



hartford region

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Viola Davis Inspired Over 1,800 Guests at YWCA's *In the Company of Women* luncheon to Embrace Who They Are**

Hartford, CT-[YWCA Hartford Region](#) held its 20<sup>th</sup> Annual *In The Company of Women* luncheon on April 9, 2015 at the Connecticut Convention Center. The event was attended by over 1,800 guests, including corporate and community leaders. The *In the Company of Women* luncheon featured actress Viola Davis as the keynote speaker. Proceeds from the event will support YWCA's vital work in the community.

Viola Davis shared her journey to become the hero of her own life. "I truly believe that the privilege of a lifetime is becoming who you are," she told the crowd. She was raised in a condemned building in abject poverty with an alcoholic father. It was due to those humble beginnings that she became singularity focused on not being her mother's daughter. However, she realized years later that she really was her mother's daughter and in order to be happy she needed to embrace all of herself. "I was the same chocolate girl who was running. I was the same one who dreamt big, who was smart, who was resourceful, who was strong," she said. "And the marriage of the two is what makes me who I am. At the end of the day you have to embrace who you are."

Governor Dannel P. Malloy, Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman and State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier, attended the event to support YWCA. Governor Malloy and Lt. Governor Wyman both gave brief opening remarks commending the work of YWCA. "I can't imagine what the Hartford region would be like without this institution," Gov. Malloy said. YWCA USA CEO Dara Richard-Heron also attended the event and spoke about YWCA's mission and impact in the community. "I want to ask each of you to think about YWCA's mission [to eliminate racism and empower women]," she said. "Then consider what we can do to make this mission a reality."

The co-chairs of the event were Tina St. Pierre, Partner, Landmark Partners and Felecia P. Scott, Assistant Vice President, The Hartford. YWCA thanked sponsors for their support, including Legacy Sponsor, Aetna. Jean LaTorre, Vice President and Chief Investment Officer, Aetna,

spoke at the event about Aetna's partnerships with YWCA and their support of YWCA's mission.

A program was held in the morning for 55 young women from area high schools. This program, Creating Opportunities, introduced young women to the power of women's philanthropy while fostering community involvement. Dr. Rochelle Young, Associate Professor of Business Administration, University of Saint Joseph, was their guest speaker. Among the young women who attended the event were participants from YWCA's [Young Women's Leadership Corps](#) (YWLC), an after-school program that gives young women the power to persevere both personally and academically.

YWCA provides programs and services to more than 2,000 individuals a year.

Established in 1867, YWCA Hartford Region is the third oldest affiliate of YWCA, a women's membership movement dedicated to **eliminating racism and empowering women**. YWCA Hartford Region provides programs and services in the greater Hartford Region including child care, supportive housing, teen leadership development, racial justice awareness, financial literacy and economic empowerment. For more information, visit [www.ywcahartford.org](http://www.ywcahartford.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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**Photo Caption: From left: Governor Dannel P. Malloy; Jean LaTorre, Vice President and Chief Investment Officer, Aetna; Tina St. Pierre, Partner, Landmark Partners; Deborah Ullman, CEO, YWCA Hartford Region; Viola Davis; Dara Richardson-Heron, CEO, YWCA USA; Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman; Britt-Marie Cole-Johnson, Board Chair, YWCA Hartford Region**

**Photo Credit: Jennifer Fiereck, J. Fiereck Photography**