

# Tribute!

eliminating racism  
empowering women **ywca**

*2008* AWARDS CELEBRATION

Presented by the YWCA West Central Michigan with Title Sponsor



# agenda

**November 12, 2008**

Noon to 1:30 p.m.

DeVos Place

## **Welcome**

Elsa Kerr

*Chairperson*

Board of Directors

YWCA West Central Michigan

Michelle VanDyke

*President/CEO*

Fifth Third Bank Western Michigan

Jessica Murphy

*Co-Chairperson*

YWCA TRIBUTE! Awards 2008 Steering Committee

Ellen James

*Co-Chairperson*

YWCA TRIBUTE! Awards 2008 Steering Committee

## **Invocation**

The Reverend Valerie Ambrose

St. Andrews Episcopal Church

Executive Director, Legal Assistance Center

## **Luncheon**

### **Awards Presentation**

Ellen James

Jessica Murphy

*Thank you for attending!*



## **Leslie King-Borrego**

*Founder/CEO*

*Sacred Beginnings*

*Nominated by Lindsey Shull*

July 4, 2000

While others were preparing for traditional Independence Day festivities, Leslie King-Borrego checked into a motel with vodka, a fistful of pills, and vials of crack. She had survived sexual abuse, a childhood filled with domestic violence and alcoholism, jail, and over a decade on Grand Rapids' streets as a prostituted woman addicted to drugs. She was raped, beaten, stabbed, and even shot. Leslie recalls, "I just wanted it to be over. I stopped believing in God a long time ago, but as I faded, I said one last time 'God, if You're there, help me.' And He did." In a haze, Leslie reached the phone and called her mother who had not heard from her in months.

Now, on any given day, you can find Leslie walking the streets that were once her home and counseling women who are struggling to survive just as she had. She worked at Rose Haven, a local refuge for prostituted women, until it closed in 2003. Leslie leads a support group - Prostitution Anonymous - for women trying to leave prostitution or to heal afterwards. She is a regular presenter throughout Michigan, sharing the details of her experience to broaden our understanding about how to prevent prostitution and best support its victims. To address the crime at its source, Leslie

speaks to classes for men arrested for soliciting sex.

Leslie is also a member of our local Prostitution Round Table - a coalition of community members dedicated to understanding the complexity of prostitution and creating effective responses. In its early research, the group identified one of our community's greatest gaps as the lack of a 24-hour safe refuge designed uniquely to support prostituted women.

In 2005 Leslie began filling that gap. While also working toward an Associates degree, which she earned this year, she opened Sacred Beginnings, a peer-mentored and managed safe haven specifically for prostituted and drug-addicted women. Three years later, Sacred Beginnings has grown to include four homes and provides a safe, supervised living environment, peer mentoring, counseling, case-management, legal advocacy, outreach, and 24-hour crisis intervention. On a shoestring budget of just \$54,000 a year and without professional compensation, Leslie and her sister Dr. Dorothy Stokely care for almost 30 women at Sacred Beginnings.

Healing from her experiences did not come easily, but Leslie is convinced that they are what give her credibility. "I know all the things that make it seem impossible to climb out of that life. These women are my inspiration. I broke my silence to help them do the same."



**Sue Stauffacher**

*Children's Author*

*Nominated by Suzie MacKeigan*

Sue Stauffacher is a prolific and passionate writer with four novels, two picture books, a book of retold folk tales, and a comic book series to her credit. She has been honored by the American Library Association, the Women's National Book Association, Borders Bookstores, the Library of Michigan and the New York Public Library.

For Sue, her art is a way to open doors for children, particularly those who struggle to read, find little encouragement elsewhere, or rarely see positive images of their personal communities. She uses her gift to craft stories around difficult and emotional issues - child neglect, single parenthood, bullying, parental incarceration - letting her young readers know that they are not alone and encouraging them to believe in themselves. Through her art, Sue brings to life courageous and interesting characters that reflect America's diversity. Most recently, her picture book *Nothing But Trouble: The Story of Althea Gibson*, who was the first African-American woman to compete and win at Wimbledon, won the 2008 N.A.A.C.P. Image Award for Excellence in Children's Literature.

Knowing that in Kent County alone one in five adults is functionally illiterate, Sue draws children to reading by making her work engaging and relevant to their lives. She is deeply concerned about educational inequity, knowing

the devastating personal consequences for children and families, particularly those with few resources, when they cannot read.

