

NEWS RELEASE

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MICHIGAN WORKS! KENT & ALLEGAN COUNTIES NAMES INAUGURAL ESSENTIAL SERVICE AWARD WINNERS

New awards program honors employees who perform essential services most people take for granted.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., November 18, 2008 — Michigan Works! Kent & Allegan Counties revealed the winners of the first annual Essential Service Awards to recognize people working indispensable, but traditionally, undervalued jobs. The Essential Service Awards recognize the important role certain workers play in our economy. Without these people who faithfully fulfill necessary roles, our economy would suffer greatly.

“These workers are essential to a smoothly running business, organization and community,” said Win Irwin, chairman of the board for Michigan Works! Kent & Allegan Counties. “Yet, as a group, this segment of workers has become virtually invisible in our society.” Irwin added that the program is as much about raising awareness of the value of essential workers as it is about the award itself.

2008 Essential Service Award Winners:

Cathy Steiner – Tiggs Dining Services

Hospitality Category

“Cathy could easily have titles of a personal organizer, event manager or a resource consultant, but what she always told me was, “I just want to help people and have them feel, that once they interacted with me, everything will be better.”

Charlene Hartwell – Aldersgate Center for Child Development

Foodservice Category

“Charlene is an exceptional human being. She always has a smile, a joke, and tons of laughter to share. She works hard and offers her best every day. We have been fortunate to have ‘Mrs. C’ on our team, providing nutritious snacks and meals.”

Martha Wur – Spectrum Health

Cleaning/Housekeeping/Groundskeeping Category

“Martha has been with Spectrum Health for more than five years now and has earned the trust and respect that can only come by living our core values every day. She exemplifies compassion, integrity, excellence, teamwork and respect.”

Kymbirlee Worthem – Campfire USA

Nonprofit Category

“Kymbirlee is committed to the children of Camp Fire. She is an excellent role model for the children, and a contributing team member at her site. The children we work with deserve the best; Kymbirlee Worthem is one of the best.”

Linda Butler – Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan

General Labor Category

“Linda does an excellent job wherever she ends up. Her friendly attitude and sense of humor makes her well liked by her fellow employees. We are always getting compliments about her from customers who tell us how helpful she is.”

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Deb Chapman – Orchard Hill Christian Learning Center

Childcare Category

“Deb is an extremely patient, kind and loving person and it shows in her daily interactions with the children. She is a favorite among the children and a teacher that they seek out for love, guidance and hugs frequently.”

Joe Simon – Senior Neighbors, Inc.

Transportation Category

“I’ve enjoyed having Joe on our staff. His robust, ‘Good morning, it’s another great day today!’ always made you feel assured that he took care of what needed to be done. He did it with respect, honesty and genuine caring for those less able than himself.”

Jan Stine – ACCESS of West Michigan

Clerical Support Category

“Jan amazes us with her ability to manage many responsibilities. If I think I have a heavy workload, I compare it to Jan’s and realize she has the bigger challenge. Yet Jan maintains a positive attitude and continues to provide the essential services we need.”

Olga Lopez – Spectrum Health

Healthcare Category

“Olga is willing to help with all the patients and nurses on the unit even if she’s not assigned to them. She notices what needs to be done without being asked. She comes to work with a smile on her face everyday and spreads a can-do attitude throughout the unit.”

Patricia Tanner – Target Corp.

Retail Category

“Pat always has a smile on her face. She likes to joke around and have fun, putting the guests at ease immediately. She makes working at Target fast, fun and friendly and she deserves to be recognized for the effort she puts into work and life.”

Nominations for the Essential Service Awards were received from both employers and the community at large in a variety of categories, including hospitality, retail, healthcare, transportation, clerical support, food service, general labor, childcare, nonprofit/government, custodial, housekeeping or groundskeeper. Criteria for the awards are based on the person’s wage, work attitude and ethic, and work history.

About Michigan Works! Kent & Allegan Counties

Michigan Works! Kent & Allegan Counties provides a network of employment and training programs and services for employers, employees, and job seekers with the goal of creating a sustained workforce with the required skills to maintain and enhance the economy of Kent and Allegan Counties.

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