



**UNITED  
COMMUNITY  
MINISTRIES**

*At the Heart of Community*

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **2017 Give From The Heart Gala Raises Nearly \$190,000 for Families in Need Proceeds Support United Community Ministries**

**Alexandria, VA (May 16, 2017)**– On Saturday, May 6, The Friends of UCM hosted the 2017 Give From The Heart Gala at the US Patent & Trademark Office. The signature event raised nearly \$190,000 for United Community Ministries, Inc. (UCM) to create brighter futures for families and children in need.

David Culver of NBC4 Washington emceed the evening's festivities, which included silent and live auctions, the presentation of the inaugural UCM Gerald W. Hyland Humanitarian Award, a heart-warming testimonial from a former UCM client, and dancing.

"This is a celebration of all those who have come before us over the past 48 years to support people in need," Ken Disselkoen, Chair of the UCM Board of Directors, told the crowd of several hundred guests and community leaders. "UCM is a gift to the community. The Board and UCM team take our role as stewards of this gift – your gift from the heart – very seriously. Together we change lives to bring families out of poverty and empower them to thrive."

"We are grateful for the energy and creativity of The Friends of UCM," says UCM Executive Director, Alison DeCoursey. "We especially thank Elin Bohn, President of The Friends, and gala co-chairs, Donna Jarvis-Miller and Margaret Murphy, for their hard work. The Friends have raised more than \$2.5 million for UCM since 2001. Thanks to them and to all of our generous sponsors, supporters, and guests for making this evening a success."

Gerry Hyland, retired Fairfax County Mount Vernon District Supervisor, was honored with the inaugural UCM Gerald W. Hyland Humanitarian Award, recognizing those who have demonstrate a commitment to the prosperity of our community.

Guests also heard from a former UCM client who shared her personal journey to financial stability and success. Monica lit up the room with her inspiring story. "UCM opened the doors for me and my young daughter. UCM was the only organization that believed in me and gave me the support I needed when I left my abusive marriage. I left everything I owned behind and came to UCM so that I could get back on my feet. Today I have a job in my chosen career. I no longer need subsidies to afford my apartment or to pay tuition for my daughter at the UCM Early Learning Center. We are in a good place thanks to UCM and to you."

“The success of Monica and others like her starts with the support of a caring community,” says DeCoursey. “UCM is here because we care about families and children. Our goal is to break the generational cycle of poverty. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, together we can empower and transform the lives of people like Monica and build a stronger community for us all.”

**About United Community Ministries**

*United Community Ministries is a community-based nonprofit offering comprehensive programs and services for vulnerable children, youth, and families in the southeast Fairfax County area of Alexandria, VA. UCM provides a vital connection between people in need and the people committed to helping them thrive. Services include counseling and referrals, emergency supplemental food, financial aid, early care and learning, ELS and citizenship classes, and parent education. Learn more by visiting [www.ucmagency.org](http://www.ucmagency.org).*

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**2017 Give From The Heart Gala**

**Crowd Shot**

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*UCM Executive Director Alison DeCoursey welcomes guests to the 2017 Give From The Heart Gala, which raised nearly \$190,000 to create a brighter future for families in need.*

**Gala Event Co-Chairs**

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*Margaret Murphy (left) and Donna Jarvis-Miller co-chaired the 2017 UCM Give from the Heart Gala, hosted by The Friends of UCM.*

**Hyland Humanitarian Award**

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*Retired Fairfax County Supervisor Gerry Hyland was honored with the inaugural UCM Gerald W. Hyland Humanitarian Award. Pictured from left: Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck, UCM Executive Director Alison DeCoursey, Gerry Hyland, UCM Board Chair Ken Disselkoen, Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay.*