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DAX KUEHN NAMED NEIGHBORHOOD VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

The members of the Community Forum of the City of Missoula have chosen Dax Kuehn as the annual Outstanding Neighborhood Volunteer award recipient for 2010. In making the award, they cited his outstanding and selfless work in the Missoula community. A memorial tree will be planted in his honor.

The City Council will commemorate the outstanding volunteer selection at the April 11 Council meeting. Mayor Engen will proclaim April 11, 2011, as "Dax Kuehn, 2010 Outstanding Neighborhood Volunteer, Day," and the month of April as "Missoula Outstanding Neighborhood Volunteers Month."

"We look forward each year to honoring a Missoula resident who has helped make life in our city better," said Mayor John Engen. "It's Dax and people like him who are leading efforts to get good things done at the neighborhood level."

Dax's work has benefited the River Road Neighborhood and the entire Missoula community. He is known for bringing people together so they get to know each other better. He has been instrumental in creating newsletters, postcard mailings, a website for the River Road neighborhood and other communication tools that connect people. He spearheaded the efforts to install a playground at Lafray Park. He has been a strong model for community engagement and neighborhood dialogue.

Dax is a professional photographer and this year has given back to Missoula with his talent by starting a branch of "Help Portrait." Help Portrait produces free photographs for low-income people. This year Dax organized two events and arranged free prints for the Missoula Head Start

Program and one for low-income seniors. He also does free family photographs for people who are terminally ill.

Dax can be reached for interviews at 531-9336.

MORE HONORS

These Missoula residents were nominated for outstanding contributions to the community and will receive certificates at the April 11 City Council meeting: Ray Aten (nominated twice); Kimberly Beatty; Judy Holbrook; Billy and Charney Izzard; Lewis and Clark Playground Committee; Lyn Redding; Jon Salmonson; and Anne Vandemeer.

Here are some excerpts from their nominations by their neighbors:

RAY ATEN

Ray has chaired and worked tirelessly on the Pattee Canyon/Farviews Neighborhood Council. He has created newsletters, surveys and worked very hard to preserve the parks and create hiking trails. Ray has raised awareness of potential problems such as infill development, traffic calming, rewriting of the building codes and what it means to our neighborhoods, beautification projects such as eliminating weeds from the entrance to our neighborhood, conducting numerous meetings, holding and chairing ice cream social, creation of walking trails and the identification of parks. Ray and his wife Cindy reside in Missoula to be near three grandchildren and are a great boon and contributors to Missoula.

KIMBERLY BEATTY

Kimberly volunteers wherever she feels she is needed. She shovels snow for an elderly couple down the street and takes out their trash each week. She provides free babysitting to at least three single mothers on our street. When she found out that one of our neighbors was being abused, she offered her home to the lady and her kids until they found a safe place to stay. She even helped buy books for school and helped pay off an electric bill before it got shut off. She never allows anyone to repay her, she always replies with "just pay it forward, that's all I ask". Her favorite quote is volunteers change the world one person at a time and she is right.

In the last year, Kimberly has volunteered at the Food Bank, Salvation Army, Lewis and Clark Elementary School and at the YWCA. In addition, she runs a Face book page called Good Reads where she supports local charity groups, local authors and artists, as well as offering assistance to students and single parent families in need.

JUDY HOLBROOK

Judy's volunteer activities have focused on our neighborhood's quality-of-life, our architectural heritage and our vested interests with other neighborhoods, i.e. the City-County River Trail. Our Judy chooses to give her talent and energy to our neighborhood's people, architecture and 120+ year history.

As Chair of the Southside Historical District, Judy and other volunteers researched the history of nearly 500 homes and businesses for designation as an historical district. Tons of paperwork and hundreds of hours over five years resulted in 250 building being listed in the city, state and federal government and a Historical Preservation District.

