

2011  
*Tribute!*  
*Awards*  
*Celebration*

**eliminating racism  
empowering women**

**ywca**

Title Sponsor



# agenda

**November 9, 2011**

Noon to 1:30 p.m.

DeVos Place

## **Welcome**

Ingrid Jensen

*President, YWCA Board of Directors*

Mary Gill-Thornton

*Co-Chair, YWCA TRIBUTE! Awards Steering Committee*

*Member, YWCA Board of Directors*

Michelle VanDyke

*Regional President, Fifth Third Bank*

Stan Greene

*Honorary Co-Chair, YWCA TRIBUTE! Awards Steering Committee*

*Secretary, YWCA Board of Directors*

## **Reflection**

Mary Vaccaro

*Director, Dominican Center at Marywood*

## **Luncheon**

### **Awards Presentation**

Stan Greene

Mary Gill-Thornton

*Thank you for attending!*

**Lori "Maranda" Cook**

*Child and Family Services  
Manager*

WOOD TV8, WOTV 4,  
and WXSP TV

*Nominated by Jamie Allen*

A West Michigan radio studio is a long way from the Shakespearean stages of London, but geographic distance aside, the two can be credited with helping to inspire one of our community's most trusted advocates for children and parents.

Not long out of college, Lori Cook found herself in the enviable position of creating and hosting a morning radio program for children. It was a place she readily admits she did not expect to land after studying theater at the universities of Cambridge and London. But the energy, creativity, and composure the stage requires had prepared her well. With a nod to the innocent, childlike character from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, "Maranda" was born.

Since that time, Maranda's presence has expanded into television, print, the web, and social networking as a way to educate and entertain children, bridge gaps to ensure they can succeed, and provide parents with useful information. "Maranda Park Parties" – six, large-scale, summer events filled with safe, kid-friendly entertainment, music, and art – draw more than 40,000 annually. Lori secures business sponsorships to ensure that the events are completely free. Further, as means of addressing local hunger, children who attend get a free sack lunch through a partnership

initiated by Lori with local school food service programs, the Michigan Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Working with eighty-five local libraries, Lori coordinates prizes, promotion, and hosts events to reward young readers in "Maranda's Summer Reading Clubs". To help teachers obtain items needed for their classrooms, she partnered with area businesses and used Maranda's online presence to launch "Teacher's Wish List." Other efforts include "Fundy-Undy"-drives to collect undergarments for children in need and "Beautiful U", a workshop designed for seventh- and eighth-grade girls which explores topics such as self-esteem, bullying, health, and fashion. Regularly, Lori uses her work with the News in Education Program with the *Grand Rapids Press* and "Where You Live"-weekly television program to cover similar topics, as well as those that look at issues of diversity.

Lori serves on the boards of directors for the John Ball Zoological Society, Grace Adventures, and the Equest Center for Therapeutic Riding. She has earned an Emmy nomination, three national Gracie Allen Awards from the Alliance for Women in Media, the American Women in Radio and Television West Michigan Chapter's Lifetime Achievement Award, and a LIN Television Circle of Excellence Award. Twice "Where You Live" has received the Michigan Association of Broadcasters Award for Best Special Interest Programming.





**Diane McElfish Helle**

*Violinist*

Grand Rapids Symphony  
Perugino String Quartet/ Quartet  
in Residence, Grand Valley State  
University

*Nominated by Karen Henry Stokes*

For years, and often still, the most acceptable role for women in music has been as performers. Like so many professions, a glass ceiling prevented women from moving into positions of leadership and authority. Yet, since moving to Grand Rapids, Diane McElfish Helle, possessing tremendous artistic talent and a desire to share the gift of music with others, has gently and unassumingly moved beyond that ceiling and strengthened our community's artistic fabric.

Diane has spent much of her career in roles that ensure the Grand Rapids Symphony's vibrancy, accessibility, and structural well-being. She has been invaluable in nurturing the relationship between the Symphony's musicians and management, in helping define its strategic direction, and in enhancing its outreach efforts. She served as a member and later as Chair of the Orchestra Committee, which is the official group recognized by the musicians' union to represent issues affecting Orchestra members. Diane was also elected by her fellow musicians to be the Orchestra representative on the Symphony's Board of Directors.

