

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
Contact Rowena Daly
rdaly@cc-md.org
667-600-2007

**Towson youth’s extraordinary dedication honored with memorial award**

When 18-year-old Lauren Cole was in middle school, she was looking for a place to volunteer. That’s how she found My Sister’s Place Women’s Center. She and her Girl Scout Troop made and delivered 72 fleece scarves to the ladies who use the center. For two years after that, she organized canned food drives, rallying her neighborhood to help. Then she did a dessert drive, organizing, baking and delivering more than 400 treats. All this work continued, all the way through 2017.

That year, while Cole was dropping off some treats one day, she happened upon a Narcotics Anonymous meeting. Her parents had taught her that asking for help was not a weakness, but a sign of strength. Lauren was so impressed by the strength these women showed in asking for help with their addiction, she made it a point to bring her homemade treats specifically to each of their meetings. Not only that, she also handmade little menus so the women felt a special touch.

“This is the kind of empathy and kindness that makes people living on the margins feel seen and loved,” said Catholic Charities Executive Director Bill McCarthy.

For her extraordinary service, the now-freshman at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn will receive the Anne Lindsey Otenasek Youth Service Award at “A Movement to Love: An Evening with Catholic Charities” on Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2019 at the Hippodrome Theatre. The award is named in memory of another longtime teenaged volunteer who was killed in the bombing 1988 of Pan Am Flight 103.

Two other exemplary servants will receive honors that evening.

**Sr. Helen Amos, RSM,** will be presented with the Msgr. Arthur F. Valenzano Joyful Servant Award. Sr. Helen serves as the executive chair of the Mercy Health Services Board of Trustees. She has spent nearly a decade working tirelessly on The Journey Home, a plan to end homelessness in Baltimore. She chairs the city’s Leadership Advisory Group dedicated that cause. Commissioned to recognize a joyful life and spirit in service, the award honors the spirit of the late rector of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who served on the Catholic Charities Board of Trustees until his passing in 2015.

**Ralph W. “Buddy” Emerson Jr.** will receive the Distinguished Service Award. Emerson recently retired as a senior vice president at M&T Bank and has been involved with Catholic Charities for more than 30 years, providing service as a volunteer, donor, trustee, and committee member.

After celebrating clients’ successes, “A Movement to Love: An Evening with Catholic Charities” will also recognize five Catholic Charities employees who exemplify the organization’s mission and commitments to dignity, compassion, humility, collaboration, excellence and integrity in an outstanding way.

Tickets, which include heavy hors d’oeuvres, drinks, dessert, and parking, are available at catholiccharities-md.org/annualcelebration.

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Catholic Charities of Baltimore is Maryland’s largest private provider of human services, with 80 programs in 200 locations to serve children and families experiencing homelessness and poverty, individuals with intellectual disabilities, immigrants and seniors without regard to religion, race or other circumstances.

www.catholiccharities-md.org.