YWCA ROCK COUNTY PRESENTS

2020 Women of Distinction
WITH CHEFS COOKIN' FOR A CAUSE

OCTOBER 15, 2020
A VIRTUAL EVENT

The 45th Annual Celebration of Women in Rock County.
2020 Women of Distinction Recipients

Abbey Donahue  Mary Fanning-Penny  Evelyn Galindo, Ph.D.

Lori Stottler  Dr. Marijuana P. Vandyck

Young Woman of Distinction  Corporate Award of Merit

Gabriella Petruzello  Jane Blain Gilbertson  President & CEO

Thank You to the Event Committee

Kelly Eickstead, Co-chair  Adrian Graham
Kayla Murphy, Co-chair  Elle Swart
Kim Lantta  Samantha Guthrie
Karen Reilly  Jen Draz
Jillian Davenport  Angela Moore
Lori Kokes  Kayla Hanson
YWCA Rock County
Women of Distinction (with Chefs Cookin' for a Cause)
Thursday, October 15, 2020

Welcome
Kim Lantta, President, YWCA Rock County Board of Directors

Transitions Program Overview
Angela Moore, YWCA Executive Director

Introduction of Guest Emcee
Kim Lantta

Presentation of Awards
Caroline Peterson, Guest Emcee
Anchor & Reporter, NBC 15

Throughout the program, some area chefs will highlight some of the amazing restaurants the Rock County area has to offer.

About our Guest Emcee
Caroline Peterson joined NBC15 in June of 2018, and currently reports during the weekdays and anchors and produces the 9 p.m. newscast on the weekends.

As a general assignment reporter, she has had the chance to cover a very wide variety of news including politics, agriculture, health, historic flooding and more.

In her free time, she loves exploring any coffee shops and brunch spots with her best friend and husband, Adam.

She loves her family, home improvement shows, music, sunny weather and volunteering at church. Caroline loves to hear what stories you have and what is important to the community.
Hello and thank you for joining us.

2020 will be a remembered as a year we all were faced with unprecedented challenges as we worked to live in a new, socially-distanced reality. It is with those realities in mind that we are meeting virtually for 45th annual YWCA Rock County Women of Distinction gala.

We are here to celebrate our community. We will do so by recognizing and honoring six women and an outstanding business in our community. They have all improved women’s lives through community service, professional achievement, integrity, leadership and through being dedicated to the wellbeing of others. And for that, they are being honored with the Women of Distinction, Young Woman of Distinction and Corporate Award of Merit awards.

The Women of Distinction honorees were nominated by their peers and were chosen by a selection committee. Over the past 45 years, YWCA Rock County has honored more than 250 women and nearly two dozen businesses and organizations.

This year, we will also highlight some of the amazing chefs in the community, as they join us to showcase their restaurants and help honor the 2020 award recipients.

By joining us, you are not only honoring these amazing achievements, but you are also helping women gain independence and build skills through the YWCA’s Transitions program. Transitions, as well as YWCA’s Economic Empowerment Center, is located in downtown Janesville at the historic Jeffris Flats building.

Transitions ensures that families who are fleeing domestic violence, have a chance to regain their independence. Transitions works to make sure families earn a stable income, live in safe housing and heal. An important part of this program is Give a Gal a Lift, which provides gas-only cards for people earning below the poverty-line. These cards help remove transportation as a barrier when it comes to retaining employment.

Thank you for joining us, as we shine a spotlight on some of the best people and businesses Rock County has to offer.

Sincerely,

Angela Moore,  
YWCA Rock County Executive Director

Kim Lantta,  
YWCA Rock County Board President
Having to choose between putting food on your family's table, or putting gas in your car to get to work is not an easy decision. Yet, it's a decision underemployed women here in Rock County are faced with.

We know a lack of transportation is a barrier when it comes to retaining employment.

YWCA Rock County's Economic Empowerment Center not only works to help women find employment, but it also works to make sure they are able to keep their jobs.