Combining her strategic role with her passion for musical education, Diane

has been integral in the Symphony's Education Committee. In total, the Symphony's musical education programs reach 77,000 children annually. She was active in the creation and development of the Symphony's popular "Up Beat" pre-concert presentations – one of the country's first such programs – as a way to provide concert-goers with insights into the music for a particular performance. Diane has also worked with the Symphony's Mosaic Scholarship Program which provides African-American and Hispanic students with the opportunity to develop their instrumental skills.

Diane has taken her love of music beyond the symphonic setting as well. Over the years, she has taught more than 130 students and was nominated as Teacher of the Year by the Board of the Michigan American String Teachers Association. She has volunteered to play at venues as varied as the Hard Times Café, area retirement homes, and hospitals. As an Elder at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Diane helped found the congregation's Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration designed to bring the community together through the sharing of music, food, poetry and art.

For all the good and benefit that our community has realized as a result of her effort, Diane's motivation is really about the experience that music brings to the individual. In her own words, "Music offers soul-sustaining gifts. It is a treasure to be enjoyed, shared, and passed on."

# *business, management, industry and labor*



**Carol Lopucki**

*State Director*

Michigan Small Business and  
Technology Development Center

*Nominated by Betty Burton Groce*

Helping others create a measure of independence in their lives has been the consistent theme in Carol Lopucki's career. As a special education teacher, she helped her students gain the confidence and skills they needed to more fully participate in our community. As Executive Director of Indian Trails Camp, she and her staff provided an environment that allowed individuals with disabilities the freedom to enjoy much of what the outside world could not offer. As the first employee of the Alliance of Women Entrepreneurs—director of one of two women-focused Michigan Small Business Administration national pilot programs—she gave women the tools they needed to make the entrepreneurial leap on their own. It is in the context of financial independence that Carol's work is particularly meaningful, especially for those who find themselves living at the margins. For those groups, entrepreneurship and the jobs they create are the bridges by which they can move ahead.

A little over a decade ago as then director of the West Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC) based at Grand Valley State University, Carol spearheaded the efforts that transformed the West Michigan office into the state's SBDC headquarters. Charged with counseling, research, training and advocacy for new and

existing business ventures, Carol has strengthened the make-up of our state's economy. Carol's vision, business acumen, and collaborative skill have made Michigan a national model and one of the top five SBDC programs in the country.

Soon after taking the helm of the state SBDC headquarters, Carol secured funding to enhance entrepreneurial opportunities in the technology-sector. Collaborating with Smart Zones, universities, and other entrepreneurial-related organizations, Michigan is one of just eight SBDCs in the country to hold the additional "technology" designation. Carol implemented a statewide initiative with the Michigan Credit Union League to increase lending to small businesses. With the governor's office, she established roundtable peer groups designed to support entrepreneurs at the local level. Most recently, she secured a \$3.5 million two-year award to manage a statewide commercialization accelerator fund.

In just eleven years, the MI-SBTDC's regional-, satellite-, and affiliate-offices, business resource centers, and business consultants have served more than 100,000 clients. Beyond this, the MI-SBTDC has created the greatest number of jobs among participants in the 21st Century Jobs Fund capital investment program in Michigan.

In all that she does, Carol has proven to be one of most innovative and successful advocates for business. With each achievement, she has improved Michigan's economy and countless lives.



# community service



**Jacqueline "Jackie" D. Taylor,  
Ph.D.**

*Consultant/ Executive Coach*

*Pondera Advisors*

*Nominated by Cecilia Cunningham*

Jackie Taylor's name appears again and again on the volunteer rosters of dozens of organizations that are working to improve the lives of women and families, to broaden access to education, and to create a deeper kinship among cultures and nations. She believes this is where some of the most profound change can impact individual lives and a community, and where she has dedicated countless hours, most often in key leadership roles. Having raised two boys and attending college at the same time as they did, Jackie is well acquainted with the challenges that women can face joining or succeeding in the workforce. She was instrumental in establishing the West Michigan Chapter of INFORUM, a network designed to support women's personal and professional growth. To develop women leaders and bring recognition to their achievements, Jackie has actively served ATHENA International and Grand Rapids ATHENA. As Vice Chair of the Michigan Women's Foundation, she focuses on identifying meaningful ways to improve the economic well-being of women and girls, and helped establish a fund to invest in early-stage businesses owned by disadvantaged women in Michigan's urban areas.

