



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**YMCA of Greater St. Louis Names Afshanti Hunter as
2014 Joseph P. Sunnen Youth of the Year**

Youth of the Year winners will receive scholarships from Lindenwood University

St. Louis, MO (March 6, 2014) – The YMCA of Greater St. Louis today announced the 2014 Joseph P. Sunnen Youth of the Year winner – Afshanti Hunter, 17, of Florissant. Along with 16 branch winners, Hunter will be presented with her award at the annual Youth of the Year Awards Dinner on Thursday, March 6.

The award recognizes young people who demonstrate exceptional leadership skills, volunteer their time to the Y and their communities, and exemplify the Y's core values – caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith.

“At the Y, we are honored to work with so many young people who are on their way to making a lasting difference in their communities through leadership, volunteerism and other contributions,” said Gary Schlansker, president and CEO of the YMCA of Greater St. Louis. “We are proud of Afshanti and all of the Youth of the Year recipients on the initiative they have taken in bettering their communities. We congratulate them on this well-deserved accomplishment, and look forward to hearing about the great things they will do.”

The Youth of the Year award has been awarded in partnership with Lindenwood University since 2004. Each year, the university generously awards a scholarship of approximately \$62,000 to the young person named the Joseph P. Sunnen Youth of the Year and approximately \$33,000 in scholarships to each of those selected Branch Youth of the Year.

Hunter is active at the Emerson Family YMCA through the Teen Leaders Club, Youth in Government and Counselor In Training programs, completing more than 175 hours of community service over the past four years.

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She has held leadership positions with the Teen Leaders Club, including president and sergeant of arms, and has served as city editor and chief of news for Youth in Government. She currently works in the Child Watch department at the branch. She is active at her high school in the marching band, Student Council, National Honor Society, color guard, Respected Women's Society and Young Ladies of Elegance.

"Afshanti has a keen interest and passion for exceeding in every facet of her life," said Philip Hatten, program director at the Emerson Family YMCA." She is an excellent role model and she illustrates that through her strong commitment and growth in building a healthy spirit, mind and body. I admire her ability to prioritize her responsibilities while still giving her best effort possible to everything she does."

Hunter is a senior at Hazelwood Central High School and the daughter of Andrea Pruitt and Dave Hunter.

Y Branch Youth of the Year 2014 winners

Carondelet Park Rec Complex: Anegales Echols
Downtown YMCA: Oksana Hill-Needem
Edward Jones Family YMCA: Cassidy Munie
Four Rivers Area Family YMCA: Mary McGilvray
Jefferson County Family YMCA: Travis Spraul
Kirkwood-Webster Family YMCAs: Ellis Burgett
Mid-County Family YMCA: Christina Krucylak
Monsanto Family YMCA: Kelli Dampier
O'Fallon Family YMCA: Rebecca Deters
O'Fallon Park Rec Complex: Jasmine Bates
South City Family YMCA: Jessica Braggs
South County Family YMCA: Ryan Coleman
St. Charles County Family YMCA: Jessica Song
West County Family YMCA: Anna Layton
Wildwood Family YMCA: Shannon Wroble
YMCA of the Ozarks: Victoria Roettger

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About the YMCA of Greater St. Louis

The YMCA of Greater St. Louis is a nonprofit organization dedicated to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Featuring 17 traditional Y branches and two Campus Y student leadership facilities on the Missouri side of the St. Louis Metro Area, our Y also includes YMCA Camp Lakewood and Trout Lodge in Potosi, Missouri. The Carondelet Park Rec Complex and O'Fallon Park Rec Complex are owned by the City of St. Louis and operated by the Y. Our Y is a proud member of the United Way. For more information, please visit www.ymcastlouis.org or call 314-436-1177.