By supporting YWCA Rock County's Give a Gal a Lift program, you can help remove transportation barriers.

If a woman is employed and earns below the poverty level, she can come to the YWCA's Economic Empowerment Center and get bus tokens, or one $25 gas-only card per month.

How you can help:

$25 provides fuel for a week of work-related travel.

$59 provides bus rides for one month.

Donations made to Give a Gal a Lift will have an immediate and life-changing effect on those who need our support. Together, we can transform our community.

To donate, visit: ywcarockcounty.org or text the word 'donate' to (608) 315-5660. You can also use the QR code by opening the camera on your phone, and pointing it at the code.
The COVID-19 pandemic pushed our aging technology beyond its capabilities. The YWCA’s current computers are a decade old, and do not have the much needed features to keep up with our current virtual reality.

We provide vital services, which is why we are asking for your help!

**CARE House**

The CARE House is the only child advocacy center in Rock County. It provides a safe space for abused children to be interviewed by law enforcement and other agencies. 185 abused children told their stories at the CARE House in 2019.

**Alternatives to Violence**

This 33-bed shelter offers a safe space for someone who is in crisis. We also provide legal advocacy and a 24-hour helpline for calls and texts. Legal advocacy was among the services that shifted online, which in 2019, served 188 clients.

**Transitions**

Domestic violence survivors receive a place to stay and care management to regain independence. During the pandemic, much of the communications with clients shifted online. Staff provided more than 530 hours of service to clients in 2019.

**Immigrant Outreach & Racial Justice**

This program assists families with language barriers, employment issues, citizenship, self-sufficiency resources and domestic violence prevention. Through this program, YWCA Rock County works to dismantle racism and support diverse populations through education and advocacy. Educational events have shifted online due to COVID-19.

**Child Care**

Our program, which serves 800 children each year, is state-certified and licensed. Staff is currently working with outdated technology as more communication with families shifts online.
What can I do to help recharge the YWCA's battery and help it stay connected to the community?

We are looking for help with technology. Specifically...

How can I give?

- You can visit ywcarockcounty.org
- You can text the word 'donate' to (608) 315-5660.

Help Fund the Mission and Reach Our $47,000 Goal.
A Shared Past, A Strong Future.

Today, as we navigate new ways to do business, we clearly see the deep roots and strength that we have forged together through generations of service. Your credit union is strong and committed to you and your financial future.

Solid since 1965. Visit bhccu.org and see how we can help you.

Federally Insured by NCUA

Virtual Lunch and Learns

YWCA Rock County's Lunch and Learns are an exciting opportunity to provide a deeper dive into community-identified issues centered on social and racial justice.

Join Us:
January 28, 2021
May 27, 2021

Lunch and Learns are free to attend, and are held virtually via Zoom. Visit ywcarockcounty.org to register.
Meet the 2020 Women of Distinction

2020 Women of Distinction Honorees

Mary Fanning Penny
CEO and President, United Way Blackhawk Region

As President and CEO of United Way Blackhawk Region, Mary Fanning-Penny is an accomplished leader as well as the most spirited cheerleader for those around her. Mary’s passion, warmth and intellect coax even those most hesitant to contribute their individual gifts to affect real change.

In 2004, having just obtained a Psychology degree with minors in Women’s Studies & Political Science from Winona State University in Minnesota, Mary’s first post-graduate position was as YWCA Rock County’s Legal Advocate, assisting women to navigate a legal system that in times of crisis can seem insurmountable.

Mary continued to serve in leadership roles in Janesville and then in 2010, accepted a corporate communications position at Alliant Energy in Madison. In 2012, following the birth of her twin daughters, Mary accepted the position of Executive Director at Rotary Botanical Gardens before taking on her current role as President and CEO at United Way in 2014. Mary, like so many women, places her role as a mother above all else. She models for her twin girls, the power of intellect and kindness, the beauty in honesty and equality, and the passion necessary to move forward with purpose toward something bigger than themselves.

