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**Event raises \$175,000 for foster youth aging out of the system**  
*YVLifeSet helps older foster youth prepare for life as adults*

**Portland, Ore. (June 5, 2019)** – Youth Villages Oregon hosted its KiteTales, an event to support youth who age out of foster care, recently. The event drew more than 100 attendees and raised more than \$175,000, including a generous \$100,000 grant from Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund contingent on a \$50,000 match. The \$50,000 challenge is available to new donors to Youth Villages Oregon and current donors who increase their gift up to \$5,000.

The event featured *New York Times* best-selling author and speaker Vanessa Diffenbaugh, whose book “The Language of Flowers,” which follows the journey of a young woman aging out of foster care, is being made into a movie. Donovan Ford, a Team USA weight lifter, also spoke about his childhood in the foster care system and later being adopted by Diffenbaugh. Ariel Ford, Donovan’s wife, also spoke at the event. Ford is a specialist in Youth Villages’ YVLifeSet program that supports foster youth in Portland as they make the transition to adulthood.

Joan Horstkotte, a member of the Youth Villages board of directors since 1978, was honored with the Ritz Family Award which is named after Pat and Trudy Ritz. The award recognizes those who have made a longstanding commitment to serve vulnerable children and families in our community of care. Last year’s recipient was Anne Pamplin-Evenson and the Women’s Auxiliary Group.

“It was a true honor to recognize Joan Horstkotte and more than four decades of her hard work, energy, care, and commitment to vulnerable kids in our community. I couldn’t think of a more deserving person,” said Pat Ritz.

“Watson Creative is a proud supporter of Youth Villages Oregon and member of a tribe of believers who support strengthening families, and helping young people aging out of foster care,” said Colby Schlicker. He is Youth Villages Oregon board member and executive vice president of marketing at Watson Creative, which developed an inspiring video showcasing Donovan Ford’s testimonial. “We echo the commitment of Youth Villages Oregon that every child should have the opportunity to be a successful adult.”

The money raised from the event will support YVLifeSet, a program for youth who age out of foster care and need help with next steps in life. While some youth who age out of state care are resilient and capable, statistics show that without help, many need additional support to reach their full potential. These young adults are more likely to be homeless, unemployed or incarcerated, and have significant

mental and/or behavioral health issues than other young adults. Because of past trauma, abuse or neglect, many will face challenges with relationships, family planning and achieving stability.

**About Youth Villages**

Youth Villages Oregon is part of a national nonprofit leader dedicated to helping children with mental and behavioral health issues, their families and young people. It is committed to providing the most effective and cost-effective programs and offers intensive in-home services to children and families, emergency department diversion for youth experiencing behavioral health emergencies and YVLifeSet™ services for youth aging out of the state system to help them make a successful transition to independent adulthood. For more information, visit [www.youthvillages.org/oregon](http://www.youthvillages.org/oregon).

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