

HAMPTON VA

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Individuals and groups honored for making a difference in the community

April 25, 2016 - Hampton's Neighborhood Commission recently announced the residents or groups who were honored this year in the "You Make A Difference" program for their work and dedication to creating vibrant, healthy neighborhoods in the city:

Mary Johnson Neighborhood Leadership Award: **Donna Little** was recognized for her leadership and advocacy in the Olde Hampton Community Association. Whether it was her efforts to recruit the pastor of Lift Jesus Higher Ministries to be a member of the Association, her work encouraging a visiting pastor from East Africa to support the association, her organization of a December 2014 "Breakfast with Santa" or her work recognizing the birth of civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr., Little has shown a selfless commitment and persistent desire to improve not just her community but the entire City of Hampton.

Dr. Michael J. Canty Project of the Year Award: The **Aberdeen Gardens Historic & Civic Association** was honored for a beautification project at Lindsay Middle School. In late July of 2015 the Association was approached by the school principal, Angela Byrd-Wright, about projects the principal wanted to complete before school opened. Working with volunteers from Langley Air Force Base, Association members removed rotting timbers and mulch outside the school, painted sections of the gymnasium, and power-washed and scraped the awning and support poles outside the school before painting them as well. Thanks to sponsors inside and outside the Association, the entire project was finished on time.

The Neighborhood of the Year Award: Whether it was the continuous improvement symbolized by a transformed neighborhood watch program or the use of social media, the combined efforts of the **Riverdale Regional Civic Association** earned it Neighborhood of the Year honors. The neighborhood watch program before 2015 was considered fragmented and reactive. Today it's a proactive program with 33 block captains covering approximately 350 homes and more than 700 residents. The neighborhood watch coordinator is now asked to speak with other communities as they set up their own programs. Social media, email and the telephone are used to talk with and help residents, and an ink and paper newsletter is printed for delivery to neighborhood resident. It's a community where teams of people went around the neighborhood during the winter to clear driveways and walkways, and a neighborhood assistance initiative helps elderly residents with small jobs, rides to vote or to neighborhood events, and more.

For more information about the Neighborhood Commission, go to www.hampton.gov/neighborhoods.

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