Mary currently serves on the boards of Forward Janesville, the Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce and United Way of Wisconsin. Throughout her career, she has served on more than 50 committees, taskforces, boards and coalitions. In 2019, Mary received the Greater Beloit and Stateline Chambers’ Executive Influencer Award.

Mary believes in the ‘sisterhood’ of women, one that is fueled by women supporting each other, being present for each other and lifting each other up. This is the foundation of her mentorships with young women and numerous contemporaries who have sought her guidance. She is well known in the Rock County community and widely respected as a person of integrity, creativity, leadership and dedicated work ethic. While proficient in a digital world, Mary is savvy enough to understand that technology can never take the place of a heartfelt, handwritten thank you note.

"She inspires the very best in all of us. She challenges us to do our part, to take the lead instead of waiting in the wings, to bravely step forward and try something new, to be courageous. She believes in us so completely that we can’t help but give it a shot."
Denise Peters-Kauihou, Mary’s co-worker
In the male-dominated field of nuclear science, Abbey Donahue stands out as a force of nature and a leader. Even as a young child, Abbey loved science and knew she wanted to explore science and design new things. She has spent 15 years living her passion, working in a field where she has designed nuclear reactor fuel, nuclear storage systems, and medical isotopes.

Abbey achieved the status of Professional Engineer, which is the highest standard of competence for those in her field. Abbey has her Masters of Science in Nuclear Engineering, with a concentration in Radiological Engineering and a Bachelor’s degree in Nuclear Engineering. She is currently the engineering manager at SHINE Medical Technologies, leading a team of engineers to construct a facility that will make life-saving medical isotopes. The facility will produce Molybdenum or Moly-99, a medical isotope that is the essential component in medical imaging procedures used to diagnose heart disease and other conditions.

Abbey not only uses her skills and passion to mentor new co-workers, she also shares her love of science and engineering with students – inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers. Since moving to Rock County from Washington D.C. in 2016, Abbey has done several classroom presentations on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math).

On the national level, Abbey served on the board of directors for the NAYGN - North American Young Generation in Nuclear, which develops leaders to energize the future of nuclear. Abbey recently completed her term as President of the board of directors, and is still involved with the organization. During her time on the board, NAYGN created a children's book geared toward girls in third through fifth grade called, ‘Marie's Electric Adventure.’ ‘Marie’s Electric Adventure’ also led to the creation of a second book called ‘George’s Energy Adventure,’ which has the same purpose – to inspire! For her leadership in NAYGN, the Nuclear Energy Institute awarded Abbey with a Top Industry Practice Award in 2018.

Abbey volunteers her time with numerous non-profit organizations, including the Girl Scouts and Humane Society. Abbey also donated her time and enthusiasm for STEM as the keynote speaker for the very first Tech Savvy Conference for middle school girls at UW-Whitewater in March 2019.

With her husband and her dogs by her side, Abbey also loves to spend time outdoors. You can find them on the weekends at Riverside Park where they enjoy hiking Devil’s Staircase.

“The scarcity of women in STEM fields is a long-standing and persistent problem. STEM is a field with a lot of possibilities for future jobs in Rock County. The School District of Janesville has a large STEM initiative, so Abbey's passion and enthusiasm for this field helps highlight these jobs in our community.”

Cheryl Peterson, Abbey's co-worker
While growing up in Beloit, it didn’t take long for Marijuana Pepsi to feel the effects of her name. Once teased by classmates for her name, she says with her family’s support, she was eventually able to overcome and realize her name gave her strength.

Marijuana earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Education from University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, her Master’s Degree in Higher Education Administration from Georgia Southern University, and a Ph.D in Higher Education Leadership from Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, WI.

While earning her Ph.D, Marijuana wrote a dissertation on uncommon black names in the classroom. Her dissertation, ‘Black Names in White Classrooms: Teacher Behaviors and Student Perceptions,’ analyzed how black students with distinctive names are treated by educators in predominantly white settings, and how that treatment plays into academic performance.

