



The YMCA-YWCA of Guelph NEWS RELEASE

CTV's Melissa Grelo will host the celebration of 20 remarkable local women at Guelph Y's 'Women of Distinction' event themed "It Takes a Village"

GUELPH, February 13, 2018 – The YMCA-YWCA of Guelph is delighted to announce that Melissa Grelo from CTV's THE SOCIAL and YOUR MORNING will be hosting the 23rd Annual Women of Distinction event themed "It Takes a Village" on May 3, 2018. Grelo is no stranger to public speaking and has been involved with numerous fundraising events that specifically support youth in the Greater Toronto Area. As someone who focuses on giving back both in her professional and personal life, she is the perfect emcee to help our community celebrate women who positively impact our village.

Grelo shares, "I've always believed in giving back and any opportunity I can have to encourage youth, especially young women, to be involved in contributing to their communities is important to me. I look forward to being part of an event where celebrating strong leaders and inspiring new ones is the key focus of the evening."

Grelo will be accompanied by Women of Distinction's Honorary Chair, Marissa Teeter and 20 remarkable role models, pioneers, and outstanding achievers from the Guelph community. The 20 honourees selected to share their stories this year represent an impressive variety of talents, accomplishments, accolades and backgrounds. From overcoming significant obstacles and taking risks to women in our community making significant advances as pioneers and champions in their respective field of work. This year's Women of Distinction honourees are:

Bolatito Alawode	Dr. Claire Martin
Lisa Browning	Dr. Tami Martino
Nia Dennis	Teresa McKeeman
Brenda Gibson	Jackie Morris
Crystal Gong	Tanya Olsen
Dr. Sally Humphries	Dominique O'Rourke
Dr. Shoshanah Jacobs	Jagoda Pike
Jaya James	Lee-Ann Prickett
Hayley Kellett	Rosalind Slater
Dr. Bonnie A. Mallard	Sarah Spry

Bolatito Alawode, one of this year's honourees, is a local entrepreneur who is the owner of My Chop Chop, an online delivery service that ships Nigerian groceries in Canada and the United States. Alawode shares, "There are women who make things happen to make a difference. I want to be one of those women and it's such an honour to be recognized for my contribution to making a difference in my community."

It Takes A Village is more than the Women of Distinction's theme for 2018; it represents the initiative to make the event more inclusive, accessible, and impactful than ever before. It acknowledges that the women who are involved represent a long list of individuals behind and around her who have inspired her.



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It represents every success and every triumph that has shaped her to become the woman that she is and has shaped the impact that she has had on *her* village. This year we will hear firsthand from individuals in the honouree's life who have helped her personally achieve such extraordinary accomplishments.

Honouree Dr. Shoshanah Jacobs discusses how the celebration of women in our community is important, "Celebrating our community's women in all their endeavours is a benchmark of our inclusivity. Being recognized as part of these remarkable people deepens my commitment to support our future generation of change makers."

As a non-profit organization, the Guelph Y works diligently to ensure that everyone has access to being included and the Women of Distinction event is no exception. This season, the Guelph Y will be giving individuals and businesses in our community the opportunity to purchase subsidized tickets for others. By having this option, it gives men and women of all ages the opportunity to attend the event and leave feeling inspired.

The Guelph Y would like to thank the Women of Distinction sponsors for supporting and empowering the women in *our* village. A special thank you to Women of Distinction's Platinum Sponsor, *Investors Group* for making it possible for the Guelph Y to continue the work that we do in order to provide programs to girls and women at all stages of life.

Rob Serra, Regional Director of Investor's Group shares, "On behalf of IG, and every member of our Guelph/Halton Hills office, we are thrilled to partner with the Guelph Y for the 2018 Women of Distinction event. It is an incredible opportunity to recognize 20 community champions, who make our village a better place to live, work and grow. We congratulate these remarkable women, their families and everyone in their lives who play supporting roles. We look forward to participating in this amazingly inspiring celebration."

Ticket sales for the Women of Distinction event will launch on International Women's Day on March 8, 2018. Both individual tickets and subsidized tickets will be available for purchase at the Guelph Y or online at guelphy.org/WOD. For those who would like to purchase subsidized tickets prior to March 8, 2018 please contact Erica Charlesworth, Supervisor of Development by email at Erica.Charlesworth@guelph.ymca.ca or by phone at 519-824-5150 ext. 255.

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For interviews or more information contact Alexandra Reid, Marketing and Communications Associate at 519-584-7479 ext. 212

About YMCA-YWCA of Guelph

The YMCA-YWCA of Guelph is a community benefit organization, open to everyone. Starting with a focus on healthy child, youth and young adult development, we excel in delivering lifelong opportunities for health and personal growth. The YMCA-YWCA of Guelph is a catalyst for our community's wellbeing through high-quality programs and services that meet the needs of a growing and diverse community.