



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Longtime Hartford Activist Recognized by Aetna for Green Leadership

St. Louis, Missouri – February 18, 2014 – One of Hartford’s own stood alongside 12 of America’s urban sustainability heroes at Aetna’s unveiling and reception for their annual African American History Calendar. Since 1982, Aetna has recognized the outstanding contributions of African Americans, past and present, in fields such as business, government, health care, education, athletics, arts, entertainment, and nutrition. This calendar, which receives national attention and distribution, has featured Martin Luther King, Marcus Garvey, and now Hartford’s very own Charmaine Craig.

Ms. Craig, who has been a longtime community activist in Hartford, was particularly highlighted for her 10 year career with KNOX, Inc., Hartford’s very own green community building organization, where she grew the city’s community garden program to 12 acres, marshalled 2,000 volunteers from all walks of life for KNOX’s cause, and runs a joint initiative between KNOX and the Mayor to reforest the city with 20,000 new trees.

“Charmaine has been a friend and colleague for many years. As someone who relishes working behind the scenes and championing grassroots organizing, it is truly a beautiful moment to see the spotlight shown on her awe-inspiring work,” praises Ron Pitz, KNOX’s Executive Director.

KNOX, Inc. has worked with Aetna closely for many years, creating community gardens in Hartford’s poorest neighborhoods in order to bring the community together to solve the core issues of food security, obesity, and health and wellness.

“Charmaine is one of those people that as soon as you meet her, you know she’s the real deal. She puts the community’s health above all else, and we are so proud to share her story during Black History Month. Congratulations to Charmaine and congratulations to KNOX” shares Floyd Green, Aetna’s Vice President of Community Relations and Urban Marketing.

Floyd and Charmaine stand together, remembering volunteer events past and challenges overcome. Charmaine, who is a bit overwhelmed with all the attention confides, “I don’t look at this as an award for me. Everything we’ve done at KNOX has been a community effort. At the center, there is the staff and board. But then there are the corporations, schools, AmeriCorps members, and community leaders that pitch in for a day or a lifetime. Every bit of love and energy has changed this city into a place where people, food, and beauty grow together.”

This year’s calendar can be found at <http://www.aetnaafricanamericancalendar.com/2014/>

Attached Photo: (left to right) St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay, honorees Robbin Emmons, Tony Hillery, Sylvester Brown Jr., Karen Washington, Charmaine Craig, and Aetna CEO Mark Bertolini

About KNOX

KNOX uses horticulture as a catalyst for community engagement and forges partnerships between residents, businesses, and government to build stronger, greener, and more beautiful neighborhoods in Hartford. Since its founding in 1966, KNOX has been a key partner in improving the city of Hartford and is a nationally recognized leader in the field of community greening. Principal services include neighborhood beautification and reforestation, park improvement efforts, development of greenways, the oversight and maintenance of both community gardens and public green spaces and the successful administration of an AmeriCorps youth development and green jobs training program. More information is available at www.knoxparks.org.

About Aetna

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