To make reading possible for more children, Sue has funneled over \$50,000 worth of engaging new trade books into the Grand Rapids Public Schools, dedicates her personal time as a mentor, and has developed an innovative literacy tool - a comic book series called *Wireman* that is designed specifically to appeal to older elementary and middle-school children who still cannot or do not read. To develop the storyline for *Wireman*, Sue consulted with hundreds of children. She also hired illustrators from economically-challenged schools. When her New York publishers failed to see the market possibilities, Sue and her husband, GVSU writing professor Roger Gilles, published the comics themselves in order to get them into the hands of young people. With only word-of-mouth advertising, *Wireman* has received orders from 35 states. In May 2008, *Wireman* was featured in *School Library Journal*.

Currently, Sue directs the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Aquinas College.

Both an educator and the mother of two teen-aged sons, Sue refuses to see children denied the chance to imagine, to explore, and to thrive. "I grew up surrounded by books that I loved, and my children have had that, too. Every child should."



# *business, management, industry and labor*



**Leann D. Arkema, M.A.**

*President/CEO*

*Gilda's Club Grand Rapids*

*Nominated by Holly Jacoby*

Women are often at the center of a family's well-being. When cancer is diagnosed, women remain at that center... whether as patients or caregivers. As President/CEO of Gilda's Club Grand Rapids since its 1997 founding, Leann Arkema has helped develop new approaches to social and emotional support for those living with cancer, giving women the resources and human connection they need for themselves and their families.

Gilda's Club has an incalculable benefit in women's lives, but it is designed to support anyone living with cancer. More precisely, over 35,000 children and adults to date. And all at no cost to members.

Meeting that mission is Leann's passion. As a result, Gilda's Club Grand Rapids is the largest North American affiliate with 22 staff members, over 1,000 volunteers, and an annual budget exceeding \$1 million. Gilda's Club serves people from 27 counties with more than 22,000 people coming through its signature Red Door annually.

Gilda's Club provides a rich array of resources for the myriad of issues patients and their loved ones face. These include topical lectures and social events; more than 20 support and networking groups; 16 children and teen groups; affinity groups on everything from yoga and gardening to quilting and Reiki; and

guidance for a patient's support network in managing the details of the cancer journey. Currently, Leann is working to establish yet another resource - one to support grieving children. She has also helped forge a collaboration that is establishing a Lakeshore area Gilda's Club under the auspices of the Grand Rapids Club.

Locally, Gilda's partners reflect an intentional effort to ensure that traditionally underserved communities will find the culturally-appropriate support they deserve. Working in concert with the Sister-To-Sister Breast Cancer Support Group for Women of Color, Leann was instrumental in providing a permanent home for the group and connecting African American women to the breadth of Gilda's Club resources.

Under Leann's management, Gilda's Club Grand Rapids is a worldwide model for its innovation and effectiveness. She marries fiscal acumen with vision and an intuitive sense of community need. She has formed one of the strongest resources available for those living with cancer and in short order made Gilda's Club indispensable to our community's broader health-care response. With more than 12,000 new cases of cancer diagnosed in West Michigan annually, her impact is profound.

Cancer touches everyone. With each new patient's diagnosis friends and family, neighbors and colleagues are touched too. Leann has deepened our sensitivity to the most important aspect of care - the human aspect.

# community service



## **Mary Angelo**

*Executive Director*

Roosevelt Park Neighborhood  
Association

*Nominated by Beth Goebel*

Life started for Mary Angelo in the Roosevelt Park neighborhood, and for the last 18 years she has dedicated countless hours and immeasurable energy to her early home. In a favorite photograph of herself, Mary is standing in front of Roosevelt Park's Hall Elementary School - 7 years old, proudly showing off her home-made dance costume and scuffed-up tap shoes. She describes discovering the photo, saying, "I felt I had come full circle."

The Roosevelt Park neighborhood has historically been a gateway for new immigrants - first German, then Dutch and now Hispanic. As the neighborhood aged and community investment shifted, Roosevelt Park began to show the tell-tale signs of an urban neighborhood in distress: crumbling streets, vacant storefronts, poverty and crime. It was into that environment that Mary re-entered, seeing the problems but recognizing a unique place with hope and potential.

The most visible indicators of her efforts are those that are well beyond the purview of her paid, professional role. Mary spearheaded the \$1.9 million fundraising effort to create the Grandville Avenue Academy for the Arts, which provides children and adults a place for cultural activities and learning. It has proven so popular that it has already outgrown its space.

When the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan had to leave its old home - a dilapidated, century-old firehouse - Mary moved into action to preserve that valuable neighborhood icon.

Serving as capital campaign chair, she helped organizational and neighborhood leaders raise \$1.3 million to restore the firehouse so that the Hispanic Center could move back into the facility that now houses family support services, cultural, youth education, and job training programs.

Mary's hand can be seen in Roosevelt Park's new "Cook Library Center" as well. Five times larger than the original 900-square-foot library, the new facility boasts 12 computers, a community room, private study rooms, help with homework, and enough books to serve the library's 11,000 annual patrons.

