Ohio County Names 2021 Champions of Children

WHEELING – Since 2010, the Ohio County Partners in Prevention Team has recognized three Champions of Children in April as part of Na-tional Child Abuse Prevention Month. Although COVID-19 derailed last year's awards, the team has adapted this year's ceremony to be held remotely on the Ohio County Family Resource Network Facebook page at 2 p.m. Friday, April 23.

The 2021 Deborah Doleski Allen Champion of Children Award recipients are:

Margie Ball, longtime Steenrod Elementary School kindergarten teacher and Ohio County 4-H

leader Jill Eddy, Youth Services System director of Com-

munity-based Services DeSean James, Wheeling Nationals youth base-

ball founder and coach tatives from over 20 orga-

and Partners in Prevention and watching them grow.

child abuse prevention,"



Photos Provided

At left, Jill Eddy, Youth Services System director of Community-based Services, displays the Champion of Children Award plaque she received based on the nomination written by Lori Garrett-Bumba, YSS Prevention Services director.

Margie Ball. Excerpts from staff 4-H camps. She has

"Each of these individ- as a kindergarten teachuals is a stellar example er in Ohio County for 42 Champion of Children. she had held the #1 spot They were chosen by our on the teacher seniority team comprising represen- list for several years. Why would anyone work severnizations plus community al years after being eligible said Claudia Raymer, Ohio loves teaching them new County Family Resource things, getting to know

eam leader. "Margie spent years as kindergarteners and 4-H Nominations were open a 4-H club leader -coordimembers." to the public. The winners nating club meetings, edwere chosen in a blind ucational activities, fund- Youth Services System selection process (with raisers, service projects and Prevention Services direcnames and organizations more. To this day, she parremoved) by team mem-ticipates in monthly club bers who have participated leader meetings, bimonthly ethic like no other, and in at least 50 percent of the All Star meetings, quarthe people who benefit are past year's meetings.

Here the people who benefit are terly foundation meetings, the children and families Lewis Honaker, the 4-H and helps coordinate every Youth Development agent county event, which isn't

the nomination follow: helped with Onio County of Margie Ball served overnight 4-H camp for nearly 50 years."

"Margie cares so much of what it means to be a years. When she retired, for Ohio County's children that she has dedicated her entire adult life to helping them grow into successful adults. Margie had a positive impact on me in members with interest in to retire? Because she is a the short time I knew her champion of children! She as teen. It's impossible to quantify the cumulative impact that she's had on Network executive director each unique personality, Ohio County having taught and mentored over 1,000

> Lori tor, nominated Jill Eddy:

"(Jill Eddy) has a work throughout West Virginia.

.. She has dedicated her with Ohio County's West true for many volunteers. life to service and embod-Virginia University Ex- In addition, she continues ies the true meaning of betension office, nominated to help plan, coordinate and ing a social worker – from



From left, Lewis Honaker, Ohio County WVU Extension agent; Margie Ball, 4-H volunteer; and Claudia Raymer, Ohio County Partners in Prevention Team leader gather for a photo and plaque presentation ahead of the Champions of Children award ceremony to be livestreamed on Friday, April 23.



DeSean James, Wheeling Nationals youth baseball founder and coach, is a 2021 Champion of Chil-

starting out at a behavioral health facility, to working with the young women and Garrett-Bumba, children at Wellspring Services, to spending the last several years improving the lives of those who receive services from Youth Services System."

> 'Jill has worked endless hours bringing new and innovative programs to the Northern Panhandle and has striven to see that each succeeds.

Even outside of her

through the YSS Youth Mentoring Network, guiding that young lady and being a source of hope and definitely a Champion of

Ron Scott Jr., YWCA Wheeling's Cultural Diversity and Community Outreach director, nominated DeSean James:

"DeSean James has been a force in the lives of Valley youth since he arrived here from Georgia. He wears the title of coach the way that it should be. He walks it and he talks it. everyday life and expects the children he is involved in to follow suit.'

"He has been a vital Harrison, CASA for Chilpart of the Little Patriots dren executive director. organization, where he el Baseball Team.'

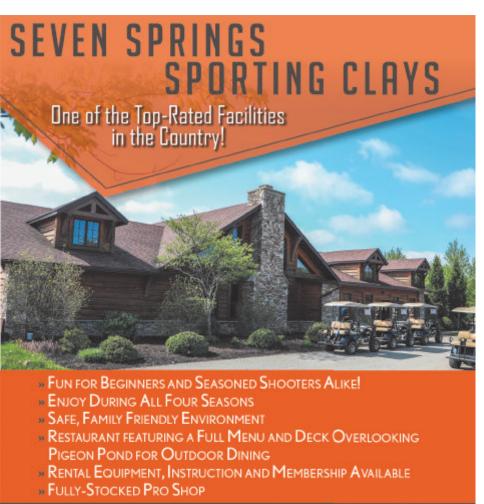
"Most recently, DeSean orah Doleski Allen.

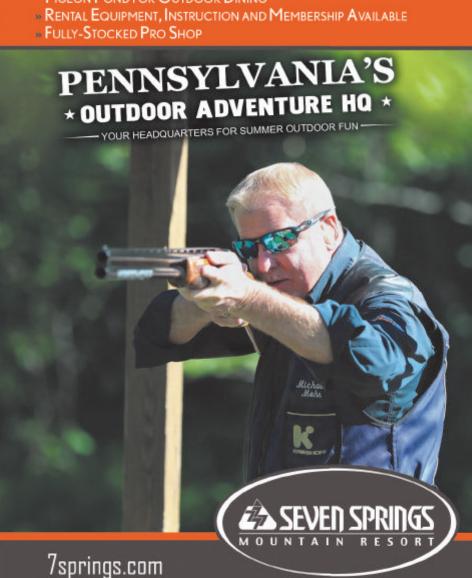
work, she mentors a child has teamed up with Men of Change and Ohio County Schools to help develop a vocational program that targets underserved and stability for the family. She disenfranchised Black stugives of herself 24/7 for her dents for the possibility of friends, family, co-work-ers and community. She is definitely a Champion of starting at Wheeling Park High School."

Raymer already presented plaques to the winners individually. The livestream on the Ohio County Family Resource Network Facebook page will include acceptance speeches and guest speaker Kelli Caseman, founder and executive director of

Think Kids. Wheeling Mayor Glenn He sets an example in his Elliott is scheduled to read a proclamation, and the Children's Memorial Flag will be presented by Susan

The awards were foundhas made sure that his in- ed and are now named for fluence has been positive longtime Ohio County and influential. So much Family Resource Netso, that he started his work executive director Wheeling Nationals Trav- and Partners in Prevention Team leader, the late Deb-







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