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House of Representatives

HONORING COMMUNITY CHAMPION
MRS. YVONNE CLARK

HON. MIKE KELLY
of pennsylvania
in the house of representatives

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize one of my constituents from Western Pennsylvania, Yvonne Clark. Yvonne, the Director of Walker's Neighborhood House in Lawrence County, has served her both her family and community with excellence, leaving a legacy of compassion and integrity behind her that has impacted many.

The seventh out of sixteen children, Yvonne worked for both American Cleaners and First National Bank before putting her professional ambitions on hold in order to raise her family. She has been happily married to Robert Clark for forty-seven years, and together they have three children: Robert Jr., Adella, and Aaron. Yvonne and Robert are also blessed to be the grandparents of nine grandchildren.

In 1979, Yvonne enrolled in the Pittsburgh Beauty Academy in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania and graduated with honors shortly thereafter. Under the mentorship of a respected and accomplished local salon-owner, Yvonne learned the skills of the trade and eventually opened her own salon in 1984. When health issues demanded a change of course, Yvonne worked as a family service worker and then a job coach before returning to school at Midwestern Baptist School of Ministry. Again, she graduated with honors and received her Associate's Degree in Women's Ministry in 2006. Additionally, valuing her role as mother and grandmother, Yvonne became the primary caregiver for her three grandchildren when her daughter was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

It was around this time that Walker's Neighborhood House, a division of the Gussie M. Walker Community Outreach Organization, was established. The mission of this after-school program is to empower youth and families to be the best they can be by obtaining a better education, while also learning that through God all things are possible. By providing both tutoring and structured recreational opportunities for local youth in an area where 85% of the population is considered low-income, Walker's Neighborhood House is breathing life back into a community and empowering our next generation of leaders. Under Yvonne's devoted and impassioned leadership, over 2,500 students have walked through its doors and left changed for the better.

Whether serving her family or her community, Yvonne has shown herself to be a leader in the truest sense of the word and a role model for the many that are privileged to know her. Furthermore, her dedication to directing the St. John United Holy Church Choir for thirty-five years and being a member of the praise team for fifteen gives evidence to the core Christian values that have informed her experiences and given strength when strength was needed along her journey. On behalf of many, I would like to express sincere gratitude and appreciation to Mrs. Yvonne Clark, a true Community Champion.
