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**MCW AWARDS ALUMNI VENTURES FUND GRANTS TO YOUNG LEADERS FROM
NORWAY AND SOUTH AFRICA**

NEW YORK, N.Y., February 22, 2016 – MCW, a New York-based non-profit organization dedicated to addressing communities' pressing needs by empowering current leaders and readying leaders of tomorrow, has awarded Alumni Ventures Fund (AVF) grants to Hennie Kongsøre, 23, from Oslo, Norway and Xolani Makhebe, 25, of Cape Town, South Africa. Along with a year of mentorship, Hennie and Xolani will receive grants of \$5,000 and \$2,337, respectively, to help them turn their ideas for change in their communities into concrete projects, drawing on their experience of drafting a "vision plan" for social change as participants of MCW's Young Leaders Program.

Hennie will use the award to continue her work with Rafiki NGO, an organization she started in 2014 to help build a community center in Bagamoyo, Tanzania, where youth will be empowered through dance and the arts. "I am so grateful and honored for being chosen to receive the AVF grant and most of all to get a whole year of professional mentorship," says Hennie. "I can truly see a bright future for my project and a positive change in the community in Bagamoyo." Hennie will be working and living in Bagamoyo as the construction project is completed; she expects classes and programs to begin later this year.

Xolani will use the award to continue his work with The Unlimited Movement Organization (TUMO), an organization he founded in 2012 whose mission is to empower communities through career guidance, education, and tutoring. With the grant, TUMO will be able to implement its vision of covering the cost of university registration fees for top-performing students participating in its tutoring program. "This is not just a fund to me, this is a gift from people who care about me and what I do," says Xolani. "It will make a huge difference to TUMO and it's an amazing feeling to know that TUMO will have its first funding."

"Since the inception of the Alumni Ventures Fund, we have been successful in identifying and supporting YLP alumni in pursuit of their visions," says Sharon Kess, founding donor and leader of MCW's AVF Task Force. "We look forward to contributing to this initiative for many years to come."

Since establishing the Alumni Ventures Fund in 2009, MCW has awarded grants to six graduates of the MCW Young Leaders Program. Preparations are now underway for MCW's 19th Young Leaders Program to be held this year from July 27th to August 4th at Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont and New York University in New York. Applications for this year's program close February 29th, and can be found at <http://bit.ly/2016YLPinfo>.

About MCW

MCW (Miracle Corners of the World) is a non-profit organization founded in 1999 with the vision that communities throughout the world achieve greater levels of education, improved health and increased economic security and a mission to address communities' pressing needs by empowering current leaders and readying leaders of tomorrow. Based in New York, with partner organizations in Africa (Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia), MCW offers the following three core programs: the Young Leaders Program, Community Development, and Oral Healthcare, as well as Partner Programs, including Human Rights and Pediatric AIDS Treatment for Africa (PATA) projects. For more information on MCW, please visit: www.mcwglobal.org.



2016 Recipients of MCW Global's Alumni Venture Fund: Hennie Kongsøre from Norway, left, and Xolani Makhebe from South Africa, right, both pictured at the 2015 Young Leaders Program retreat held at Stony Brook University in Stony Brook, New York.