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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wellesley Firefighter Joanie Cullinan Honored by the New England Patriots

Melanoma Survivor and Early Detection Advocate Recognized as a 2020 "Difference Maker"

October 22, 2020 (Wellesley, MA) – Wellesley firefighter and cancer survivor Joanie Cullinan continues to save lives and inspire others. [The New England Patriots announced](#) that Joanie has been selected as this week's "Difference Maker of the Week" award winner for her outstanding work to raise awareness for occupational cancers and promote early detection.

The Difference Maker awards are presented every week throughout the 2020 NFL season by the New England Patriots Foundation. Part of the foundation's Celebrate Volunteerism initiative, the awards recognize volunteers like Joanie who go above and beyond to support non-profits in their communities.

"Joanie's tireless work to help others by sharing her own experience with cancer and advocating for early detection makes her the perfect recipient for this award. Congratulations!" said Marjorie Freiman, Wellesley Board of Selectmen Chair. Fire Chief Rick DeLorie added, "Our firefighter family is so proud of Joanie and her outstanding work. We're glad she's healthy and back with us."

When Joanie was diagnosed with Stage 3 Melanoma three years ago, she began working with [15-40 Connection](#), a non-profit organization focused on teaching people how to detect cancer early, advocate for themselves, and work with doctors to get the best outcomes. As part of Joanie's recognition, 15-40 Connection will receive a \$5,000 donation from the Patriots Foundation.

"Joanie is an unbelievably enthusiastic advocate and a tremendous human being. Her recognition is so well deserved," said Joyce O'Connor Davidson, 15-40 Connection Vice President for Communications & Engagement. "While some people might have retreated into themselves after a cancer diagnosis, Joanie looked for a way to continue to help others. The \$5,000 donation we are receiving will go toward the education we deliver for *free* in fire departments, to young adults in schools, and to community organizations."

While in-person recognition for the Difference Maker award winners is currently on hold due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, Joanie's achievements are highlighted on the [New England Patriots website](#), and the [Town of Wellesley website](#).

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