

NEWS RELEASE

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**United Way
of Greater Stark County**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dinner. Proposals. Vote. Fund. STARK SOUP January 29.

(Canton, OH) January 17, 2017 – United Way's Young Leaders Society (YLS) hosts the first of three events in the 2017 STARK SOUP series on **Sunday, January 29 at 6 pm at The YWCA Canton**. The proceeds from the event PLUS a \$1,000 matching grant will be awarded to the winner. The STARK SOUP series is a micro-grant program that supports Stark County community projects focused on EDUCATION, INCOME and HEALTH - 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. The rest is up to the attendees, but wonderful things can happen when people come together and SOUP stories are evidence of that. STARK SOUP is a community dinner that exists to take the innovative ideas from remarkable individuals and organizations in our community and put life to them.

"We are looking forward to another great year of STARK SOUP. Last year, attendees helped micro-fund three really incredible ideas through SOUP events, showing that together we can build a stronger community through this platform of connection, idea sharing, and collaboration. We have so many dreamers, makers, and doers in Stark County and are happy to showcase a few through SOUP," said Kelly Klein, Director of Communication, Lighthouse Ministries and Chairwoman of SOUP.

Our four finalists for January are Skylark Bruce, Len Cooper, Gayle Walters, and Vanessa Board. Skylark Bruce is part of the Canton Sunday Picnic, a volunteer group that feeds hungry people in our community every Sunday. They would use the grant money to make improvements to their kitchen to help increase their efficiency and storage of donated food. Len Cooper is a Communication professor at the University of Mount Union and wants to create an interactive video installation piece that will provide users with an immersive experience while exploring the world of #blacklivesmatter. A focus of the piece is to combine the anonymity of social media with the faces of real people. Gayle Walters from Access Health Stark County wants to partner with Stark County District Library and bring "Oh, the Things You'll Know," an engaging, culturally relevant, health literacy initiative, to Stark County. Vanessa Board is from Oakwood STEM Academy at Oakwood Middle School and she would like to create a cross-curricular convergence of career-tech high school engineering students with creative middle school STEM (Science-Technology-Engineering-Math) students, forming one electric vehicle competition team. All the January finalists have great ideas to share and we hope you can join us for their presentations.

General admission tickets to the January 29 dinner are \$10 and include soup, salad, bread and a chance to vote for one of the four presented project proposals. Each speaker will have 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. At the event, 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 will receive all the money raised PLUS a \$1,000 matching grant from United Way's Young Leaders Society. For a chance to mingle and have a say, purchase tickets at www.uwstark.org/StarkSOUP.

UWGSC 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. For additional information regarding STARK SOUP And United Way's Young Leaders Society, please contact Carrie Clemens at 330-491-9974 or email carrie.clemens@uwstark.org.

About United Way of Greater Stark County

United Way of Greater Stark County believes in creating long-lasting change in the three important impact areas of focus, Education, Income and Health. 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. 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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