Since moving into their South 5th West home 38 years ago, Judy has transformed their barren property into a gardening showcase. She has inspired many of us to up our own curb appeal. Today, the beauty of the gardens and landscaping stop many pedestrians. Be sure to drop by the spring, summer and fall for eye candy delights!

BILLY & CHARNEY IZZARD

The Izzards are always including neighbors in the family celebrations including annual pumpkin carving parties and Christmas gingerbread house completion. Year after year these events are fun for the entire neighborhood. Billy and Charney even open their home on holidays by welcoming neighbors who do have families nearby.

During the summer months the Izzards offer up produce from their garden. Charney spends a lot of time tending her three ducks and often offers up duck eggs as well.

Year in and year out Billy makes a point of helping his neighbors with all sorts of chores such as: mowing, raking, snow blowing, mending fences, giving gardening tips and even 'pet sitting'.

Of all the contributions made by both Billy and Charney, Billy's contribution to the Milltown Garden Patch has had the most impact on our neighborhood. The Milltown Garden Patch has a large donation garden. Proceeds from the donation garden were given to the Missoula Food Bank for those in need. His future hope is to grow and sell pumpkins from the Milltown Garden Patch which will be used to create a scholarship for the Bonner School.

LEWIS AND CLARK PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE

This dedicated committee of individuals has volunteered their time over the past eighteen months to build a shared vision, design, and fundraise for a new playground at the Lewis and Clark Elementary

School. The efforts of this committee have galvanized this neighborhood to invest money and time to actualize a new, safe and modern playground for the neighborhood at the school. The playground is a focal place for the neighborhood -- children learn to ride their bikes on the playground, they practice soccer and baseball, they shoot hoops and use the equipment year-round. The playground is a neighborhood gathering place -- often during the summer kids will be playing and parents chatting into the twilight hours.

The all volunteer effort has raised \$74,000 and still has many avenues it is pursuing to increase this amount. Much of the current equipment at the playground is decades old and in need of modernization.

Many volunteer hours have been spent to improve an area at the heart of Lewis and Clark neighborhood that is utilized by all; most importantly our youth.

LYN REDDING

During her ten years living in Missoula and in the neighborhood, she has been an active and enthusiastic volunteer in many ways. She served in the Chalice of Repose program of St Patrick Hospital and went on to do volunteer massage therapy for five years. She has been and continues to be a leader in the Heart of Missoula Neighborhood Council and its Leadership Team.

Over the years she has, sometimes single handedly, kept the NC going, even when she was the only one willing to serve in a leadership role. She scheduled meetings of the NC, obtained speakers, recruited other for the Leadership Team, designed and had made signs and put them up, often by herself, conducted meetings and maintained communications with the City and its leaders. She also helped in the development of the Downtown Master Plan.

JON SALMONSON

Jon has been the backbone of our Leadership Team this year for the Franklin to the Fort region. He has served selflessly and energetically. His advocacy of parks, trees, and sidewalks for our neighborhood and for the city speaks for many who have no voice in the decision-making process. He is an outstanding example of a caring neighbor and serves to inspire those of us who know him and to support many who do not.

Jon was a vital participant in the process of developing our Neighborhood Plan, during which we created an inventory of deficient infrastructure in the neighborhood: curbs, sidewalks and fire hydrants. As the result of this process city grants were secured for hydrants and sidewalks in these areas. Among his accomplishments, Jon was instrumental in developing and adopting the City of Missoula's Complete Streets Policy.

ANNE VANDEERMEER

Anne volunteers for G.U.T.S. which is a program to empower young women in the community. She is on the board of The Boys and Girls and Habitat for Humanity. She is constantly building and doing construction for those in need in the community. Anne's efforts to help those around her are endless. She is an amazing woman and has earned recognition from her community. She has an amazing way of bringing people together and motivating others to join in. Anne is always positive and is the hardest worker I have ever seen. Her energy is contagious and everyone who spends times with her walks away feeling a sense of pride and accomplishment.

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