Unassuming and pragmatic, Mary has helped to show community investors the unique value of the Roosevelt Park neighborhood and its residents - particularly the children. Her efforts prove the adage "success begets success". Property values have increased by 100%. Once vacant storefronts now house vibrant businesses. Roosevelt Park, always a gateway for immigrant generations but temporarily marginalized by age and neglect, today thrives as the epicenter of our community's vibrant Hispanic culture. Mary has proven herself a forceful advocate for the justice and equality Roosevelt Park's residents deserve. In doing so, she has strengthened the whole of our community.



# professions



**Dr. Gayle R. Davis**

*Provost and Vice President for  
Academic Affairs*

*Grand Valley State University*

*Nominated by Dr. Wendy Wenner*

At Grand Valley State University's new faculty orientation in August, Dr. Gayle Davis shared her philosophy with the educators responsible for shaping their students' understanding of the world. Citing William Cronon, noted environmental historian, she said, "the ultimate value in an educated person is that they 'connect'. These are the people who can critically discern the path of integrity, humaneness, and appreciation of the world's diversity."

Gayle has dedicated her career to these principles and to ensuring the doors to opportunity are opened wide. She has created educational infrastructures and academic cultures that are both accessible and welcoming. As GVSU's de facto Chief Operating Officer, Gayle's efforts are especially profound viewed against a backdrop, which ranks Michigan as 38th nationwide for women's educational attainment.

With a leadership style characterized by vision, intelligence, and inclusiveness, Gayle has gained university-wide respect. The result allowed her to implement a long-desired and improved reorganization of GVSU's 8 colleges. She worked to create more equitable workloads and evaluations, and to fund additional faculty positions each year so students are not forced to endure costly waits for required courses.

Gayle is intentional in broadening the perspectives and talent that comprises GVSU's Academic Affairs Leadership Team, as well. While women have made gains in the number of faculty appointments in the U.S., they still represent just one-third of associate professors and one-fifth of full professors who ultimately fill the ranks of university leadership. Today, at GVSU more than half of the Academic Affairs Leadership Team is made up of women and people of color. Further still, Gayle helped to successfully lobby for the establishment of GVSU's first Vice President of Inclusion and Equity.

She was instrumental in the University's decision to extend medical and insurance benefits to the households of all university employees, including their unmarried gay and straight partners. In doing so, GVSU - our region's largest university - has strengthened its competitiveness as an employer-of-choice within Michigan.

A community has few assets more precious than those created through education - the ability of a society to adapt to forces beyond its control, produce leaders whose actions are informed by heart and logic, harness ingenuity in ways that ensure the well-being of the most vulnerable. As the first woman to hold the post of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at GVSU and in less than 7 years in that role, Gayle has helped us move closer to these ideals.

# sports, fitness and wellness

**Barbara M. Hile**

*Director, Marrow/  
Stem Cell Program*

*Michigan Community Blood Centers*

*Nominated by Anne Pugliese and  
Terri MacDonald*

As the first director for the Michigan Community Blood Centers' Marrow/Stem Cell Program, Barbara Hile has constructed a bridge between critically-ill patients and the individuals who carry within themselves the potential for life-saving cures. Barbara has grown what was once a part-time job into a full-time statewide operation ranked as the third busiest in the nation with a registry of more than 51,000 potential donors. Each year, she identifies 1,200 potential matches and coordinates 80 actual donations in hope of successfully treating over 50 life-threatening diseases - including leukemia, aplastic anemia, and sickle-cell anemia.

The need is extraordinary, but particularly for people-of-color. The success of a marrow/stem cell transplant in saving a patient's life is dependent on how well her cells match those from her donor. The best matches are from family, yet just 30% find suitable matches this way. Adding to the challenge for people-of-color, while they suffer from illnesses at similar rates as whites, there are far fewer registered donors from these communities. Throughout the country each day, over 6,000 patients are searching for a suitable match. Their chances are an astronomical 1 in 20,000. For people-of-color the chances are considerably slimmer. Only 30% of those in the national registry represent communities of color.

In response, Barbara has forged key partnerships with the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, the African American, Hispanic and Latino annual conferences, and faith-based and other groups within the local Asian and American Indian communities. This year, over 400 people-of-color have stepped forward to join the Michigan Community Blood Centers' registry and increase the likelihood that patients from their own communities will find the life-saving matches they need.

The cost associated with testing donors can climb to \$125 per person. Barbara works to reduce the barriers that could prohibit individuals from being tested, particularly within underrepresented communities. She often supplements the MCBC budget with fundraising endeavors that range from corporate partnerships to spaghetti dinners to golf outings.

