

NEWS RELEASE

For more information:

Cynthia Vignos

United Way of Greater Stark County

Vice President, Marketing and Strategic Communication

330-491-9954

cynthia.vignos@uwstark.org



**United Way
of Greater Stark County**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Way of Greater Stark County's Young Leaders Society Hosts STARK SOUP Events to Benefit Local Entrepreneurs

(Canton, OH) December 6, 2016 – 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 go home with 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. Anyone with an idea to submit can visit www.uwstark.org/StarkSOUP to apply quickly and easily. The previous STARK SOUP event was filmed live, so visit <http://www.nctvstorytellers.org/stark-soup.html> to watch the video and get a better idea of the format and style of this unique program.

In 2016, SOUP events funded \$4,130 into community projects and YLS matched \$3,000. 2016 SOUP winners include Better Future Facilitators, Maranda Weigley and Jason Pigott. Better Future Facilitators received a \$2,400 micro-grant for their program that enables high-potential homeless citizens living in shelters opportunities to co-create and own their own small business. Anti-Hunger Games was created by Maranda Weigley. She received a micro-grant of \$2,700 to help provide weekend food for students that receive free or reduced cost meals at school. Jason Pigott received \$2,130 to launch virtual reality technology in his 7th grade classroom.

General admission tickets to the upcoming January 29 dinner will be \$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 goes home with 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 after January 9 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 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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