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Community Awards honor Waunakee's finest

They volunteer their time and talent to make Waunakee a great place to live, giving senior citizens rides to the doctor, clearing snowmobile trails and ensuring that children in the hospital have a special blanket.

They are the recipients of the 2010 Community Awards, sponsored by Waunakee's service organizations.

Nine individuals received awards at Sunday's banquet at Rex's Innkeeper, including: Chad Landes, May Vision Center, Sally Ross, Jean Hensen, Ray Kuehl, Shelley Joan Weiss, Ken Ballweg, Adam Kreitzman and Vern Meier.

Chad Landes

Chad Landes received the Outstanding Senior Student Award, sponsored by the Optimist Club.

In the high school senior's young life, he has volunteered extensively and served as president of FFA and the Dane County Youth Snowmobile Club.

His other volunteer work has been at St. John's Catholic Church, the Waunakee Neighborhood Connection, Buckets for Hunger, Relay for Life and as a basketball coach.

Although he devotes much of his time to helping with community projects, Landes still manages to do well in school, and has achieved academic honors and has taken three Advanced Placement classes.

May Vision Center

May Vision Center, David May's optometric practice, is the recipient of the Waunakee-Westport Chamber of Commerce Orchid Award.

May said the office has been his dream since he was in optometry school more than 10 years ago.

A graduate of Verona High School, May earned his bachelor's degree in zoology from UW-Madison and then his doctorate in optometry from the Illinois College of Optometry in 1996. He spent several years working for Davis Deuhr Dean before opening his own clinic in the Village Mall in 2006. He then built his present location which opened in 2009.

May also volunteers with the InfantSee program, Vision USA, Special Olympics, Walker's Point Community Clinic and the MATC Optometric Advisory Board. He is also a member of the Waunakee Lions and Rotary Club, along with several professional associations.

He and his wife, Candie, live in Waunakee and have two children.

Sally Ross

The Waunakee Senior Center named Sally Ross its Volunteer of the Year.

Ross has been volunteering at the center since 2003. She is at the reception desk one afternoon a week and frequently at the nutrition program. Ross also is a driver escort, providing senior citizen rides to doctors appointments through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

Ross also volunteers with RSVP and with Asbury United Methodist Church.

Ross grew up on a farm in Muscoda and worked at the UW-Madison for 36 years.

She has also volunteered for the UW men's hockey booster club, Middleton Outreach Ministries and the Northeast Side Senior Coalition.

Jean Hensen

The Waunakee Lioness honored Jean Hensen as this year's Community Involved Woman.

Hensen, who owns her own quilt shop in Waunakee, has devoted much time to the Madison Chapter of Project Linus, coordinating, organizing and designing quilts and blankets for children at Madison area hospitals. Last year, 604 blankets went to neonatal intensive care units.

Hensen also coordinates sewers who make patriotic themed lap quilts for veterans at the Veterans Hospital and donates quilts for special events such as silent auctions and Relay for Life.

In addition, Hensen taught CCD for 12 years and was the on the St. John's Church parish council for four years. She is a 37-year member of Post 360 Legion Auxiliary, as well as past president.

Jensen was born and raised in the Waunakee area. She and her husband, Butch, have two grown children and nine grandchildren.

Ray Kuehl

The FFA Alumni presented Ray Kuehl with the Agricultural Enterprise Award.

Kuehl was raised on a farm at Beaver Dam where he was a member of 4-H and FFA. He served as president of the FFA chapter, as state FFA treasurer and received the American Farmer Degree.

Throughout his life, Kuehl continued to garner accolades for his community service.

In 1961, he received the Pure Milk Association Young Dairyman Award and has been elected president of the following organizations over the years: The State of Wisconsin's Young People's Farm Bureau, Wisconsin State Agribusiness Council, Wisconsin Holstein Association; Waunakee-Westport Chamber of Commerce and the Lions Club.

Kuehl has also been the World Dairy Expo Dairy Cattle chairman for 13 years, and served on the Wisconsin Auctioneers board of directors and as president elect.

