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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LOCAL COUPLE RECOGNIZED FOR 26 YEARS OF TEEN LEADERSHIP
Helen and Kevin Joyce: Southern District YMCA Volunteer of the Year**

December 15, 2014 (Exeter, NH) – Southern District YMCA is thrilled to announce the 2014 Volunteer of the Year. This year, the honor recognizes and celebrates the extraordinary service of two people who are nurturing youth leadership: Helen and Kevin Joyce.

For 26 years, the Joyces have served as advisors to high school delegations to YMCA Youth and Government™ in New Hampshire. During this time, they have advised, mentored and inspired high school students to be engaged in the democratic process.

In a surprise presentation on December 7, Kimberly Meyer, Director of Community Operations for Southern District YMCA, recognized their contribution in the lives of close to 10,000 youth during their volunteer leadership.

Deb Clark Valentine, retired director of YMCA Youth and Government™ in New Hampshire, sent her remarks, “Through your own careers as educators and respective roles as history teachers, department heads, guidance counselor and assistant principal ... you never wavered from the importance of making sure every generation of teen leaders understand the importance of respectful debate, the role democracy plays in our lives and, of course, the importance of developing their leadership capacity in order to serve.”

YMCA Youth and Government™ inspires teens to understand the importance of civil service and public engagement. Each year – for more than 60 years – 300 teens from 30 schools have come together in the New Hampshire State House to experience the theory and practice of determining public policy and the principles of democracy. Through hands-on collaborative action, the students learn the importance of moral courage in solving public questions, the significance of the freedoms set forth in the Bill of Rights and in state and federal constitutions, and the value of an honest difference of opinion, with freedom to express it, as a healthy medium in which to attain personal dignity.

Volunteers – such as the Joyces – are the cornerstone of the YMCA and are vital in delivering youth development, healthy living and social responsibility within the community. Through our volunteers’ valuable and selfless commitment to living a cause-driven life, Southern District YMCA is able to deliver much needed community services with high-quality efficient programs. Because of the contributions of volunteers, Southern District YMCA is accessible to all, having never turned away anyone for their inability to pay. Visit sdyymca.org to learn more.

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PHOTO CAPTION (Photo attached to email)

From left: Volunteer of the Year Helen Joyce (not pictured Kevin Joyce); Rob McGregor, Southern District YMCA Executive Director; and Kimberly Meyer, Southern District YMCA Director of Community Operations



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