The effort earned her the ‘Dr.’ before her name, now as Dr. Marijuana Pepsi Vandyck, she was recognized not only in local media outlets, but nationally and internationally as well. The story appeared in places like the Huffington Post, CNN, online blogs and BBC News.

Dr. Vandyck currently serves as an Inclusive Excellence Lecturer at UW-Whitewater in the College of Education & Professional Studies, a program with the goal of increasing the numbers of faculty of color. Prior to taking on this role, Dr. Vandyck served as the director of the Department of Education funded TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) Program at Beloit College serving first generation, low income, and multi-ability students.

A firm believer in giving back and uplifting others, Dr. Vandyck established the Marijuana Pepsi Scholarship for first generation African-American students enrolled at UW-Whitewater, her alma mater.

Marijuana loves reading historical romance novels, camping, fishing, and kayaking alongside her husband Fredrick and son Isaac when not working on their three acre hobby farm which typically houses two pigs, 13 ducks, 15 chickens, and 110 guinea fowl.

“Dr. Marijuana Pepsi Vandyck is homegrown, a true success story and lives the YWCA Rock County mission! She is smart, resilient, and a strong woman of color who leads by example. It is very important to recognize young leaders, like Dr. Vandyck, who are working at the grassroots level to make a difference in our community!”

Regina Dunkin, Marijuana's friend & Beloit City Council President
As a Spanish teacher for the School District of Beloit, Dr. Evelyn Galindo uses her personal experiences and her expertise to inspire and advocate for her students.

Evelyn holds several degrees, including a Ph.D. for Central American Literature, Culture and History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Throughout her education, Evelyn earned scholarships and fellowships, as well as the Outstanding Woman Student Award from Northern Illinois University in 2010.

After beginning her teaching career at Craig High School in Janesville, Evelyn went on to teach students at the Northern Illinois University, Parker High School in Janesville, UW-Madison and UW-Rock County. Evelyn arrived at the Beloit School District in fall of 2019, where she currently teaches grades six through twelve.

During her time with the Janesville School District, Evelyn wrote curriculum with the goal of bettering the experiences for her students. After arriving in Beloit, she was instrumental in developing a syllabus so that Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish Literature and Cultures could be added to the district’s list of AP courses. By offering this course, Beloit Memorial High School is able to expand the opportunities for students learning Spanish as a second language, as well as for native Spanish speaking students.

Evelyn also advises the Latino Club at Beloit Memorial High School, mentoring students during and after school. The club explores social and academic topics in order to serve the community for all students and families.

In her free time, Evelyn is dedicated to an art collective based in Madison that works on social justice issues in Southern Wisconsin. Drawing on her family’s own story, Evelyn also writes for an online publication that brings awareness to immigrant experiences. Evelyn, a native of El Salvador, arrived in the U.S. with her family in the 1980’s as refugees during the Salvadoran Civil War.

Evelyn finds ways to get involved and make a difference for our community, and for her own two children. In the process, she is inspiring the next generation to do the same.

"Ms. Galindo provides a safe space in her classroom during Latino Club meetings and she strives to be a role model for young women in this group. Students find her welcoming, friendly, intelligent, and goal-oriented. By sharing her own unique experiences and perspectives with her students, she exemplifies important leadership in our community."

Julie Horvath, Evelyn’s co-worker
Since Lori arrived in Rock County in 1998, she has served several non-profit organizations and worked endlessly to contribute to a stronger community. Lori has continuously advocated for a healthier county and encouraged people to find their voice.

As someone who overcame a difficult childhood herself, Lori cares deeply about the mental health and educational opportunities for children. As one nominator wrote, “Lori’s difficult childhood didn’t cause her to believe she couldn’t. Instead she used her experience as power and has used her healing journey to help all young people she encounters to embrace their dreams and live a future worthy of their dreams.”

