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Marjaree Mason Center Announces **Miss America 2015 – Kira Kazantsev**, as
Featured Keynote Speaker at 33rd Annual Top Ten Professional Women and Leading
Business Awards

FRESNO, CA (July 14, 2016) – Marjaree Mason Center, Fresno County’s only dedicated provider of domestic violence shelter and support services, including education for victims and youth, announced today that Kira Kazantsev will be the luncheon keynote speaker at the 33rd Annual Top Ten Professional Women and Leading Business Awards on Friday, October 14, 2016 at Fresno’s Convention Center, from 11:00am-1:00pm.

Kira Kazantsev is best known for being crowned as Miss America 2015 and Miss New York 2014. Her personal experience with dating violence was the inspiration and dedication to her pageant platform "Love Shouldn't Hurt": Protecting Women Against Domestic Violence. Through her partnership with Safe Horizon, the largest non-profit victim services agency in the country, she created the #PutTheNailinIt campaign. This nationwide campaign encouraged participants to paint their left ring fingernail purple, the color of the anti-domestic violence movement, in support of showing others that they vow to end domestic violence.

“I’m so excited to be able to join you all as the keynote speaker for the 33rd annual Top Ten awards hosted by the Marjaree Mason Center.” Said Kazantsev, she added “I’m extremely honored to get to speak about domestic violence, a cause that’s near and dear to my heart and I can’t wait to share my love for this advocacy work with you all.”

The 33rd Annual Top Ten Professional Women and Leading Business Awards, a prestigious awards ceremony honoring local professionals, will bring over 1,000 attendees together with the goal of honoring these outstanding individuals in our community while also raising awareness for domestic violence. This event pays tribute to ten women who have served as role models and given back to their communities, all while making strides in their professions. One business is also honored as the Leading Business of the Year for its support of women and women's issues.

Be sure to join us at the Top Ten Professional Women and Leading Business Awards luncheon on Friday, October 14, 2016 from 9:00am-11:00am for our meet & greet

and/or our awards luncheon from 11:00am-1:00pm. All Top Ten Professional Women and Leading Business Awards nominations are due by 5:00pm on Friday, July 22, 2016. Sponsorship commitment deadline and date that ticket price increases to \$70 is September 30, 2016. To purchase tickets or sponsor the luncheon, visit www.mmcenter.org/top-ten.

For media inquiries pertaining to Kira Kazantsev's appearance, please contact Kaysha Rajani, Marjaree Mason Center's Director of Development and Communications, at kaysha@mmcenter.org or 559.487.1313.

About Kira Kazantsev:

Kira Kazantsev served as Miss America 2015 and Miss New York 2014. She is an advocate on women's issues, personal branding expert, speaker and blogger.

Kira has contributed writing pieces to Huffington Post, USA Today, and has appeared on HuffPost Live's Domestic Violence Awareness: *Making Campuses Safe* panel, AOL Build Series, The Real Story with Gretchen Carlson, Live with Kelly and Michael, Jimmy Kimmel, Access Hollywood, Extra, Inside Edition, thousands of local news outlets, and many more. She has also presented awards at the American Music Awards, Academy of Country Music, American Country Countdown, and the Billboard Music Awards.

During her year as Miss America, she served as the National Goodwill Ambassador for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, advocated on behalf of her personal platform: Love Shouldn't Hurt: Protecting Women Against Domestic Violence, and was the first Miss America since 1971 to travel overseas, including Afghanistan, Bahrain, and South Korea with the USO to visit our troops.

As an advocate against domestic violence, Kira has been a long time partner with Safe Horizon, the largest provider of domestic violence services in the country. She was honored by Safe Horizon with their Voice of Empowerment award alongside actor and activist Alan Cumming, serves on their Leaders on the Horizon board, and together, they created the #PutTheNailInIt campaign, which encourages people to paint their left ring fingernail purple to show their support against domestic violence and put the nail in domestic violence for good. The national #PutTheNailInIt campaign PSA continues to be featured on the discovery channel.

She has made guest speaking appearances all over the country on a variety of subjects at domestic violence shelters, conferences, fundraising events and universities including Clemson University, San Diego State, and Georgetown University.

Kira studied Political Science, Global Studies, and Geography at Hofstra University Honors College and graduated in 2013. She has been accepted at Notre Dame Law School and is also trilingual speaking Russian, Spanish, and English.

About Marjaree Mason Center:

For nearly 35 years, the Marjaree Mason Center has offered shelter and support services to victims of domestic violence in Fresno County. Currently, the Center operates the county's only dedicated provider of domestic violence shelter and support services, including education for victims and youth. The Center was founded in 1979

after the murder of Marjaree Mason, a native of Easton. A graduate of Washington High School and Reedley College, Marjaree lived in Fresno for 31 years and was well known in the community. The Marjaree Mason Center supports and empowers adults and children affected by domestic violence, while striving to prevent and end the cycle of abuse through education and advocacy. To contact MMC, call business center at 559.237.4706, 24-hour confidential emergency hotline at 559.233.HELP (4357) or visit online at mmcenter.org, [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) or [Twitter](#).

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