

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Way  
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### **GiGi's Playhouse Wins United Way's Young Leaders Society Recent Stark SOUP Event**

(Canton, OH) October 10, 2017 – United Way of Greater Stark County's Young Leaders Society (YLS) hosted a Stark SOUP event on Sunday, October 8th at The YWCA Canton. The \$1,210 proceeds from the event PLUS a \$1,000 matching grant from YLS were awarded to Christina Ziga-Budd for her local GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Center initiative.

GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers offer opportunities for individuals and families to participate in activities, therapies and tutoring - free of charge. Christina explains, "This is not about me or GiGi. It is about all of us stepping up to make this world a better place. The real heroes of GiGi's Playhouse are the participants themselves. They inspire me every day!" GiGi's Playhouse was created to change the way the world views a Down Syndrome diagnosis and to celebrate what individuals with Down Syndrome are truly capable of achieving as students, co-workers, friends and valued members of every community. More information is available at [www.gigisplayhouse.org/canton](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org/canton).

The Stark SOUP series is a micro-grant program that supports Stark County community projects focused on HEALTH, EDUCATION and FINACIAL STABILITY - the impact areas of United Way of Greater Stark County's BOLD GOALS. Bold Goals are United Way's essential building blocks for a better quality of life. Stark SOUP offers a supportive space for creative people and a relational hub where people can connect Other presenters were Operation: Flags of Freedom, Daniel Greer from Urbsee and Heather Kuhns, Ed.S. from North Canton City Schools.

The Stark SOUP community dinner showcases innovative ideas from remarkable individuals and organizations in our community and helps them materialize. Guests enjoy soup, salad, bread and a chance to vote for one of the four presented project proposals. Each speaker has four minutes to talk about their project idea, how it will advance United Way of Greater Stark County's BOLD GOALS and answer four questions from the audience members. Attendees eat, talk, and network - then vote on the project that they believe benefits Stark County the most. At the end of the night, the spoon ballots are counted and the winner receives all the money raised PLUS a matching grant up to \$1,000 from United Way's Young Leaders Society. More information is available at [www.uwstark.org/StarkSOUP](http://www.uwstark.org/StarkSOUP).

"We can build a stronger community through this platform of connection, idea sharing, and collaboration." said Kelly Klein, Chairwoman of YLS Stark SOUP and Director of Communication at Lighthouse Ministries. "We have so many dreamers, makers, and doers in Stark County and are happy to showcase a few through this event."

United Way of Greater Stark County extends special thanks to Stark SOUP program sponsors and in-kind donations. Without them, STARK SOUP would not be possible. All supporters are recognized online at [www.uwstark.org/StarkSoup](http://www.uwstark.org/StarkSoup). Contact Carrie Clemens at 330-491-9974 or email [carrie.clemens@uwstark.org](mailto:carrie.clemens@uwstark.org) for additional information regarding Stark SOUP and United Way's Young Leaders Society.

**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. We are more than fundraisers. 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. Visit [www.uwstark.org](http://www.uwstark.org) for more information about United Way of Greater Stark County. Offices are at 401 Market Avenue North, Suite 300, Canton, Ohio 44702. (330) 491-0445.

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