

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The YWCA Spokane Acknowledges Gina Lanza As The 2016 Sir Lancelot Award Honoree

GINA'S SUPPORT HELPED TO RAISE \$75,000 OVER A 9 YEAR PERIOD

Spokane WA - During the 10th annual **An Evening In Tuscany** benefit for the YWCA Spokane on July 8th, 2016, the annual Sir Lancelot award will be given to long-time YWCA Spokane supporter, Gina Lanza.

ABOUT THE SIR LANCELOT AWARD

Starting in 2012, this honor was originally named after and given to Lance Laurier, YWCA Spokane Director of Grants and Contracts, for his years of dedication and service to the agency. Going forward, this nomination-based award has provided staff members with an opportunity to celebrate and honor "behind-the-scenes" community members who have gone above the call of duty to assist in the YWCA Spokane's mission of promoting safety and reducing domestic violence in our local community.

ABOUT GINA LANZA

Gina Lanza is a well-known Chef and the previous owner of Amore Italian Restaurant and the Anaconda Grill. "As a wonderful friend to the YWCA Spokane," expresses Dana Morris, YWCA Spokane Development Director, "Gina has graciously donated her time, resources, and famous artichoke-pesto lasagna recipe to this Tuscan-inspired benefit since its inception in 2006. We are so grateful for her on-going commitment and support." In 2005, Gina's involvement with the YWCA Spokane started through volunteering her time in Our Sister's Closet, the YWCA's donation-based, free clothing boutique for women. Shortly after, Gina offered to facilitate a cooking class to raise money to purchase hygiene supplies for Our Sister's Closet. Her class was a huge success and spurred the inspiration to create something more. The following year, An Evening In Tuscany was born, and became an annual source of support to meet the needs of the women and children living in the YWCA Spokane's domestic violence safe shelter.

An Evening In Tuscany has grown from an intimate dinner to a beautifully established benefit, now four times the original size. With Gina's help, this annual fundraiser for the YWCA Spokane has raised \$75,000 over the last 9 years!

Gina's dedication is insurmountable. Even when she lived out of state, she would fly home to cook for the YWCA's Tuscan benefit. Not only does Gina prepare fantastic Italian cuisine, she has often sponsored the event and has contributed fun and beautiful baskets to the event's auction on a consistent basis, with the support of longtime friend and volunteer Laurie Anderson.

"We want Gina to know how important and appreciated her time and talents are to the families we serve," expresses Regina Malveaux, YWCA Spokane CEO, "and how cherished her friendship is to the YWCA Spokane. Her dedication has made such a huge impact in the lives of the women and children we have the pleasure of serving."

The YWCA Spokane encourages community members to join us as we celebrate Gina Lanza on July 8th at the new "An Evening In Tuscany" benefit location: Barrister Winery, 1213 W Railroad Avenue. More information can be found at www.ywcaspokane.org.

ABOUT THE YWCA SPOKANE

The YWCA of Spokane is a multi-service non-profit organization whose mission is eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. For over 113 years the YWCA has been committed to empowering women in the Spokane community.

The YWCA's three umbrella programs include the Alternatives to Domestic Violence Program, Spokane County's only state-recognized program for domestic violence; the Women's Opportunity Center, an established Workforce Connection Site; and Child Services which includes four sites implementing the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program. The YWCA is also home to the uniquely collaborative Spokane Family Justice Center which includes YWCA legal advocates, and City and County law enforcement and prosecutors. These programs benefit more than 17,000 women and children annually.

The YWCA of Spokane is the go-to place in the region for services that empower women and children, support for victims of domestic violence, work readiness resources, and early childhood education. The organization is also a key partner in coalitions in the community working on issues of racial and social justice.