Guided by her faith, Lori went from a non-profit management and consultant career to a life of public service in 2007, when she was elected Rock County Clerk. However, this was not her first time on the ballot, Lori was elected to the Janesville School Board in 2006, where she served until 2012. In 2015, Lori left her role with Rock County when she became the City Clerk-Treasurer for Beloit.

As the Rock County Clerk, Lori brought a determination for excellence, accountability and competency that earned respect not only county-wide but statewide for her knowledge and performance related to Wisconsin’s election systems. She then took those same qualities with her to the role of Beloit’s Clerk-Treasurer. Among her certifications, Lori earned her CERA from the National Election Center, which is the highest certification an election administrator can obtain.

Aside from her professional responsibilities, Lori continues to give back to the community by volunteering her time and talents. She currently serves on the Women’s Fund, which serves women and children throughout Rock County. She also is the founding president for CASA of Rock County, where she led the non-profit through the process of becoming a standalone 501(c)(3). Among her many volunteer roles, Lori also served as a mentor with Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

Lori is able to positively affect the lives of so many people in the community, while continuing to be an amazing spouse and mother to her husband and sons. While those who know Lori say she does not seek recognition, they say her actions set her apart as truly deserving of being named a Woman of Distinction.

“Lori is not one of those “out front” leaders - but instead she is a doer; a uniter of people and a woman who can get it done. She is the person who carefully plans and contributes in the background for things like election administration, fundraising and programming so others can step in and implement with ease.”

Jelene Ahrens, Lori’s friend & City of Beloit Deputy Clerk
Gabriella Petruzzello is an accomplished scholar, dedicated athlete, civically-responsible community member and a leader among her classmates.

While at Craig, Gabriella was a 4.0 student who has earned Academic Honors for three years. She challenged herself in rigorous courses, such as Advanced Placement, Honors-level and Accelerated or compacted courses. Having a passion for journalism and photography, Gabriella was also the editor of her school’s newspaper.

In addition to her academic excellence, Gabriella pushes herself in athletics. As a cross country runner, she earned second team all-conference, academic all-conference, team state qualifier, and academic all-state recognition. During her freshman year, while participating in track, Gabby was named “most dedicated” team member.

Noticing a need, Gabriella approached her school’s principal to offer her talents as a photographer to benefit her classmates who might not otherwise afford a professionally-taken senior picture. She also volunteered to share her knowledge and experience with mental illness as a classroom speaker, presenter at a school-wide workshop, as a guest speaker for faculty and for freshmen seminars and health classes.

In the larger community, Gabby has volunteered at the library, with the City of Janesville Recreation Division and House of Mercy - to name a few. Gabriella cares about helping others and is willing to share her talents, experience, and time to make that happen.

Gabriella demonstrates leadership by pushing herself “behind the scenes.” Recently, she has taken some online courses - for her personal betterment - on Speed Reading, Integrative Mental Health, Mindfulness, and Stress Management. And, true to her nature, Gabriella presented what she learned to her principal at Craig High School, to offer some insight on how the information may be helpful to staff at the school.

Gabriella continues to look to the future, and is now studying at Central College in Pella, Iowa.

"Gabby is an amazing young woman who is accomplished in her studies and athletic pursuits. She cares about people and wants to make a difference for others. She is a leader who has gone the extra mile to get involved, make things happen, and share her personal experience to better others. Gabby has had her share of personal adversity, but those experiences have only strengthened her resolve. I have no doubt that Gabby will accomplish all that she sets her mind to in her future studies and career pursuits."

