United Way of Central Indiana Announces Finalists for ELEVATE Awards

Join United Way for an evening of philanthropy and community with this “Havana Nights”-themed event on March 2, 2019 to honor young professionals while raising funds to address hunger

INDIANAPOLIS – United Way’s ELEVATE Awards recognizes the next generation of philanthropists, volunteers and activists in the Central Indiana community. After receiving 106 nominations for the inaugural award year, 15 finalists were selected across five categories. Winners will be announced at ELEVATE, a new signature fundraising event, on March 2 at Crane Bay Event Center in downtown Indianapolis.

Submissions called for individuals (age 21-40) who positively impacted the Central Indiana community and elevated others. A group category was included to recognize impact from employees in a company who executed an event, initiative or project that addressed an important social issue. A six-member volunteer committee of community leaders and experts reviewed nominees and offered their votes for the top talent in each category.

“Nominees included risk takers and change makers that have pushed our community forward with bold vision and diligent commitment to their cause,” said Marshawn Wolley, ELEVATE Judge and Director of Community Engagement and Strategic Initiatives at IUPUI. “Through the Elevate Awards, United Way has found a diverse group of young leaders whose stories challenge us to raise the bar and show us what it means to be committed to an organization or cause. In the honorees we get a glimpse of what’s possible.”

The official 2019 ELEVATE nominees are:

**Board Member of the Year presented by Eli Lilly & Company**
Laura Granieri, IndyHub on behalf of People for Urban Progress
Justin Hayes, Katz, Sapper and Miller on behalf of AYS, Inc.
Lauren Petersen, TechPoint on behalf of Partners in Housing

**Employee Resource Group of the Year presented by Becknell Industrial**
African American Network at Eli Lilly
BOLDForce at Salesforce
LillyPRIDE at Eli Lilly and Company

**Innovator of the Year presented by UPS**
Dominic Dorsey, Don’t Sleep
Ronni Kloth, Lilly Endowment, Inc.
Christina Zerfas, Ohana Software
Nonprofit Professional of the Year presented by Strada Education Network
Jessica Evans, Purchased, Inc.
Dave Neff, EDGE Mentoring
Darcey Palmer-Shultz, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana

Volunteer of the Year presented by Roche Diagnostics Corporation
Katie Bailey, Indiana University Public Policy Institute for Neighborhood Christian Legal Clinic
Ranjana Chandramouli, Eli Lilly & Company for various STEM Education projects
Rebecca Ford, Eli Lilly & Company for Starfish Initiative and LifeSmart Youth, Inc.

Beginning February 4 each finalist’s story of impact and service will be profiled on United Way’s ELEVATE blog. Sponsorship opportunities in recognition of ELEVATE finalists are available for purchase. Contact Jody Pope (jody.pope@uwci.org) for details.

The ELEVATE Committee will host a pre-party Trivia Night sponsored by Lumina Foundation at Centerpoint Brewing Co. on Wednesday, Feb. 13, from 5-7 p.m. Guests will enjoy being tested on their knowledge of food insecurity issues and hunger relief work happening in the community.

To purchase tickets to ELEVATE or to learn more about the event, visit http://elevate.uwci.org/.

###

About United Way of Central Indiana: United Way is a community of donors, advocates, volunteers, and partners who fight for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in every community. United Way invites all members of our community to LIVE UNITED by giving, advocating and volunteering to improve lives in Central Indiana. Visit www.uwci.org to learn more.