

The 21st Annual Children's Champion Awards

2016 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Outstanding Business, Organization, Government Agency or Community Initiative that offers, supports or provides Healthy and Safe Places for Children and Youth

Genesee County Parks

The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission works diligently to activate the public parks in our community and make them healthy and safe places for children to learn and play, especially during the summer.

In 2015, Genesee County Park offered their FREE Summer Playground Program for children and families at five locations in our community: Bluebell Beach, Davison Roadside Park, Flushing County Park, Max Brandon Park and McKinley Park. Daily activities at all sites included gardening and nutrition, nature, arts and crafts, physical activity and sports.

Recognizing the need for more physical activities for children, they also implemented a new curriculum called Come Out and Play support engagement in intensity aerobic activity on a daily basis. Come Out and Play included "Quests" that were used to challenge families to get active together by using parks and trails as places to be active and get fit.

Outstanding Business, Organization, Government Agency or Community Initiative that offers, supports or provides Special Opportunities for Children and Youth

Genesee District Library and Flint Public Library

In recent years, the GDL and PFL have significantly enhanced their partnership to better serve the community. Every year, the libraries work together to offer National Library Card signup month, working with 40 businesses to offer discounts on things their patrons buy the most. The GDL and FPL also collaborated to provide a new take-home technology with the intention of improving early literacy rates across the county. In September, they put over 430 Playaway Launchpad tablets into circulation.

Every October, they co-host the Lil' Monsters Halloween Bash, providing centralized programming that encourages kids to read. Last year, over 2,000 children attended this safe, fun Halloween activity.

The Genesee District Library and the Flint Public Library work together to provide a multitude of library services, technologies, and high quality programming to an ever-changing community.

Outstanding Business, Organization, Government Agency or Community Initiative that offers, supports or provides Opportunities to Develop Life Skills for Youth

Genesee County Girls Court

Girls Court provides gender-specific and trauma focused treatment, judicial monitoring, community supervision, and mentoring opportunities. It's primary purpose is to prevent the exploitation of children, and address victimization, health, education and overall well-being.

The Genesee County Girls Court was designed to give young women who are victims the ability to learn new life skills and avoid prosecution. The goal is to provide services for at-risk girls in a juvenile delinquency program, build them up, and give them tools so they do not become victims of human trafficking or other negative outcomes. Girls Court redefines these young women as victims rather than criminals.

Outstanding Business, Organization, Government Agency or Community Initiative that offers, supports or provides Volunteerism Opportunities for Youth or to Serve Youth

The Blueberry Ambassador Program

Sheila Gafney and Pat Peters' energy and passion for Area 13 Special Olympics and individuals with special needs has been tenacious for the past 30 years.

Many student athletes' lives have been impacted in a positive way as they are allowed to experience life like any other child in regular education with sporting events and coaching. Sports are provided to students on a year round schedule while Sheila and Pat continuously teach lifelong skills of fair play, respect for opponents, cooperation and graciousness regardless of the points involved in the competition.

However, there is an impact that has been made on a very personal level for many of these athletes. Sheila Gafney and Pat Peters have also opened their home to students in dire situations. One student athlete with special needs was going to be placed in foster care due to his father's pending incarceration. Pat sought guardianship for the student and provided a home and guidance for the student for 2 years until the father was released. They continue to work with the father as he maintains his sobriety and employment.

Through their leadership and volunteerism with Area 13 Special Olympics, Sheila Gafney and Pat Peters have lived a selfless life devoted to the welfare of individuals with special needs.

Robert E. Weiss Outstanding Youth Award

Guy and Linda Moxam Outstanding Youth Scholarship (\$1,000)

Chadelle Richardson

Chadelle Richardson is a senior at Flint Northwestern High School, where she serves as the assistant advisor for Student Council. Early in the school year, she was told that not many students were interested in being a part of the organization. Undeterred, Chadelle went around during her lunch period to recruit students and now Flint Northwestern has the largest student council to date.

As a Student Council member, she has worked four American Red Cross Blood Drives, helped raise over \$4,000 for the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, caroled at two different nursing homes, participated in bellringing at least three times for Salvation Army and served meals at North End Soup Kitchen.

During the summer, she volunteered 120 hours at Hometown Home Health and Hospice. She also participates in the Jobs for Michigan Graduates reading program where she reads to students in Kindergarten through second grade.

As a member of Student Senate, she represents Northwestern among students from all over Genesee County. Student senate focuses on being good representatives, Roberts Rules of Order and student government. They also do mock trials and practice writing and voting on bills in Lansing.

Chadelle spends what little spare time she has applying to colleges and completing scholarships. Chadelle plans to attend a university in Michigan and study family law. Her family is extremely proud of their first generation college student!

Curbo Vocational Education Award and Scholarship (\$1,000)

Tekoa Hewitt

Tekoa Hewitt has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to children through the Gateway to College program.

