

Cedar Valley *Women of Persimmon*

Nomination Form

Persimmon, the YWCA color of strength and confidence

The YWCA Black Hawk County is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

Criteria for Cedar Valley Women of Persimmon Awards

1. Consideration will be given to the ways in which the nominee exemplifies the mission of the YWCA. The nominee's contributions and degree of impact of her achievements may be in her neighborhood, community, state or nation. Those "behind the scenes" women as well as those in the public eye are considered.
2. The nominee must be a resident and/or work in the Cedar Valley area. Students attending educational institutions in Black Hawk or Bremer counties are also eligible.
3. If not selected as a Woman of Persimmon recipient, an individual may be nominated either in the same or in a different category in future years. Past Cedar Valley Women of Persimmon recipients are eligible to be nominated in another category after five years.

2026 Cedar Valley Women of Persimmon Award Categories

- ***Leadership Award*** – Honors a woman who exemplifies ethical leadership, professional excellence, and a commitment to advancing equity and opportunity. She creates pathways for other women to rise and demonstrates the values at the heart of the YWCA mission.
- ***Heart of Service Award*** – Recognizes a woman whose volunteer contributions have created meaningful, lasting impact in the lives of women, youth, and families. She leads with generosity, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to community.
- ***Rising Star Award*** – Celebrates a young woman (age 18-25) who demonstrates promising leadership, academic or professional excellence, volunteer service, and emerging influence. She represents the next generation of trailblazers in our community.
- ***Champion for Youth Award*** – Honors a woman who advocates for the health, empowerment, and well-being of young people. She lifts youth through mentorship, advocacy, and compassionate leadership.
- ***Partner in Empowerment Award*** – Recognizes an organization that models inclusive leadership and actively empowers women through equitable practices, advancement opportunities, and a demonstrated commitment to supporting the YWCA mission.

Past Award Recipients

Leadership Award (Professional Woman) – Belinda Creighton-Smith, Kim Young-Kent, Charletta Sudduth, A’Lisa Walker, Julie Pitzen, Mary Ann Burk, Lisa Muñoz, Jean Trainor, Inez Murtha, Beverly Smith, Emily Girsch, Alicia Smiley, LaTanya Graves, Jennifer Christiason, Amanda Mahncke, Denita Gadson, Tanya Warren, Jayme Renfro, Rev. Vera Walican M.Div.

Heart of Service Award (Volunteer Service) – Susie Heaton, Crystal Buzzo, Christine Carpenter, Barbara Brown, Uyntha Duncan, Patricia Harper, Marcia Griffin, Myra Boots, Kristina Mehmen, Barbara Prust, Endya Johnson, Melanie Knipp, Maureen White, Doris Kelley, Lori Johnson, Jennifer Onuigbo, Jeanne Olson, Donna O’Brien, Nancy Taylor

Rising Star Award (Young Woman of Tomorrow) – Laura Edwards, Alesha Jones, Nikki Ann Bornong, Sunni Swarbrick, Amy Costliow, Olivia Hottle, Zohha Tariq, Larissa Crain, Victoria Hurst, Hsae Meh, Vanessa McNeal, Maggie Miller, Nilvia Brownson, Hannah Bockhaus, Devin O’Loughlin, Yadira Guzman, Lexi Gause, Madeline Hinz

Champion for Youth Award (Youth Advocate) – Karen Grode, Rita Ferneau, Marcia Borwig, Ellen Vanderloo, Mary Lynn Hoard, Liz Crowley, Heidi Fuchtman, Julie Ehlers, Jeannette Mukayisire, Aditi Rao, Laticia Aossey, Susan Langan, Amanda Goodman, Sunni Kegebien, Jena Seeland, Melanie Shayer, Desirae Holmes, Tierra Matlock, Lori Dale, Anita Ross

Partner in Empowerment Award (Business/Organization that Empowers Women) – Seeds of Hope, Juliette Low Society, Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity, Clohesy Consulting, Beyond Pink TEAM, Splash of Color, UNI Feminist Action League, Visions Hair Studio, House of Hope, Waterloo Commission on Human Rights, Try Pie, UNI Center for Urban Education, UNI Women In Business, Lincoln Savings Bank, The Center of Attention, Riverview Center, Hawkeye Community College, Fifth Generation Natural Skin and Hair Care, Elite Design

Nomination Form
YWCA Cedar Valley Women of Persimmon
April 23rd, 2026

**Nomination
Information
& Guidelines**

1. Nominations are due **Friday, March 6, 2026** to:
Amelia Smith, Executive Director or Asmith@ywcabhc.org

YWCA Black Hawk County

425 Lafayette

Waterloo, IA 50703

2. Please feel free to involve the nominee in preparing the nomination material.
3. Selection is based on information provided in areas noted as A, B and C (see following).
4. If possible, please send nominations to Asmith@ywcabhc.org , or drop off.

Nomination Please provide all information below (type or print):

Requirement A. Name of Nominee: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Business/Employer/Organization: _____

Title: _____

Nominated by: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Business/Employer/Organization: _____

Title: _____

B. Nomination for: *(please check one)*

- Leadership Award
- Heart of Service Award
- Rising Star Award
- Champion for Youth Award
- Partner in Empowerment Award

Nomination Form - Cedar Valley Women of Persimmon

April 23rd, 2026, *continued*

C. Achievement Information:

**Please provide concise information in the following areas below:
(Not exceeding one (1) page total)**

1. What positions or roles has this woman or organization held in the category for which you are nominating her/them?
2. Why should this woman or organization be considered for this award? How do her/their achievements relate to the YWCA's mission to eliminate racism, empower women and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all? Include one or two specific examples of how she/they consistently support, mentor or inspire you and other women and/or girls in the Cedar Valley as related to the YWCA's mission.

Nominations are due by Friday, March 6, 2026

Please consider purchasing a reservation for your nominee. Contact Samantha Meehan to make a reservation by email at smeehan@ywocabhc.org or by calling 319-234-7589 ex. 221