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## CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
SEPTEMBER 5, 2019**

### **MUSCATINE GIRL RECEIVES MERITORIOUS CIVILIAN AWARD**

*Muscatine Fire Department presents award to girl who saved family home and family*

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** – The quick thinking of a young Muscatine girl was instrumental in saving a family's home and possibly lives. For her efforts, Isabelle Maresca was presented the Meritorious Civilian Award by Muscatine Fire Chief Jerry Ewers during the Muscatine City Council meeting Thursday (Sept. 5).

The Meritorious Civilian Award is presented for actions termed "outstanding performance" in the course of action where a civilian demonstrates remarkable performance relating to the protection of life and/or property. This is only the third time this award has been given out to a citizen.

On Wednesday, June 12, 2019, the Muscatine Fire Department responded to 410 Park Drive for a report of a structure on fire. All residents had safely exited the residence with firefighters finding moderate smoke coming from the back of the residence upon arrival. Battalion Chief Ted Hillard entered the home and found the fire under control with a large amount of smoke trapped inside. Positive pressure ventilation was used to remove the smoke products from the home.

An interview of the family after the fire scene was determined to be safe found that the quick thinking and actions by Isabelle contributed to reducing damage to the home and the safety of her family.

“We would like to recognize Isabella’s actions by presenting her with a Meritorious Civilian Award plaque and letter describing the incident that saved property and lives,” Chief Ewers said.

The investigation into the incident reveals that Isabella’s mother, Myrna Maresca, had left a pan containing hot grease inside it on the stove while cooking dinner. The hot grease caught fire during the time the stove was unattended.

“Isabella saw the fire when she entered the kitchen, stating that it was about two feet high and reaching the microwave above the stove,” Ewers said. “She yelled to her family that the kitchen was on fire and her mother came back into the kitchen.”

Isabella had learned critical fire safety skills from the Muscatine Fire Department education program and from watching YouTube videos about fire safety. She retrieved a fire extinguisher off the wall in the next room and brought it to her mother who extinguished the fire before it fully extended into the cabinets causing more damage or the total loss of the residence.

“This quick response not only saved the fire from becoming out of control with a residential ABC extinguisher, it may also have saved the lives of people who were not aware of the fire in the home,” Ewers said.

Then seven-year-old Kaiden Herlein was presented the Meritorious Civilian Award on May 17, 2018, after leading his legally blind grandmother to safety and call 9-1-1 after a light fixture caught fire in his grandparents’ home.

The first civilian award was presented in 2014 when an Allsteel employee suffered a cardiac arrest at work and two coworkers jumped to the rescue by performing bystander CPR and early defibrillation.

The award was implemented in 2012.