

Awardees Announced for NCCF's 2022 Gala – UNIMAGINABLE: The HeART of Community

On October 22, 2022, at 6:30 PM, NCCF will honor exemplary individuals, supporters, & organizations that champion the radical idea that good is ever-present.

BETHESDA, MARYLAND, USA, August 30, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Saturday, October 22, 2022, at 6:30 PM, the National Center for Children and Families ([NCCF](#)) will honor exemplary individuals, supporters, and organizations that champion the radical idea that, despite difficult times, good is ever-present and must always be supported and celebrated.

Hosted by 16-year-old Mistress of Ceremonies, Drew Olivia Tillman (This is Us, Mixed-ish), UNIMAGINABLE: The [HeART of Community](#) will be streamed

live nationally with the assistance of NCCF's media partner Montgomery Community Media (MCM). Special guests include, Honorary Committee Chair, Radio Hall of Famer and BET legend, [Donnie Simpson](#), as well as Billboard-ranked musician Marcus Johnson. An art auction and youth performances will round out an evening rich with poetry, music, and dance.

The incredible roster of distinguished honorees includes:

Humanitarian Lifetime Impact Award: The Honorable Brian E. Frosh, (Maryland Attorney General). Often called "The People's Lawyer," Brian Frosh consistently fought for all Marylanders throughout his powerful career. He has led while advocating for fairness, equality, and justice. He transformed the lives of graduates, reared by the Foster Care system, by ensuring their ability to attend Maryland academic institutions tuition-free. He has remained steadfast a member of the NCCF (formerly The Baptist Home for Children) community and has used his personal and



professional influence to stand up for, and in solidarity with, the many vulnerable people NCCF serves.

2022 Champion in Our Midst Award: The Honorable Nancy Kopp (Former Maryland Treasurer). A pioneering figure in state politics, as well as a model public servant and financial steward, Nancy Kopp's legacy of honest, hardworking, and brilliant leadership inspires praise and admiration from all sides of the political spectrum. She has stood firm and fair, successfully keeping Maryland's fiscal house "in order," while championing the access of vulnerable residents to Maryland's resources, thus changing countless lives. Her work strengthened communities and ensured a bright financial future for all residents of Maryland.

2021 Tom Cookerly Exceptional Superintendent Leadership Award: Dr. Francisco Durán (Superintendent, Arlington Public Schools). As a leader of Arlington Public Schools (APS), Dr. Durán's resolute and passionate crusade to close gaps in educational opportunity, access, and achievement ensures that all students he serves receive a quality education that will equip them with the skills needed for today's ever-changing world. His work with children, across a 30-year career in education, illustrates the need of the community to care for its youngest and poorest students, and complements the shared mission of NCCF and The Neediest Kids (TNK) to level the playing field for all children in school, benefiting the entire community.

Humanitarian Spirit Award for Equity and Inclusion: The Honorable Craig Rice and the Honorable Will Jawando (Montgomery County Council). Councilmembers Rice and Jawando's tenacious advocacy for their constituents brought them together at the start of the COVID pandemic to change the landscape of health and wellness within Montgomery County's diverse Black community. Together, they spearheaded a multi-million-dollar Montgomery County appropriation to address the acute and negative impact of COVID-19 on Black Diaspora residents. Their cooperative and unrelenting stand to ensure health equity in a season of great upheaval has inspired and produced the Black Physicians and Healthcare Network (BPHN), a coalition of culturally competent professionals committed to serving the physical and mental health needs and to saving the lives of those living in high-risk Black neighborhoods.

John F. White Alumni Award: Mr. Zach Kerr (NFL, Defensive End). Zach Kerr's story, an adolescent who overcame homelessness with his family, pursued his powerful dreams, and achieved greatness under the bright lights of the Superbowl while never forgetting his roots, is an astonishing accomplishment that has impressed and inspired so many in NCCF's community. NCCF is tremendously proud of all his hard-earned accomplishments as an athlete but even more so for his impact on youth who want to follow in his footsteps. He generously and frequently shares his story and uses his platform to help others, demonstrating his kindness and compassion for elevating others.

Humanitarian Spirit Award for Compassion and Advocacy: Judge Marielsa Bernard (Senior Judge, Montgomery County Circuit Court). Judge Bernard has honorably served, represented, and advocated for the most vulnerable members of this community through criminal, civil,

immigration, and family law. Her amplification of the voices of at-risk youth, so often silent within the society, has compelled the community to focus on the plight of young people and young families who are affected by their contact with the justice system. Additionally, Judge Bernard transformed her incalculable personal grief from the loss of her daughter, into unimaginable good by reaching out to other mothers who have suffered similar devastation, establishing empowered peer-support groups to combat the isolation.

Humanitarian Spirit Award for Community Outreach: Mr. Joseph Abdalla (Executive Director, Code 3 Association). By encouraging civic engagement, volunteerism, leadership, outreach, and authentic dialogue between the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and the communities it serves, Joseph Abdalla has created a lasting community connection. The impact of this phenomenal work can be seen and felt throughout the halls of John Carroll Nalle Elementary School (JC Nalle) in the District's Ward 7, and in the streets of the surrounding neighborhoods. Through patience, generosity, resolve, and consistently positive interactions, Abdalla and Code 3 have helped to overcome community apprehension and mistrust to establish meaningful bonds and relationships between JC Nalle's students, members of the community, and police officers.

Humanitarian Spirit Award for Volunteerism: Soroptimist International of Montgomery County. This group holds as its mission the improvement the lives of women and girls through volunteer activities and engagement. Soroptimist International of Montgomery County, in its work with NCCF's Betty's House, a transitional residence which supports the social and economic development of undocumented immigrant mothers fleeing domestic violence, succeeds in its mission based on shared values of gender equality, empowerment, education, and diversity. Due to the Soroptimists' volunteerism, exceptional compassion, and generosity, Betty's House residents find hope and help, feel seen and loved, and are welcomed by the larger community.

UNIMAGINABLE: The HeART of Community is a free, online community event open to all. Register today at <http://www.heartofcommunity.org>.

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