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For Immediate Release

Stories about Hope are Told Because Ordinary People have Decided to Be Kind

Again this week, a collaborative group of west suburban organizations recognize more Regional Rock Stars. These are people in the region who are creatively and thoughtfully making change happen—from their own backyards to starting companies and smiles to bedside manner. These acts of kindness are helping to inspire hope throughout our communities. They help to spread gratitude during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each week, we will share these stories online and to the general public.

“As we continue to work together as a community, our colleagues and neighbors keep inspiring us to be our best selves,” said Greg DiDomenico, President & CEO of the Community Memorial Foundation.

“Congratulations Regional Rock Stars and thank you for making a difference.”

Dr. Megan Gayeski, Rush Oak Park. Dr. Gayeski, a resident and mother of a young child who resides in Clarendon Hills, and her team, provide unparalleled care to patients who tested positive for COVID-19 at Rush Oak Park. They keep families well informed with regular, proactive, informative, kind and gracious updates. The commitment brings comfort, confidence and peace. Dr. Gayeski says, “I feel like fear is a huge part of the pandemic. People are afraid to get it and they are afraid for their sick family members who are alone in the hospital due to visitor restrictions. The very least we can do is to keep those at home updated with how mom, dad, brother, sister, etc, is doing each day.” She goes on to compliment other rock stars, “I’ve also been blown away by the kindness of those in our community. Thanks to anonymous donations, I’ve helped to provide over 67,000 N95 and other masks to doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists and more at over 90 different hospitals and private clinics in the area. Kindness from our neighbors is always appreciated, but even more welcome during this time when our normal lives are turned upside down.”

Dayton DiTomasso, Hinsdale student and Corona Clothing. Dayton is a teen at Hinsdale Central High School who created an online T-shirt business with COVID19 themes to donate to "Feeding America" and Meals on Wheels. The t-shirts have comical Coronavirus sayings to lighten the mood. “I came up with the idea one day when we were about three weeks into quarantine,” Dayton says. “My mom had looked up six-foot-apart t-shirts because she thought they would be funny, but nothing was out there. So I decided I would make some and maybe sell to the neighbors. I started creating designs, marketing and getting the word out. And the cool part is everything was done from my laptop at home. During such a negative time during this global pandemic, it puts a smile on someone's face or makes them laugh when they see a "6ft apart" or "wash your damn hands" t-shirt. And obviously there is the donation side of things which is so great and really makes you feel good and makes other people feel good knowing that they are helping people that really need it. It has been a really fulfilling and valuable experience for me to do this, and I felt I have had a good impact on the community.”

Armando Campos, Helping Hand Center. At Helping Hand Center (HHC) many staff are rising above all obstacles to continue to provide genuine care and education to our clients. The past few months have been about adjusting to new routines and positively navigating change. Armando, a Direct Support Professional (DSP) Team Lead at HHC, brought fun and happiness into homes by sharing his unique hobby. Armando

raises chickens and delivered eggs to our clients to decorate for Easter. Not only is Armando giving back to the HHC community as a DSP Team Lead, he also serves the community at large as a first responder.

“It is through the dedication of our staff, like Armando, that we continue to transform the lives of the individuals we serve even under the most challenging circumstances,” explains Emily Mantucca, Director of Development at HHC. “During this time of crisis, the HHC team has been incredibly creative in providing engaging and educational programming to our clients. Armando saw a need and took initiative to share his unique hobby with others. By simply sharing what he had to give, he brightened the day for so many!”

The Regional Rock Stars is a collaborative effort by AMITA Health, Community Memorial Foundation, the Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce, West Central Municipal Conference and the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce & Industry. **We invite you to share more stories of the individuals who are making a difference in our community so that we can recognize them and be inspired by the ways they are bringing the entire region together. [Use this simple form to let us know who you know and who deserves to be recognized.](#)**

Individuals will be recognized at a community celebration at the end of the year.



AMITA Health (www.AMITAhealth.org) is a joint operating company formed by AdventHealth in Altamonte Springs, Fla., and St. Louis-based Ascension. AMITA Health is the largest health system in Illinois, comprising 19 hospitals and more than 230 sites of care. The health system has 900 providers in its medical groups, more than 26,000 associates and 7,000 physician partners and serves over 6.6 million residents in the greater Chicagoland area.

Community Memorial Foundation (CMF) is a private health conversion foundation established in 1995. The Foundation's grantmaking and community work are guided by its mission - to measurably improve the health of those who live and work in the western suburbs of Chicago. Throughout 25 years of regional investment, CMF has awarded more than \$77 million dollars to nonprofit organizations in the western suburbs of Cook County and southeastern portion of DuPage County. cmfdn.org

Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce has been in operation for more than 90 years by representing the voice of businesses in Hinsdale and beyond and has created a legacy in serving the entire community by Connecting Business through Community-Leadership-Opportunity-Involvement.

The West Central Municipal Conference serves as the Council of Government representing 52 local governments in west suburban Cook and eastern DuPage Counties. Within our mission statement, we seek to serve our members by fostering municipal cooperation and communication; developing solutions on matters of mutual concern; advocating common interests at the county, state, and federal levels of government; and offering training, technical assistance and resource information that contribute to the efficient management of local government. westcook.org

The West Suburban Chamber of Commerce & Industry is the collective voice of the region's business community, advocating pro-business initiatives and public policy on a state and local level. Economic prosperity is driven by promoting the thriving business climate, geographical preference and demographic diversity of the region. We leverage the strength of our membership by encouraging innovation and the exchange of ideas, information and opportunity for the benefit of the entire community. Wscci.org