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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual The Power of One Dedicated Woman Awards Honors Six Community Leaders**

June 20, 2017-This morning, in a beautiful breakfast ceremony at the Stroh River Place Atrium, Michigan Community Resources (MCR) held their 3rd annual The Power of One Dedicated Woman, an event honoring unsung women changing Detroit neighborhoods. These women are community leaders who volunteer their time and talent to improve their neighborhoods and inspire others to get involved in community development.

The six women honored this year were Sonia Renia Brown of Auntie Na’s House, Deysi Martinez of Living Arts, Aleasa Peatross-Smith, Sandra Pickens of Littlefield Community Association, Mary Jo Smith of University District Radio Patrol, and Dell Stubblefield of Focus:HOPE. They were selected from dozens of amazing nominees.

“This is the third time that we have held this event,” said Jill Ferrari, CEO of Michigan Community Resources. “Every year I leave inspired by the hard work and determination of these women. They give selflessly to their neighborhoods in every way imaginable. We are so lucky to have them as leaders in our community. They deserve this recognition precisely because they don’t ask for it. And MCR is committed to providing them the services and resources they need to do their best work.”

One way MCR supports and empowers community-based organizations and their leaders is through its innovative Neighborhood Exchange (NEx) platform. NEx provides capacity building services to nonprofits and community-based organizations working in community development. From free public workshops to one-on-one problem-solving assistance, NEx supports hundreds of local groups in Detroit and across the state that are working to improve their neighborhoods.

In 2016 alone, NEx held 10 capacity-building workshops with over 450 attendees, served 49 organizations through one-on-one Office Hours assistance, sponsored 5 community events, and engaged thousands through its interactive website where groups can learn, share, and connect to a peer network.

The event is presented in partnership with Chemical Bank, the Champion sponsor. “Chemical Bank recognizes the importance of honoring women who are the driving force behind Detroit’s community development. We are deeply committed to serving our community and we are thrilled to partner with MCR in support of this inspiring event,” Laura Castone, Chemical Bank’s CRA Market Manager for Southeast Michigan said.

The event began three years ago as an idea. Dotti Sharp, Board Chair of Covenant Community Care, brought the concept to MCR's Chief Program Officer, Shamyle Dobbs.

"I instantly fell in love with the idea and we at MCR knew that we had to make it a reality. The endurance required by these women to shoulder the responsibility of community change with limited resources is immense. This event is a way for us to thank them for all that they do," Dobbs said.

"There is always recognition for women at a professional level, but I had not heard of an event for women who work in their community because they love Detroit and want to see it sparkle as the jewel that it is," Dotti says. "These women all give of themselves to foster a loving community and a brighter tomorrow for their children. They are stewards of selflessness. They encourage and mentor others to get involved throughout our city."

The spirit of mentorship concluded the event. Each nominee, given a purple baton earlier in the event, at the prompting of Jill Ferrari, raised them in the air. The symbolism of the gesture is clear: the work that these women do for their neighborhoods does not stop after this breakfast. They will continue to help their communities and pass the baton to the next generation of community leaders with pride in what they have done and what is to come.

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### **About Michigan Community Resources**

The mission of Michigan Community Resources is to support and empower nonprofit community organizations in Michigan that serve low-income individuals and communities, with an emphasis on community economic development, by providing pro bono legal services and technical assistance. Founded in 1998, its programs include legal assistance, educational training & publications, urban planning services, and community outreach. MCR helps community organizations build their capacity, accomplish blight mitigation and neighborhood improvement activities, and improve quality of life. Learn more at [mi-community.org](http://mi-community.org).

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