



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Robin Jones
617-529-2490

**EFFORT TO REMEMBER FORMER YOUTH LEADER SHINES LIGHT ON OTHERS
MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

"Light of Dawnn Awards" honors legacy of beloved youth coach, Dawnn Jaffier

Boston, MA., October, 2014--- Community leaders and the family of youth coach, Dawnn Jaffier, who was the innocent victim of gun violence last August, are announcing an effort to honor Dawnn's legacy by celebrating annually people dedicated to building stronger communities for the promise of a better tomorrow. The *"Light of Dawnn Awards"* Committee is calling on the Boston community to nominate those servant leaders on the front lines who demonstrate what it means to connect, build relationships, empower and expand opportunities for others.

"Light of Dawnn Awards" will recognize individuals working in the non-profit sector who demonstrate the spirit that is Dawnn's legacy – a compassionate and unwavering commitment to assisting those in need. This annual tribute will serve as a small way to honor Dawnn, and all victims of senseless acts of violence. Jaffier was a dedicated and beloved youth leader and mentor at the West End House Boys and Girls Club, which she aspired to run someday and had also worked for Playworks, Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston and City Year.

"This is the perfect tribute to Dawnn," said Ian Jaffier, Dawnn's father. "She was the most beautiful, thoughtful, courageous person I knew. She walked into a room and exuded love, hope and a sense of confidence and calm that simply drew people together. My family and I are humbled by the outpouring of support and commitment to keeping her memory and good work alive."

The *"Light of Dawnn Awards"* Committee is made up of several community leaders who came together to honor and elevate the everyday heroic work of those who, like Dawnn, choose a career building relationships and community through deep connections and are uniquely talented in doing so.

"Collectively, our hope is to attempt to simply support and spread word of the influence and impact of people like Dawnn," said David Shapiro, CEO, MENTOR: National Mentoring Partnership, acknowledging the many and growing citywide efforts to celebrate Jaffier's life. "Dawnn did all the right things in life – leading by example and taking on one of society's most important challenges, keeping all youth engaged and on-track and she was uniquely talented in making connections to impact lives. We know that she is counting on all of us to keep her promise going by helping others realize their promise."

"Dawnn lived her life in service to her community, and the *Light of Dawnn Awards* are a powerful way of remembering her work and recognizing those who have chosen a similar path," said Mayor Martin J. Walsh. "My administration and the Boston Police Department are committed to working with the community to reduce violence in our neighborhoods to prevent more innocent and vibrant lives from being cut short."

"We are fortunate to live in a community with such renowned non-profit organizations - comprised of individuals working tirelessly to improve the lives of those around them," said Blake Jordan Executive Director of Highland Street Foundation. "It is a privilege to support this awards program to honor those quiet champions, whose every day actions are making change, instilling hope and creating long-lasting positive impact."

A selection committee made up of Dawnn's colleagues, peers and family will make the annual selection of 2-5 individuals to be the *Light of Dawnn Award* recipients. Those selected will be recognized at a public event and receive a monetary award for their outstanding efforts in February 2015. The Massachusetts Nonprofit Network will manage the process.

Nominations will be accepted between October 15 and December 31, 2014. For more information on *Light of Dawnn Awards* or to nominate an individual go to www.massnonprofitnet.org/lightofdawnn.

###