASE

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**United Way
of Greater Stark County**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CANTON PROM event raises money for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program

(Canton, OH) March 31, 2017 – United Way's Young Leaders Society recently hosted the Canton Prom at the Historic Onesto Lofts in downtown Canton. The fundraising event raised \$10,400 to benefit the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, scheduled to be piloted this fall in Stark County. This generous gift will enhance the existing partnership between United Way of Greater Stark County and Child & Adolescent Behavioral Health. The event featured a dessert bar, basket raffles and a DJ. Pictures are available at www.facebook.com/UnitedWayOfGreaterStarkCounty or on social media using the hashtag #CantonProm2017.

Prom Court nominees were challenged with raising funds for the project and competing for the title of Royal Couple. This year's winners were Topaz & Mike Tolloti. Other contestants were Amanda & Cody Clark, Katie & Tom Hale, Leslie & Ryan McMichael, Meghan Mills & Ben Slutz, and Gretchen & Patrick Wendell. Each couple leveraged unique methods to raise money for the project, including restaurant fundraisers.

Topaz Tolloti explains why she and her husband chose to participate in the Royal Couple competition: "Mike and I are inspired by so many fantastic people taking action to do good things for Stark County and we're proud to be part of this community. We were honored to be one of the couples helping the United Way bring the Dolly Parton Imagination Library here in support of children's literacy. We've attended Canton Prom in past years and it's such a fun way to raise money for these worthwhile causes."

United Way of Greater Stark County extends special thanks to the local businesses who supported the event through participation and financial contributions: Canton Chair Rental, Canton Palace Theatre, Canton Players Guild, Gervasi Vineyard, Intrigue Salon & Spa, Mary Kay Consultant Melanie Felix, Moments by Steph Photography, North Canton Tree LLC, Lilla Rose Stylist Rebecca Weddell and Texas Roadhouse. Without them, the event would not be possible.

"Events like this are a win-win for our community," says Maria Heege, United Way of Greater Stark County President & CEO. "Canton Prom engages the members of our Young Leaders Society, while raising money to help us reach our BOLD GOALS in Education."

About Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

In 1995, Dolly Parton launched Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to benefit the children in her birthplace of Sevier County, Tennessee. Dolly's vision was to foster a love of reading among that area's preschool children and their families by providing them with the gift of a specially selected book each month. By mailing high quality, age-appropriate books directly to their homes, she wanted children to be excited about books and to feel the magic that books can create. Moreover, she could insure that every child would have books, regardless of their family's income. Currently over 1,600 local communities provide the Imagination Library to over 1,000,000 children each and every month. Statistics and independent reports have shown that Dolly Parton's Imagination Library drastically improves early childhood literacy for children enrolled in the program. Further studies have shown improved scores during early literacy testing. www.imaginationlibrary.com

About United Way of Greater Stark County

United Way of Greater Stark County fights for the Health, Education and Financial Stability of every person in every community. The agency collaborates, convenes, and partners to support programs and initiatives that break the cycle of poverty, promote a healthy community where children are successful from kindergarten through graduation to a career, and where families have the tools, skills, and support they need to become financially independent. We win by living United. For more information about United Way of Greater Stark County visit www.uwstark.org. Headquarters are at 401 Market Avenue North, Suite 300, Canton, Ohio 44702. Dial (330) 491-0445 to reach the offices.

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