The last ten years of Jackie's thirty-year career in university administration were

spent as Vice President of Davenport University. Mindful of doors that were opened to her through education, Jackie is unceasing in her commitment to expand educational opportunities. She serves on the Board of Directors for "School-To-Career Progressions" which prepares students to be successful in school and beyond. She co-chaired the Literacy Center of West Michigan's capital campaign. A "Spartan" to the core, Jackie served on the National Advisory Council for Michigan State University's College of Education and MSU National Alumni Board.

Combining her love of learning with a deeply held interest in cultural relations, Jackie and her family established an award at MSU's College of Education for doctoral candidates whose research focuses on building bridges of international and intercultural understanding. Jackie chairs the Rotary District Ambassadorial Scholarship Committee, and served as President of the Grand Rapids Rotary Club. She was Board President of the World Affairs Council of Western Michigan, and served on the Business Diversity Committee for the Summit on Healing Racism. She currently chairs the YMCA International Committee.

The extraordinary effect that Jackie has had is profound – touching individuals, reaching into the institutions with which they interact, and influencing the very cultural tone of our community. In doing so, she has helped us grow.

# professions



## **Ana Aleman-Putman**

*Principal*

Burton Elementary and  
Middle School

*Nominated by Barnes &  
Thornburg LLP*

To paraphrase author Elaine Bernstein Partnow, “What a child experiences inside a classroom dictates to a large extent what she will experience in the larger world.” In ways that better resemble a life’s mission than a profession, Ana Aleman-Putman has set about to prepare her students for what they will face, but more importantly for who they can become.

Ana began her career as an elementary teacher in the Grand Rapids Public School System (GRPS). Her classroom successes brought her to the attention of GRPS’ leadership, and she was soon encouraged to participate in the school system’s program designed to prepare future administrators. Although she knew that she could help more children at an administrative level, tears still come to her eyes when she recalls the bittersweet decision to leave the classroom.

Her assignment as Principal of Cesar Chavez Elementary was a proving ground. Ninety-eight percent of students are eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program. To help them overcome the limitations that such poverty brings, Ana worked to strengthen their families, to believe in themselves, and to increase the resources in their classroom.

She initiated monthly parent meetings to educate parents on the school’s curriculum. To give parents comfortable access to services and resources that their families need, Ana recruited local agencies to attend the school’s Welcome Back and Parent Nights. Because sick and unhealthy children struggle to learn, she partnered with Blue Cross Blue Shield and the Michigan State College of Human Medicine to implement a school-wide health program. She encouraged mothers to learn to drive so they could help their children take advantage of after-school academic opportunities. At times she even personally paid the fees associated with fingerprint documentation, allowing parents to secure employment. Ana acquired funding from throughout the community to ensure that her students had what they needed to learn in the classroom. She recruited local companies, including Wells Fargo, Barnes and Thornburg, and Varnum, to tutor students and underwrite a range of educational experiences such as trips to Michigan’s capitol. The cumulative effect of her efforts raised Cesar Chavez Elementary School’s No Child Left Behind-Adequate Yearly Progress rating from “D” to “B” and set her students on a path for success.

Now in her second year as Principal of Burton Elementary and Middle school, one of GRPS’ largest campuses, Ana is already making similar progress. And for each child who walks through those school doors, their future has brightened.



# *sports, fitness and wellness*



## **Patty Sellner**

*Athletic Trainer/*

*Community Wellness*

The Center for Physical  
Rehabilitation

Forest Hills Northern High School

*Nominated by Laurie Kuna*

Patty Sellner jokes that when she was growing up, her hometown was so small, girls got to play all the sports because there simply weren't enough kids. She loved every minute of it.

