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And the Voluntony Goes to...

OLYMPIA – Friday, May 21st, community members dressed up in their best evening wear to walk the red carpet and pose for photos at the first ever *Voluntonies Award Show*, to honor volunteers and hardworking nonprofits in the area. Presented by The Volunteer Center of Lewis, Mason, and Thurston Counties, the Hollywood-style volunteer award show, hosted at the historic Capitol Theater in downtown Olympia, offered guests a chance to feel like celebrities while accepting awards for the services they offer on a regular basis.

“Volunteers work so hard and give so much of themselves to the community that we wanted to treat them to a special night out in honor of all the good things they do,” said Sara Ballard, Executive Director of the Volunteer Center. “It was great to see everyone dressed up and enjoying the evening.”

Sponsored by Olympia Federal Savings, The Olympia Film Society, OBEE Credit Union, Capital Medical Center and TCTV, the night’s festivities began at 6 p.m. with guests arriving on the red carpet in style to be interviewed by Jolene Jang and TCTV who filmed the event for later broadcast on the station.

“Jolene added glamour and personality to our red carpet talking with guests about their volunteer work and commenting on their wardrobe. She was our very own Joan Rivers for the night!” said event planner Heather Smith.

Before the show guests were able to mingle, get their photos taken and buy tickets for a chance to spin the prize wheel. The big ticket item, a script signed by the cast of ABC’s *Private Practice*, was raffled off as a fundraiser for the Volunteer Center.

The award show featured a comedic routine and song from local performers Bob Giles and Vaude de Ville who sang about the virtues of volunteering to the tune of “You Are My Sunshine.”

“We were absolutely delighted, both Bob and I, to be invited and it turned out to be just a bucket of fun,” said de Ville.

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Over 100 Retired Senior Volunteer Program participants were honored with the RSVP President's Award for their work with various organizations. Presenters then handed out awards for a variety of group and individual efforts that highlighted some of the best ideas and strategies for volunteering in the area.

After the award show, guests joined the Volunteer Center board of directors and staff at a fundraising after party at The Mark Restaurant to screen the "Movies About Change" award winning video from the MPowerment Project.

"The idea for the Voluntonies came last Fall when several prime time shows featured volunteerism in their story lines. What better way to end our Hollywood inspired award show than by screening videos that spotlight real volunteerism in our own community?" said Ballard. "We're hoping to continue this tradition next year."

The mission of the Volunteer Center of Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties is to support volunteer efforts to address community needs; and inspire, engage, and mobilize volunteers. The Center accomplishes this mission by connecting people with opportunities to serve, offering volunteer management training and the promotion of volunteerism. The Center also provides more than 3,000 volunteer referrals per year, works with more than 250 nonprofit and public agencies in its service area and offers more than 650 volunteer opportunities through its Web site at www.volunteer.ws

Voluntony award recipients included:

Community Champion: David Dec, GRuB
Honorable Mention: Scott Bishop, Interfaith Works

Inspirational Achievement: Clarice McCartan, Drexel House
Honorable Mention: Shawn Smith, Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department, Chronic Disease Prevention Section

Cool Collaborators:
Rochester Community Gardens
Honorable Mention: Kristen West, Choice Regional Health Network

Global Thinker: Lena Hammond, GRuB

RSVP LEAD with Experience:
Eldon Francis, Wolfhaven
Honorable Mention: Mary Belz, Friends of the Olympia Library

Emerging Leader: TIE
DJ Hammer, Centralia Hospital and James Lee, Capital Medical Center

Team Impact:
Capital Medical Center's Spiritual Care Givers
Honorable Mention: The Timothy Team

Movies about Change:
Justin Taylor, the MPowerment Project

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