He has developed into an aspiring leader through mentoring, tutoring, and volunteerism. He has been accepted to the Mott Community College-Honors Program where he volunteers on and off campus, thus excels in his academics toward a career pathway in the medical field.

In addition to being a Mentor, Writing Center Tutor and Peer Tutor for Mott Community College, Tekoa volunteers to facilitate many of the new Gateway to College Prep/Orientation Student Experience sessions in helping other youth ages 16-24 who have dropped out of high school understand the importance of reconnecting with education and how to successfully transition into the college environment.

In continuing his efforts to improve the lives of youth, Tekoa does not mind sharing his story to motivate and encourage other youth. He was invited to speak at the Flint & Genesee Literacy Network to share his story of why he dropped out of high school. All of this might sound inspiring but what is most impressive is that he continues to share his story to inspire and help others while attending college full-time, working multiple jobs and advocating for youth on a local and national level.

He will graduate in 2016 with high academics from Mott Community College-Gateway to College Program receiving a high school diploma from Flint Community Schools.

Roy E. Peterson Caring Adult Award

Deborah Mastin

Deborah has always had a passion for working with children. When her own daughter was in elementary school, she advocated for high quality education and, with very limited resources, started a tutoring program. After she retired from GM, she returned to helping the youth of our community as a paraprofessional at Flint Northwestern and Southwestern High School.

Deborah recently began an encore career at the Genesee Valley Regional Center, a juvenile detention center, where she serves as a tutor, reinforcing and teaching math concepts to at risk youth in the criminal justice system.

She works with young people that others see as a lost cause due to their run ins with the law, inspiring them to take education seriously. Students thrive under her firm, yet compassionate teaching style and often ask to stay a bit longer so that they can master fractions, decimals or geometry.

Deborah helps her students in becoming productive members of society. Every student that she encounters will leave the detention center with improved knowledge about math and increased hope for their future. No child is a lost cause with her and every kid has potential and value.

Crim Fitness Foundation Active and Healthy Leader Award

Angela Stamps

In 2006, when Angela Stamps moved to Los Angeles and had to rely on her bicycle for her main mode of transportation. She quickly saw many health benefits - improved mood, increased energy and a more athletic build. In 2012, Angela returned to her hometown of Flint and noticed the obesity crisis facing Genesee County. Her passion for bicycling led her to begin teaching youth, specifically teenagers about bicycle safety.

In 2012, Angela Stamps began Kentakee Athletic & Social Clubs with the mission to provide athletic and educational activities to teenagers in underserved communities. Angela works with organizations such as the Genesee County Parks & Recreation to provide bicycle education to youth throughout the county. In addition, she operates Berston Bicycle Club, a nine week program for youth ages 10 to 18. Each participant receives a new a bike, helmet, bike bag and reflective vest all for free.

Through her work with the Kentakee Athletic & Social Clubs Angela Stamps is teaching children how to be independent, active, healthy and confident.

James T. Dover, Jr. Outstanding Senior Award

Margaret Miller

Margaret Miller, as known as Ms. Maggie, goes above and beyond the call of duty. She has a heart for children and volunteers her time tirelessly.

After retiring from the Flint Schools she continued to work and serve the students in the community. She volunteers every day! She helps in a number of capacities, including assisting in the main office, chaperoning school dances and serving as the senior class advisor. She is also a wonderful parent advocate and even assists parents after school hours to ensure they receive the information they need.

The students love her and describe her as approachable, kind, and helpful. The staff appreciates her and describes her as professional, compassionate, engaging, and a guardian angel. Ms. Maggie is truly a jewel and has a dedicated spirit for service.

Bob Emerson Scholarship Recipients (\$1,000 Each)

Hannah Bentley and Kyle Gavulic

Hannah Bentley has held many leadership positions while at Clio High School, including Drum Major of the Mustang Marching Band, Student Congress Relations Officer, and National Honor Society Recording Secretary. She is also a member Clio's Youth Advisory Council through the Community Foundation of Greater Flint and co-director of the seventh grade band. She plans on attending the University of Chicago this fall to major in management with an emphasis in international business.

Kyle Gavulic, from Goodrich High School, was nominated for the Outstanding Youth award in 2015. In one year, he logged 358 hours of volunteer service, including mentoring younger students in the Friends of Rachel Club, delivering a successful community-wide Chain Link Challenge, and serving on the Michigan Youth Leadership Council. This fall, he plans to attend Vanderbilt College, where he will be studying orthopedic medicine. He hopes to become a physician and actively volunteer within school systems as a sports trainer.

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Genesee County Parks

Special Opportunities for Children and Youth

Genesee District Library and Flint Public Library

Opportunities to Develop Life Skills for Youth

Genesee County Girls Court

Volunteerism Opportunities for Youth or to Serve Youth

Pat Peters and Sheila Gafney

Outstanding Individual Awards

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