

For Immediate Release

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The Power of 20 helps to changes lives

Birmingham, AL– The YWCA Central Alabama hosted its 20th Annual Purse and Passion Luncheon. The event was titled the *Power of 20*, in honor of the event’s 20th year. Maggie Brooke, President of the YWCA Central Alabama Board of Directors, reflected on the many lives impacted by the organization’s programs over the 20 years of Purse and Passion. Nearly 1,500 guests opened their purses and wallets to support the YW’s mission. The luncheon was held on April 18, 2019 at the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel.

“Over the past 20 years, to see the impact of the money raised through the YWCA Purse and Passion luncheon is humbling,” said Pat Hoban-Moore Interim CEO for the YWCA. “We are grateful to the generous giving and caring supporters of the YWCA Central Alabama. We would not be able to offer the programs and provide the services needed in and by our community without their support.”

The YW provides a nationally-accredited child development program for children of homeless and working poor families; a broad array of domestic violence services; safe, affordable housing; and social justice programs.

The guests watched video stories of YW clients who have found their way back to stability, thanks to gifts they received at the YWCA. Michael and LaShaela found the gift of strength and stability while staying in one of the YW’s homeless shelters for intact families.

In 2006, the YWCA Central Alabama realized that child care isn’t the only obstacle that homeless families face when they’re trying to start again. For some, the hardest part is finding a way to stay together during the lowest point of their lives.

Most homeless shelters in the community accept either men, or women and children. That means that single fathers with children, couples with children, and mothers with boys over the age of 10 are most likely going to have to split up at the very time they need to be together the most.

That’s the reality that LaShaela and Michael were facing when their world began to crumble around them. The couple has a special needs child, a precious little boy who is the light of their lives. But his lengthy hospital stays and his health issues meant that the couple fell behind on their bills as they tried to focus on their child, like any parents would.

Their situation grew more desperate until the unthinkable became even more unimaginable, and they realized that in order to get the help they needed, they might have to split up. But then they found the YWCA’s Interfaith Hospitality House, one of a very few shelters in Alabama that serves intact families. The YW saw a need and filled it, and LaShaela and Michael will forever be grateful.

Jennifer Evans, one of the luncheon’s co-chairs, asked those in attendance to make an additional \$20 donation in honor of the event’s 20th year to help those in need of the YW’s services. “Twenty dollars may not seem like much

but the collective power of everyone in this room could move mountains for those who find them too daunting to climb on their own,” she said.

Co-chairs for the 2018 luncheon were Eleanor Griffin, Leigh Davis and Jennifer Evans. Steering Committee members were Sherry Anthony, Kim Rogers, Erin Stephenson, Kitty Brown, Apryl Kelly, Sumner Rives, Dot Mueller, Tracey Morant Adams, Dalton Blankenship, Lajuana Bradford, Maggie Brooke, Lisa Burton, Myla Calhoun, Paige Daniel, April Deal, Brenda Hackney, Kathryn Harbert, Sheryl Kimerling, Ricki Kline, Lynn LaRussa, Andrea McCaskey, Lisa Miller, Yolanda Sullivan, Debbie White, DeValerie Williams.

Several corporate sponsors, including lead sponsor Harbert Management Corporation, supported the YW’s efforts to create a more caring community. Major support for the luncheon came from Alabama Media Group; Alabama Power Company; Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama; EBSCO Industries, Inc.; Protective Life Corporation; Regions Financial Corporation; and McKinney Capital.

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