Patty carried that same enthusiasm into adulthood. Now, as an athletic trainer she helps athletes stay healthy and when the unfortunate injury does occur, she helps them heal so they can get back to what they love. She holds a degree in Health Science with an emphasis in anatomy and sports medicine, is a certified strength and conditioning specialist, and has gained extensive experience in aquatic rehabilitation. In total Patty has logged over twenty years in her field and at each turn, has earned the respect of those with whom she works.

During her tenure as head athletic trainer at Lowell High School (LHS), Patty created, supervised, and team-taught a student athletic training program financed through grant funding which she secured. In six years, approximately 120 LHS students received athletic training instruction as a means of introducing them to the field. Moreover, the program – LHS' only health-related career class – put students in a position where they could provide meaningful assistance to athletes.

Currently, through a partnership with the Center for Physical Rehabilitation (CPR), Patty is contracted as the on-site athletic trainer for Forest Hills Northern High School (FHN). Through CPR, Patty has implemented important injury-reduction programs at FHN, as well as, within Comstock Park and Forest Hills Central high schools. Focused specifically on preventing knee injury, "Sportsmetrics" has been credited with eliminating serious knee injuries for those schools' student athletes within the last three years.

Patty's successes in community wellness are equally notable. During her time as Lowell's Community Wellness Director, she developed and implemented the popular "100 Miles in 100 Days"-community walking program. Through CPR at FHN, Patty introduced the "Healthy Husky Pedometer Challenge" that attracted over 150 staff walkers this year and raises money for health-related charities in Grand Rapids.

Patty helped develop the wellness policy for Lowell Area Schools, created wellness projects for all ages building many partnerships in the process, launched food drives at LHS athletic events, and expanded the Lowell Community Health Fair. As a member of Lowell's Pink Arrow Pride breast cancer awareness effort, Patty initiated the first steps that ultimately established Gilda's Club in Lowell.

From the classroom to the athletic field and into our daily lives, Patty's influence has helped create better practitioners, strong athletes, and a healthier community.



# *judy lloyd student leadership award scholarship*

## *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 (now, Open Circle) Celebration exponentially.

Judy was a member 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 with whom she worked warm words of encouragement and the practical hands-on help to succeed.

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 Scholarship should bear her name.

Inspired by Judy's life and work, the YWCA Board of Directors chose to establish the Student Leadership Award Scholarship 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 ywca's judy lloyd student leadership award scholarship*



## **Kacie Gee**

*Senior*

*Sparta High School*

*Nominated by Teresa Converse*

Kacie Gee has succeeded despite a childhood filled with experiences and choices that could have easily derailed her, at minimum, from finishing high school. The fact that she made the choice to profoundly and fundamentally change her life just two years ago further underscores the exceptionality of her achievements.

Kacie admits that it was difficult, but says, "I finally realized that I'm worth it. It became easier to do what I needed to then."

Now a senior and with a 3.97 GPA, Kacie is poised to graduate at the top of her class and plans to enter medical school, ultimately specializing in neonatology. She is well on her way. Kacie earned a medical internship at St. Mary's Hospital in the neonatal and emergency medical units, where she also volunteers five hours each Sunday. To gain additional experience, she takes classes at Kent Career Technical Center (KCTC) and will begin working at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans this winter.

Naturally charismatic and empathetic, Kacie has become something of a "go-to" volunteer. She is a leader in her youth

group, helping other girls realize that they too have the ability to reach their potential. She spent much of her time this spring at Meadowlark Retirement Village, enjoying residents' stories and helping them as needed. She has provided meals at Degage Ministries and planted trees for a green-park initiative. Through her church's outreach ministry, she helped with yard work for several home-bound members. In May, Kacie took on her largest volunteer project yet after learning that the family of one of KCTC's security guards lost everything they owned in the tornado that leveled Joplin, Missouri. She quickly organized a fundraiser for the guard's family and the others who lost so much. In a matter of days, more than twenty large boxes of clothing, food, water, books and blankets were collected and on their way to the devastated town.

There are myriad ways to describe Kacie. Intelligent. Kind. Frank. Funny. Generous. Confident. And while one word or one story can never adequately capture the depth of a person, it is apparent that Kacie's optimism and determination are most central to who she is. When the seventeen year old was recently faced with having to replace her car – her only transportation to work and internship – her response was to smile and say with every confidence, "I'll figure it out."