

**eliminating racism
empowering women**

ywca

Hartford Region

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Angélique Kidjo electrified audience of over 1200 at
YWCA's In the Company of Women luncheon**

Hartford, CT-[YWCA Hartford Region](#) held its 21st Annual *In the Company of Women* luncheon on April 7, 2016 at the Connecticut Convention Center. The event was attended by over 1,200 guests, including corporate and community leaders. The *In the Company of Women* luncheon featured Angélique Kidjo as the keynote speaker. Proceeds from the event will support YWCA's vital work in the community.

Angélique's powerful performance began with a song. Her inspiring message continued to weave songs, and spoken words throughout her speech. Her story of growing up in Africa and becoming an empowered performer through song engaged attendees. She celebrated her father for doing something rare for an African man: believe in women's empowerment. She shared stories of her grandmothers who also broke tradition by working instead of remarrying after both became widows. Angélique continues this tradition by providing education for many girls in Africa. "In Africa you educate a girl, you educate the village, the country," she said. "That's where the solution lies for the future." She closed her performance by teaching the audience an African blessing song and inviting everyone to bestow blessings to the community.

Lt. Governor, Nancy Wyman, State Treasurer, Denise L. Nappier and Commissioner of Department of Economic and Community Development, Catherine Smith, attended the event to support YWCA. Lt. Governor Wyman gave brief opening remarks commending the work of YWCA. "What the Y[WCA] does for young women is unbelievable," Lt. Gov. Wyman said.

The co-chairs of the event were Dantaya Williams, Vice President, Human Resources, Commercial Engines, Pratt & Whitney and Lisa Chirichella, Executive Director, Pension Investment Management, Aetna. 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. The event's Presenting Sponsor was The

Travelers Companies, Inc. Joelle Murchison, Vice President of Travelers Enterprise Diversity and Inclusion spoke at the event about their support of YWCA's mission.

Creating Opportunities, a program that was held in the morning for 55 young women from area high schools, introduced young women to the power of women's philanthropy while fostering community involvement. Jessica Castro, professional dancer and artist, 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 and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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