While Barbara's most visible work is centered on recruiting donors, she is an equally passionate advocate for the patients who turn to her. For families living with life-threatening illness, she is quick to offer her shoulder to lean on. Barbara is a priceless resource to patients in addressing the myriad of issues they face and navigating a maze of supportive services.

In the face of crisis, Barbara offers the pragmatic help and encouragement to patients in situations that all too easily feel disempowering. And in doing so she offers us the rare privilege of witnessing hope reborn.



# *judy lloyd leadership award*

## *presented by the ywca board of directors*



### **Judy Lloyd**

September 18, 1945 to June 1, 2005

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."*

-John Quincy Adams

It was this way with Judy Lloyd as well. Her kindness and extraordinary grasp of the issues facing our community, inspired countless numbers to follow Judy's lead. She was a role model for us all; the most graceful and respected of leaders. Judy led in a quiet, unassuming way – connecting individuals and organizations to the benefit of those most in need. She was a cheerleader and a touchstone, knowing who to bring to the table to get a job done and then devoting herself wholeheartedly to the tasks needed to get there. She touched hearts and strengthened our community at the same time. Judy's passing was met with an outpouring of generosity in her memory. These gifts which the YWCA has housed at the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, are directed to long-term support of our services to create a community supportive of women and their families.

Within the YWCA, Judy's two-decades of influence was immeasurable. She participated on the TRIBUTE! Steering and Selection Committees. She helped establish and grow the YWCA's Circle of Women Celebration exponentially. Judy was a mem-

ber of our Finance Committee, helping manage finite resources to effectively address the seemingly infinite challenges facing women and girls. She led the YWCA's Board of Directors during some of the organization's most historic moments and helped to lay the foundation for fundamental change in the national YWCA. And through each moment, with each task, Judy offered those she worked with warm words of encouragement and the practical hands-on help to succeed beyond expectations.

With a corps of volunteers who resemble Judy's dedication and quiet leadership, the YWCA has worked hard over the last century to create an environment that allows women and girls to thrive and lead. The TRIBUTE! Student Award is an extension of that. We honor those young women who, while still in high school, have already shown themselves to be gifted, competent models for us all. The connection between these young women and Judy is natural and apparent. It is most appropriate that the Student Leadership Award should bear her name.

Inspired by Judy's life and work, the YWCA Board of Directors chose to establish the Student Leadership Award in her honor. It is designed to offer practical help to TRIBUTE! student honorees as they work to fulfill their dreams. It is in this way that we recognize Judy and commit ourselves to a future motivated by her values and example.

# *student honoree*

## *and recipient of the judy lloyd leadership award*



**Rosa Lopez**

*Senior*

Lee High School

*Nominated by Amy Brower*

Rosa Lopez quietly reflects on how she felt when she and her family arrived in the United States from her native Mexico, saying "I was so nervous but my parents kept encouraging me and I knew that I could do so much here." Determined, Rosa mastered the new culture and language that surrounded her. As proof of her success, Rosa maintains a 3.5 GPA, and is once again listed in the National Honors Society. In just a few short years she has become a role model for her classmates, teachers, and countless others.

Rosa has played on Lee High School's soccer team and is Treasurer for the Lee Student Council and Spanish Club. She earned a varsity letter as an active member of Rebel Readers, a Lee High School literacy program. To mentor incoming students and help them adjust to high school, Rosa participates in Freshman Focus, which pairs seniors with incoming freshmen.

Rosa credits her parents with much of her achievement and holds firmly to the values she learned at home. At the center of these are respect and a desire to improve life for others. To this end, Rosa finds ways to marry her own interests with opportunities to help. She

loves art and can be found regularly at the Grandville Avenue Academy for the Arts assisting in children's arts programs and helping at the front desk. This summer, she volunteered over 60 hours as a junior counselor at the Arts Academy's Summer Arts Camp, working with 47 young campers.

An equally avid reader, Rosa is a fixture at the Grandville Avenue Neighborhood Library. There she does everything from shelving books to assisting the library director to tutoring younger students with their homework. Last year, Rosa also assisted with First Communion classes for the 8 and 9 year olds every Sunday.

Once overwhelmed by the opportunity presented to her in her new country, Rosa now eagerly embraces the countless paths it offers. As she moves into her final high school year, she finds herself enthusiastic about the prospect of college and learning the skills she needs to become a successful entrepreneur perhaps in fashion marketing...combining her interest in business and art. She is particularly intent on succeeding because of the opportunities it will provide her younger siblings.

Rooted in tradition, deeply committed to her family, and passionate about the future before her, Rosa has proven herself an extraordinary example to young women throughout our community.