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**BARRY GLASSMAN**  
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE



**BILLY BONIFACE**  
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Harford County Celebrates 17 Champions for Children and Youth**

**BEL AIR, Md.**, (June 28, 2018) - Harford County honored 17 individuals who have improved the lives of local youth at the 2018 Champions for Children and Youth Awards held June 22 at Harford Community College's Chesapeake Center in Bel Air. The awards presented by the Harford County Department of Community Services' Local Management Board celebrate professionals, volunteers, and youth who go above and beyond to help young people in our community.

Kevin Keegan, chair of the Harford County Local Management Board, opened the ceremony and introduced Joe Ryan, 2018 speaker of the year for Champions for Children and Youth.

"Children are our greatest assets, but they are also our most vulnerable," Ryan said. He went on to speak about the joy children bring to our world, "If you have a bad day at work, go to a park, listen to their laughter, it's good for your heart."

Following Ryan, Madison Oswald, 2018 youth speaker of the year for Champions for Children and Youth, gave an inspiring speech about advocacy for drug-abuse prevention and recovery.

"No one wakes up wanting to be an addict ... it's a disease," Oswald said. "We must start educating our children on the dangers of drug and alcohol at an early age."

In addition to Ryan and Oswald, the 2018 recipients of the Harford County Champions for Children and Youth Award are: Susan Amato; Harford County State's Attorney Joseph Cassilly; Sgt. Christopher Crespo, Harford County Sheriff's Office; Diane Dugan; Kaylee Fillers; Leanna Gefrich; The Hon. Susan Hazlett, District Administrative Judge; Jake Hollin; Heather Irizarry; Allison Jefferson; Florish Okigweh; Mark Reed; Sheila Short; Tammy Warner and Buzz Williams.

Each Nominee received framed artwork by Erin Phillips, a tenth grade student at Harford Technical High School. Each year the committee chooses a piece of art created by a local child for the Champions for Children

Award, to symbolize the work being done to enhance the lives of young people in Harford County.

Sponsors for this year's event included The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region, Catholic Charities, Harford Cable Network, Harford Community College, Harford County Department of Social Services, and Harford Mutual Insurance Company.

"We are deeply grateful to this year's honorees and sponsors for supporting the health, education and protection of our youth," Harford County Executive Barry Glassman said. "By lifting up our next generation they are helping to build a strong future for Harford County."

The Harford County Local Management Board works continually to improve outcomes for children, youth and families in the community. For more information, contact 410-638-3166 or [lmb@harfordcountymd.gov](mailto:lmb@harfordcountymd.gov).



*Harford County's 2018 Champions for Children and Youth: Back row from left: Mark Reed, 2018 Champion for Children and Youth and Kevin Keegan, Chair, Harford County Local Management Board; center row from left: Sgt. Christopher Crespo, Madison Oswald, Kaylee Fillers, Florish Okigweh, Leanna Gefrich, Joe Ryan, Tammy Warner, Jake Hollin, and Sheila Short; front row from left: Buzz Williams, Heather Irizarry, Susan Amato, Diane Dugan (and her dog Maizie), Amber Shrodes, director of Harford County Department of Community Services, and Harford County State's Attorney Joseph Cassilly; not pictured: Judge Susan Hazlett, and Allison Jefferson*

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