



Chamber Annual Awards

Every year the Grand Ledge Area Chamber recognizes businesses and individuals at the Chamber's Annual Dinner in April. You can help honor those who are an inspiration to the Grand Ledge area community by making nominations for the Grand Ledge Area Chamber of Commerce's annual awards.

Each year our Chamber recognizes the contributions of individuals and groups by awarding the Business Person Of The Year and Teacher Of The Year. A nomination form is provided for you to make your nomination as a Chamber member. Please take a moment to review the criteria then make your nomination. Nominations for this year's recipients of 2007 will have to be submitted no later than February 28, 2007. Make your membership count, submit your nominations.



Business Person Of The Year Award 2006

Liz Andrews is the recipient of the 2006 Business Person of the Year Award. Liz is the former President of the Grand Ledge Area Chamber of Commerce. She served as President from April 2003 to April of 2004.

The goal of the Chamber during her time in office was change. She worked to maintain the small town atmosphere, while moving forward with growth. Part of this growth meant encouraging input from neighbors, Delta Township, Mulliken, Eagle, and Wacousta. Through this growth the Chamber of Commerce was able to evolve and become more efficient, ultimately creating a stronger community here in Grand Ledge. Liz grew up in a family where there was a strong emphasis placed on community network.

When Liz stepped into office as President, the Chamber and Grand Ledge schools were working on a project known as, "Community Development Task Force." This committee included business people, city officials, and laymen who worked together to create a strategic plan for growth. Liz always believed our town was good, but she knew Grand Ledge had the potential to be great, and that is what she was working towards.

Liz believes that Grand Ledge is a unique community because we have such a large number of willing volunteers. During our festivals such as Victorian Days, Yankee Doodle Days, Island Art Fair, Mudge's Follies, Color Cruise, Home Tour and Festival of Trees, Grand Ledge sees over 1,000 enthusiastic volunteers each year.

Liz is a strong advocate of the Chamber of Commerce's Student Ambassador Program. In the past this program has invited 5 or 6 juniors of Grand Ledge High School to take part in community events. Liz believed that The Student Ambassador Program was a great way for our Chamber to make a connection between local business people and business people of the future. After all, these future business men and women will grow up, and they may decide to raise their families here in Grand Ledge.

Past Winners of Business Person of the Year

1977 – Bruce MacDowell
1978 – Betty Hahn
1979 – Gerald Shane
1980 – Frank Eschtruth
1981 – Dick Dible
1982 – Leo Marczynski
1983 – Edward Bouck
1984 – Ronald Richmond
1985 – Roger Hansbarger
1989 – Roger Kuhlman
1996 – David Mohnke
1997 – William Atkin
1998 – Tom Spityzley
1998 – Ed MacKenzie
1999 – Cathy Wilhm
2000 – Thomas Dible
2001 – Karl Lothschutz
2002 – Cathy Andrews
2003 – Ron Maquire
2004 – Linda Mulder
2005 – Bill Archer



Teacher Of The Year Award 2006

This year's Teacher of the Year award goes to Joni M. Henretty. Joni teaches Life Skills and Journalism, grades 6-8 at Grand Ledge Beagle Middle School. Joni has the distinction of being the very first Beagle student to be hired at Beagle Middle School as a teacher. She has been teacher at the school for 15 years.

Guided by her love for children, Joni continued her education pursuing a career in teaching. She graduated from Michigan State University with a Bachelor of Science in Home Economics, Master of Arts in Educational Psychology, and a high qualification in Secondary English.

Joni has worked in conjunction with Eaton Intermediate School District and the statewide Health and Home Economics Organization to develop and refine the Health and Life

Skills curriculum. She has developed a separate curriculum known as Junior Great Books that she also teaches in addition to Life Skills and Journalism.

Joni is an Encore teacher which gives her the opportunity to teach students with various physical abilities, backgrounds, and education levels.

Joni is very involved in activities at Beagle Middle School beyond her classes. She has been a Student Council Advisor for the past 10 years. This has allowed her to work with the total student body organizing pep assemblies, concession sales, fundraisers, motivational assemblies, food drives, coat drives as well as many other school improvement projects. In 1997, as a result of her leadership, the Beagle Student Council earned an Award of Excellence from the Michigan Association of Student Councils.

In 1999 Joni initiated an anti-violence program at Beagle known as "Hands are Not for Hurting." The program involved students tracing their hands and creating a wall mural, also everyone took a pledge to anti-violence.

With the help of fellow teacher, Sue Fortuna, Joni organized "Empty Bowls," a program in which the students made pottery bowls in Art Class, which were later filled with soup made and served by the teachers. The fundraiser rose over \$1,000 dollars for GLEAP.

Additionally with the help of fellow teacher, Sara Caswell, Joni was awarded a mini-grant for their "Every Step Counts Program." The money went to the purchase of pedometers. The program is still intact and each year they sponsor a 2 hour student walk to benefit and bring awareness to a chronic disease. Currently Joni and Sara Caswell are organizing a health fair at Beagle to encourage people to make positive changes in their personal health and fitness.

An addition to these achievements Joni is also a Cooking Club Advisor, Health Fair Coordinator, Sewing Club Advisor, and Grand Ledge Education Associations Union Representative.

It is apparent that Joni's energy extends beyond the classroom as she is active not only in her school, but also in her community.

Joni further demonstrates her commitment to our youth in helping organize activities and coordinate volunteers at the YES House Teen Center in Grand Ledge. She was also instrumental in removing soda from the pop machines at Beagle Middle School

Her students and fellow staff speak of her in very high regard describing her energy as "infectious," one student said that "she motivates through warmth and concern." Another described her as giving worthy advice and placing a great deal of importance on manners and respect. The general consensus is that she is a great teacher who inspires her students through interactive learning to be their very best.

Married, and a mother to 2 children Ian, and Janet, Joni is also a licensed Foster parent through Lutheran Social Services.

Past Teachers Of The Year Award

2001 – David Layle
2002 – Michael Kaufman
2003 – Nancy R. Ingram
2004 – Nancy Coleman
2005 – Mindy Christman