
News Release

July 23, 2009

For Immediate Release

U.P. Service Awards highlight volunteerism throughout U.P.

MARQUETTE – The inaugural U.P. Service Awards are shining a light on the life-changing actions of volunteers, businesses and nonprofit organizations across the Upper Peninsula.

The U.P. Service Awards, coordinated by the U.P. Volunteer Network (UPVN), are designed to recognize outstanding volunteer efforts and inspire others to give of their time, talents and treasure. Honorees were chosen in six categories including the Volunteer Connect award, which recognizes an organization that has successfully used and promoted 1-800-Volunteer.org, a national online service which matches volunteers with organizations that need them. U.P. Service Award honorees will be recognized at the U.P. Nonprofit Conference at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, October 23, 2009.

“The stories included with the nominations were all very inspirational, which made it difficult for the judges to pick just one winner out of each category,” said Laura Michaletz, AmeriCorps VISTA, at the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development. “It is clear that the U.P. is filled with many hard-working, caring volunteers.”

Award Recipients

Youth Award: Alix Rugg, 17, of Kingsford, has a diverse volunteering background and has stayed active through involvement with the Kingsford High School-Outreach, food shelter, mission trips, Students Against Destructive Decisions and more. She has led several fundraising projects for cancer funds such as Relay for Life. Her extensive volunteer work with youth in vacation Bible school, the local ice rink, and her mission work, motivates Rugg by proving how much difference one person can make in the lives of others.

Adult Award: Barbra Siira of Wakefield, has dedicated herself to supporting the Special Olympics for more than 35 years. Since 1993, Siira has held the area director position for Special Olympics which involves recruiting volunteers and athletes, driving, managing equipment and fundraising. Since becoming a local coordinator, Siira has raised close to \$300,000 to help support regional Special Olympic events.

Senior Award: Tom Ewing of Sault Ste. Marie, has combined his work with his long history of volunteering. His radio show on WSOO has long been a host to community information and interviews. Ewing has dedicated much of his personal time to the SOO Theater Project involving himself with everything from cleaning and maintenance to fundraising and writing press releases. He has been an Elk for 22 years and a Rotary Club of Sault Ste. Marie member for 28 years.

Volunteer Program Award: Ishpeming’s Bell Hospital Auxiliary and Volunteers program is being honored for its outstanding services and well-founded presence in the hospital. The program coordinates Lifeline, a personal emergency response system which serves more than 200 subscribers, and Kids Korner, a children’s day care center at the hospital. The auxiliary has also made significant monetary donations to Bell Hospital including \$139,000 for a state-of-the-art



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ambulance. More than 6,800 auxiliary volunteer hours have been logged since September 2008.

Business Community Leader Award: Through volunteer efforts, Coleman Engineering Company, with offices in Iron Mountain and Ironwood, serves an estimated 45,000 individuals yearly. In 2008, the company provided more than 1,200 hours of volunteer service to the community. The company donated more than \$50,000 worth of in-kind services to Vision 2020, a local community development program and has also provided in-kind services to Safe Routes to School, Iron Mountain Northside Park, Upper Peninsula Veterans War Memorial, the cities of Norway and Crystal Falls and other local projects.

Volunteer Connect Award: Alger Marquette Community Action Board (AMCAB) is a long-time supporter and user of 1-800-Volunteer.org. It posts many volunteer opportunities on the online database to find people who want to help get the organization's work done on a daily basis. AMCAB is a non-profit organization that meets the needs of citizens of all ages across two counties. Services AMCAB coordinates include commodity foods, senior meals, housing services and an outreach program.

The UPVN is a collaborative initiative with the mission of connecting volunteers with nonprofit organizations that rely on them. In addition to promoting volunteerism and recognizing volunteers, the UPVN provides volunteer management training to nonprofits and is the administrator of 1-800-Volunteer.org in the U.P.

The UPVN is led by the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development with core partners including U.P. 2-1-1, United Way of the Eastern U.P. Volunteer Center, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and Volunteer Center of Dickinson and Iron Counties, RSVP of Delta, Menominee, Schoolcraft and Marinette counties, and RSVP of Marquette County.

For more information about the UPVN and the volunteer matching database call 1-877-339-6884 or visit upvolunteer.org.

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Photo and Cutline information

Youth Award: [AlixRugg.jpg](#)

Adult Award: [BarbSiira.jpg](#)

Senior Award: [TomEwing.jpg](#)

Volunteer Program Award: [BellAuxilliary.jpg](#) (from left, Maureen Mitchell, JoAnn Betts, Diane Betts, Kaye Frederickson, Mary Mitchell, Bonnie Kimball)

Business Community Leader Award: [Coleman.jpg](#) (from left, Mark Girard, JoAnn Matonich, Marie Ross, Brian Game, Kevin Trevillian, Toni Strutz, Myron Berry, Tom Gordon)

Volunteer Connect Award: [AMCABRose.jpg](#) (from left, Rose Bullis, Karen Duquette)