Dr. Alison Bjoin, Gabby's former principal
Woman of Distinction Recipients (1975-2019)

Judy Adler
Dorrie Alff
Jeanine Allen
Marion Allen
Linda Amundson
Joanne Anderson
Lucy Anderson
Eva Arnold
Peggy Aulino
Jean Austin
Milly Babcock
Cynthia Bagley
Barbara Barrington
Alice Barlass
Marion Barlass
Edie Baran
Sally Basting
Sally Bean
Katherine Belling
Judy Berg
Clarice Bergerson
Sr. Mary Michael Berry
Ruby Beyer
Marie Bilek
Barb Bortner
Barbara Boyd
Carolyn Brandeen
Fran Brien
Edna Brooks-Pittman
Sgt. Ann Brophy
Leslie Brunsell
Lois Buell
Kelli Cameron
Carol Campbell
Amy Carey
Jeanne Carfora
Marjorie Carlson
Ella Cash
Dorothy Chladek
Harriet Christopherson
Barb Cisler
Joan Clark
Maria Clark
Sue Conley
Hazel Connors
Karel Cripe
Jane Crisler
Sally Cullen
Jaleh Cullens
Gwen Daluge
Jennifer DeGarmo
Mirabel Deming
Paula DeRubeis
Kay Deupree
Marsha Dobbs
Nancy Belle Douglas
Rachael Dowd
Regina Dunkin
Mary Ann Eggen
Mary Lou Einerson
Kim Emerson
Nancy Fennema
Beverly Ferguson
Kristin Fillhouser
Claudiadair Fitzgerald
Ann Forbeck
Mary Frederick
Shawn Fredricks
Ruth B. French
Lisa Furseth
Esther Gage
Marcia Galvan
Martha Gammons
Kari Gates
Barbara George
Dorothy Gilbertson
Jane Blain Gilbertson
Carol Goelzer
Barbara Goldberg
Helen Graham
Anne Griffiths
Iris Guelker
Ellie Gutmann
Roberta Haakinson
Connie Hake
Nancy Hansen-Bennett
Ilah Hartung
Gerry Hedberg
Sharon Heitzman
Diane Hendricks
Regina Hendrix
Michelle Hendrix-Nora
Kim Hesgard
Lois Hickey
Barbara Hickman
Theresa Hineline
Elisabeth Hinkle
Kathy Holcombe
Mary Hopkins
Julia Hornbstol
Mary Margaret
O’Connell-Hosler
Irene Hoyt
Cecelia Howe
Bettye Hugill
Peggy Jacobs
Judy Jaggard
Lora Jakoubek
Muril Janisch
Kathleen Jelinek
Marilyn Jensen
Patti Podgers-Johnson
Doris Johnston
Lynn Jones
Junice Jones
Jackie Judd
Marlyn Keating
Susan Keeney
Jamie Kessenich
Evelyn Kettle
Jan Kinnaman
Stephanie Klett
Judi Kneesee
Grace Knipp
Kris Koeffler
Jacki Olson Kold
Deb Kolste
Patricia Krarup
Charlene Kraus
Karen Krueger
Karen Lisser
Bernice Laita
Elida (Lollie) Langer
Jan Leach
Amy Loasching
Gen MacFarlane
Kathi Madsen
Joan Malin
Ann Markulis
Carol Matthay, M.D.
Woman of Distinction Recipients (1975-2019) Continued