Kuehl was inducted in the Agribusiness Council Hall of Fame and received the Wisconsin Holstein Distinguished Service Award, Waunakee Lions Club Distinguished Service Award and

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Lions Club International Melvin Jones Fellow Award. He has been a registered dairy cattle and grain farmer for 26 years and has been active in the industry.

He and his wife, De, live in Waunakee where he owns Ray Kuehl & Associates Realty.

Shelley Joan Weiss

The Waunakee American Legion presented Shelley Joan Weiss with the Leadership Award.

Weiss has been the principal of Waunakee Middle School since 1992, and in those last 18 years, the school has earned a great deal of recognition. Recently, the middle school was named a School of Excellence by the state's Department of Public Instruction and the Association for Wisconsin School Administrators.

Weiss also received the Jim Stoltenberg Award for Excellence in Middle Level from the Wisconsin Association for Middle Level Excellence. That association has also recognized her with the presidents award.

Another of Weiss' initiatives has been to organize and implement a district and community interagency safety committee. She collaborated with the Waunakee EMS to provide community based H1N1 immunization clinics and received recognition from the Madison-Dane County Public Health Department for service with pandemic programming.

Weiss also has had an extensive career with the Wisconsin Air National Guard from which she retired in November.

Ken Ballweg

Ken Ballweg of Endres Mfg. Co. was named the Waunakee Rotary Club's Business Person of the Year.

Endres Mfg. Co. has been part of Waunakee for more than 80 years. The family-owned company is currently transitioning into its fourth generation of leadership. Ballweg has been part of Endres Mfg. for over 40 years and has seen many changes. A native of Waunakee, Ballweg was born and raised on a dairy farm and attended St. John's, Waunakee High School and UW-Madison.

Early in his career, he was involved with the Jaycees and has continued to serve the community through his involvement in the Waunakee Rotary Club, St. John's Church, Waunakee Community Foundation, St. Mary's Hospital Foundation, Endres Mfg. Foundation, Camp Gray, Catholic Charities and Wauktoberfest.

During these slower economic times, Endres employees have been sent out to work at various nonprofit or religious organizations that Endres employees have supported to help with maintenance issues. This is one way to keep people employed and contributing to society.

The Endres Mfg. Co. credo is that good, dedicated employees are the key to the success of any business.

Adam Kreitzman

Waunakee Police Officer Adam Kreitzman was the recipient of the Waunakee Rotary Club's Safety Award.

In the spring of 2007, Kreitzman became the Waunakee Police Department's first K-9 officer, and in May of 2007 he received his new partner, K-9 Alex, who was just 7 weeks old.

Kreitzman and Alex completed a lengthy training program leading to Alex's certification as a drug and tracking dog. In February 2008, Kreitzman and Alex took to the streets for the first time. They train continuously to maintain Alex's certifications.

Alex is used to help combat illegal narcotics, and with the dog's help, police have logged 57 such arrests. Thousands of dollars in drugs and over $9,000 in cash has been seized. Alex also played an instrumental role in locating crack cocaine during the execution of a search warrant in a Waunakee home in 2009, resulting in the largest seizure of illegal drugs in the history of the community.

Alex is also used for tracking individuals who are missing or in danger, along with fugitives, and is used for educational programs in the schools.

Vern Meier

The Waunakee Lions Club honored Vern Meier with the Distinguished Service Award.

A resident of Waunakee for 30 years and a graduate of Waunakee High School, Meier has volunteered extensively in the community.

He has been a member of the Knights of Columbus for many years and has worked on that organization's food stand at WaunaFest.

Last year, Meier volunteered to chair the food stand and he will chair it again this year.

Meier has also been on the St. John's Parish Council, serving as president for two years. With family members and friends, he also grills brats during Brat Fest to raise funds for Special Olympics.

A current resident of DeForest, Meier also volunteers with the DeForest Chamber of Commerce during the July 4th celebration.

Meier has worked at ABS Global for nearly 45 years and is currently in the marketing department. He has two children, Mandi and Mike.

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