

Jackie Joyner-Kersee Foundation Hosts 2nd Annual Gala Event

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Event generates over \$400,000 to benefit the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Center and the families it serves





St. Louis, Mo. Dec. 1, 2014...On Oct. 30, almost 500 supporters of the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Foundation, decked out in their finest evening attire, laced up their sneakers and gathered at the Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark to raise awareness and funds for the Foundation and the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center (JJK Center). Sponsored by Ameren,

the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the St. Louis Cardinals and World Wide Technologies, the 2nd annual fundraising gala, dubbed “Sequins, Suits and Sneakers,” raised more than \$400,000 to benefit the JJK Center’s efforts to provide youth, adults and families with the resources to improve their quality of life.

KTVI FOX 2 News consumer reporter Bonita Cornute and KMOX anchor and reporter Carol Daniel served as emcees for the gala, which featured remarks from Richard Mark, honorary chair of the event and Ameren Illinois Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. The event also featured a keynote address from Jackie Joyner-Kersey herself, who was joined on stage by fellow Olympian and East St. Louis native Dawn Harper. Guests also had the chance to hear directly from three inspiring young adults whose lives have been touched by services offered at the center, while more than a dozen other youth affiliated with the JJK Center stopped by to share how Jackie is helping them to achieve their dreams. Dynamic performances by COCA, the Center of Creative Arts, rounded out the evening’s entertainment.

“Our 2nd annual gala event was a huge success, and this success wouldn’t have been possible without the incredible outpouring of support we received. I am so proud of my community” said Joyner-Kersey. “Big thanks go out to all of our sponsors and the volunteers who worked so tirelessly to make the event possible. The funds raised will go a long way toward helping us continue to serve area families and youth through the after school, summer, sports and health and fitness programs offered at the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center.”

The JJK Center supports the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Foundation’s vision to be recognized globally for its comprehensive, youth-driven, education, athletics, spiritual and community-building programs in the Greater East St. Louis region. Today, the center is a safe haven for learning, athletics and play. It provides services to thousands of families and youth in the metropolitan St. Louis area, and is an integral part of revitalizing the East St. Louis community. The JJK Center also hosts community meetings and informational seminars, including a financial literacy program and job training for parents and citizens of the Metro East.

As the winner of six medals in four consecutive Olympic Games, Jackie Joyner-Kersey is considered one of the greatest athletes of all time. Dedicated to helping others, Jackie’s launch and ongoing support of the JJK Center continues to fulfill her personal promise to guide and support youth to help them overcome challenges and achieve their dreams. Since January of 2000, the Center has enhanced the lives of thousands of children and families, particularly within the community of East St. Louis.

To learn more about the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Foundation and the work of the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center, visit www.jjkfoundation.org.

In 2000, Jackie Joyner-Kersey launched the JJK Center in East St. Louis, Illinois, a city where youth suffer from disproportionately high rates of food insecurity, gang violence and educational disadvantages. The youth and athletic center sits on 37 acres and offers a safe haven, caring adults and vital services to thousands of families and youth in the metropolitan St. Louis area. Visitors will find a wellness center, dance studio, learning resource center and science lab, basketball courts and softball, baseball and football fields at the center. Most important, the center serves as a supportive alternative to the streets.