Kathi Madsen  
Joan Malin  
Ann Markulis  
Carol Matthay, M.D.  
Mary Margaret McBride  
Nancy McCann  
Tammy McCaslin Fanning  
Jean McCartney  
Sue McGinniss  
Judy McRoberts  
Karen Goelzer-McKaig  
Dr. Kim Kostka McKay  
Linda Mentink  
Ursula Meyers  
Janet Soergel Mielke  
Elinor Mills  
Sandi Molski  
Julie Monahan  
Ruth Ann Montgomery  
Evelyn Morgan  
Suzanne Mueller  
Sue Mullen  
Helen Murray  
Nancy Neinhuis  
Virginia Nitz  
Maxine Nobiensky  
Marion Noll  
Catherine Norris  
Dolly Nowlan  
Caryn Oleston  
Sarah Olver  
Camilla Owen  
Jennifer Paepke  
Cheryl Peterson  
Janet Philipp  
Crystal Phillips  
Pat Phillips  
Diane Pillard  
Alice Plautz  
Linda Posner  
Ruth Ann Potts  
Sharon Quaerna  
Cecilia Ramirez  
Debra Ramsdell  
Jean Randles  
Esther Rau, M.D.  
Cyndi Regan  
Belem Gonzalez-Regan  
Christine Rebout  
Linda Reinhardt  
Sue Renkas  
Mary Lee Reuss  
Dorothy Risch  
Carol Roherty  
Jan Ross  
Trudy Rule  
Diana Ryan  
Rachel Salisbury  
Virginia Saltzman  
LaVerne Sandgren  
Jessica Schafer-Locher  
Mary Jane Schieve  
Kendra Schiffman  
Bobbie Schroder  
Cheryl Schmidt  
Edna Feldman-Schultz  
Patty Schumacher  
Mary Lou Williams Schroeder  
Millie Seidl  
Marge Sell  
Cynthia Sholl  
Arlene Silness  
Mayme Simonsen  
Wanda Sloan  
Nancy Stabb  
Lauri Steeber  
Sherri Stumpf  
Coral Swanson  
Kerry Swanson  
Barb Tapovatz  
Doris Thom  
Delores Thompson  
Maureen Thornton  
Phoebe Tobias  
Joyce Tucker  
Nancy Verhoeven  
Joan M. Waite  
Ruby Walton  
Kay Welch  
Nancy Welch  
Sima Wexler  
Mary Wickhem  
Thelma Wilcox  
Mary Willmer  
Jan Witt  
Chrys Wolnick  
Jackie Wood  
Virginia Wyss  
Ruth Zei  
Gloria James Ziegler  
Shari Faber  
Sandy Johnson  
Kelly Willoughby  
Marlene Rossler  
Linda Lyke  

Young Women of Distinction

Craig High School 1992  
Girls Cross Country Team  
Parker High School 1993  
Girls Basketball Team  
Betsy Ennis  
Melanie Garunay  
Alexandra Hokinson  
Ama Kyereme  
Stella Luong  
Mollie Myers  
Katelyn Presti  
Minaliza Shahlapour  
Harmony Shepherd  
Lisa Sudmeier  
Anne Runde  
Claire Mikkelson  
Taylor Salmon
Blain Supply, corporate headquarters for Blain's Farm & Fleet, regularly gives back to the community through fundraisers and support of nonprofits. To date, Blain's Farm & Fleet has raised more than $5 million for the American Heart Association, contributed countless dollars to local FFA and 4-H scholarship programs and each Christmas, the company donates toys to children in need throughout the communities it serves.

Jane Blain Gilbertson is President, CEO, and sole owner of the 43 Blain's Farm & Fleet stores throughout Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan and Blain Supply, Inc., headquartered in Janesville, Wisconsin. The family owned companies were founded in 1955 and currently employ 4,400 associates. Jane accepted the nomination on behalf of the company.

Jane, a Janesville native, received her Bachelor of Science degree in Retailing from Miami University (Miami of Ohio). After graduation, she joined Macy's Executive Training Program in their Midwest Division. When Jane returned to the family business, she became the children's apparel and giftware buyer. She grew to assume responsibility for the marketing, merchandising, buying, e-commerce, and store operations teams over the next several years.

After the passing of her father and uncle, Jane and her brother bought out the remaining family shareholders in 1998. Jane and her brother ran the business together for 16 years, until 2014, when Jane bought her brother out, he retired and she became Sole Owner, President & CEO.

Jane is married to Mick Gilbertson; a licensed architect, and they have two daughters.

Blain Supply joins a great group of previous Corporate Award of Merit Recipients. Previous recipients include:

- Agrace HospiceCare, Inc.
- Alcohob, Inc.
- Badger Council of Girl Scouts
- Damron Communications
- Data Dimensions
- Fetch Graphics
- Jax Custom Printing
- Lab Safety Supply, Inc.
- Manpower
- MercyHealth Systems
- Patch Products
- St. Elizabeth’s Nursing Home
- UW Rock County
- W.W. Grainger, Inc.
- Zonta Club of Janesville
- Drywater Productions
- Women’s Fund, Community
- Foundation of Southern Wisconsin
- Women’s Fund, Stateline
- Community Foundation
YWCA Board of Directors

Kim Lantta, President
Clair Berg
Stephanie Bravieri
Maria Delgado
Julie Janiak
Kelly Eickstead

Tami Kellerman
Shauna McCarthy
Kayla Murphy
Tina Pudlas
Karen Reilly
Angela Moore, YWCA Executive Director

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

Child Care
Transitions
Immigrant Outreach & Racial Justice
Alternatives to Violence
CARE House

It’s not about a new educational program. It’s about giving all kids the chance to thrive.

In science and engineering, women make up only 28% of the workforce. People of color are only 33%.

By partnering with Maydm and like-minded organizations throughout Wisconsin, we’re bringing underrepresented students to the forefront so everyone can see what they’re capable of.

alliantenergy.com/stories
Baker Tilly is proud to sponsor the YWCA Women of Distinction and Chef’s Cooking for a Cause!

We are Baker Tilly. A leading advisory, tax and assurance firm dedicated to building long-lasting relationships and helping you win now and anticipate tomorrow.

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Together we rise

In a time when it seems that everything looks different, the heart of our community remains vibrant. As you do your part to stop the spread of COVID-19, you inspire us to rise together.

Mercyhealth’s health care team is fueled by compassion, excellence and unsurpassed determination. We are here when you need us. Your care is our top priority.

Together, let’s rise to make a difference and look toward a tomorrow filled with promise.

Proud sponsor of the 2020 Women of Distinction

For 50 years, we have been invested in the success of your family, your business, and your life. Because what matters most is doing what’s right – for our customers, our associates and our Wisconsin communities.

1 South Main Street, Janesville  |  608.743.1500
JohnsonFinancialGroup.com

Photo courtesy of Full Spectrum Photography
Some area chefs and winemakers are coming together this year to help celebrate this year’s amazing Women of Distinction.

Is there a better way to celebrate achievement than over a nice dinner, or wine tasting!? Make sure to bid on some amazing dinner and tasting experiences from area restaurants and businesses. This year the auction is online.

Make sure to check out the online auction...

Visit ywcarockcounty.org and look for the link on the Women of Distinction (with Chefs Cookin' for a Cause) page. You can also scan the QR code with your smartphone's camera.

Thank you to participating restaurants and businesses!

Merrill & Houston’s Steak Joint
Velvet Buffalo
Glen Erin
Mac’s Pizza Shack
Italian House
Texas Roadhouse
Timber Hill Winery
Whiskey Ranch Bar & Grill
45th Parallel Distillery

And as a thank for attending Women of Distinction (with Chefs Cookin' for a Cause) you will receive a gift from YWCA Rock County and some of these amazing chefs and businesses!
YWCA Rock County 6th Annual
Racial Justice Conference

Join us Virtually:
Thursday, November 12, 2020
8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Morning Keynote
James Leewen
"Lies My Teacher Told Me and What To Do About Them."

Afternoon Keynote
Dr. Alex Gee
"Moving Backwards in a State Whose Motto is Forward: Understanding Wisconsin's Dismal Racial Disparities"

The cost is $75 per person, registration increases to $100 per person on November 1.
For information on breakout sessions and registration, visit:

ywcarockcounty.org

Thank you to our Sponsors & Donors

Social Work, HR and other professionals may be eligible to receive continuing education credits for attending the conference.
Thank you to our 2020 sponsors

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Bud Weiser Motors    Hesser Toyota     Kwik Trip     Casey’s General Stores
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