



Tribute!

eliminating racism
empowering women **ywca**

2017 AWARDS CELEBRATION

Wednesday, November 8, 2017

#ywtribute

With Title Sponsor



FIFTH THIRD
BANK

AGENDA

YWCA Tribute Awards

November 8, 2017

Noon to 1:30 p.m.

DeVos Place

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Welcome

Doug Wilterdink

President, YWCA Board of Directors

Charisse Mitchell

CEO, YWCA West Central Michigan

Tom Welch

Regional President, Fifth Third Bank Western Michigan

Michelle VanTorre-Tellier

Member, YWCA Board of Directors

Co-chair, Tribute Awards Planning Committee

Luncheon

Awards Presentation

Michelle VanTorre-Tellier

Member, YWCA Board of Directors

Co-chair, Tribute Awards Planning Committee

Patrick Lonergan

Co-chair, Tribute Awards Planning Committee

ADVOCACY



Dr. Veneése Chandler
Executive Director/ CEO
Family Outreach Center, Inc.
Nominated by Carol Paine-McGovern

Admittedly reluctant at first, Dr. Veneése Chandler – fondly referred to as “Dr. V.” – took the helm of the Family Outreach Center (FOC) in 1983, just five years after it opened its doors and at a point that it faced the very real prospect of closing. Its funding had been cut in half and it had a skeleton crew of staff charged with caring for some of the most stigmatized people in our community – those suffering from mental illness and addiction.

Three decades later, Dr. V. is credited with transforming the organization into one of the most respected behavioral and mental health care agencies in the region. Today, the FOC has four locations, 100 staff members, and an annual budget of \$5 million. Its extensive service array is built on the understanding that an individual’s treatment is tied to the health of the family, and the service model is designed to improve access for underserved populations. It’s neighborhood-based which embeds FOC in the communities it serves. Agency partnerships are leveraged to ensure families have ready access to a full range of supports. Programming is relevant and culturally competent, aimed at filling critical community gaps.

Annually, FOC reaches 5,000 people. In addition to comprehensive assessment and diagnosis services, outpatient counseling, medication

review, recovery management, and wrap-around supports, FOC provides specialized outreach to jails, schools, and churches, as well as moms, to children, and the Native American community and elders; programs targeting families with adolescent children experiencing serious emotional disturbances; and classes to help Black parents shape a healthy, proud, and capable self-image for their child.

While Dr. V.’s vision has dramatically impacted her agency, it is also helping to strengthen the broader non-profit sector. The FOC is a founding partner of the local Urban Core Collective which is creating a pipeline of future non-profit leaders within communities of color. In addition to serving on numerous boards and committees, Dr. V. is a Council on Accreditation Volunteer Peer Reviewer, which takes her to like-organizations throughout the country to evaluate the effectiveness of their operations.

Dr. V. stands apart for many reasons. She is a proven leader. She is the first African American woman in our community to hold the position of Executive Director of a non-profit. At a time when mental illness and addiction were seen as a failure of will, she bravely stepped into the arena and educated us. Yet, when asked what she is most proud of, she says without pause, “It’s seeing those we serve reclaim their lives.”



Edye Evans Hyde

Vocalist, Musician, Theater Actress,
Educator, Producer and Executive
Director—Ebony Road Players
Nominated by Monique Salinas, Ph.D.

Edye Evans Hyde is one of West Michigan's most respected and best known jazz vocalists. With three albums to her name and featured contributions in numerous others, Edye has performed in venues as far away as Italy and China. She is a popular guest performer with our community's art-anchors such as the Grand Rapids Symphony and Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra. She was named the West Michigan Jazz Society's Musician of the Year and received the Celebration of Soul Dr. MaLinda P. Sapp Legacy Award from the Grand Rapids Symphony. Edye also received Grand Rapids Community College's Ethel Coe Giants Award and was among the top 15 finalists, from an original field of 300 vocalists, in the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition. Her album "Magic in His Eyes" earned Album of the Year at the 2013 WYCE Jammies Awards.

Edye's music often carries over into theater where she is equally enjoyed and respected. She has appeared in numerous productions over the past 30 years with the Robeson Players, as well as Actors', Grand Rapids Circle, and Grand Rapids Civic theaters. In 2017, she was named the Grand Awards' recipient of the Norma Brink Lifetime Achievement Award.

For the last four years, it is in theater that Edye has focused her energy, as founder and Executive Director of the

Ebony Road Players (ERP), a non-profit theater company that combines art, education, and social justice. With a multi-racial cast, crew, and board of directors, its goals are ambitious: educate minority communities about theater, encourage conversation about tough social issues, and present African American works.

ERP has reached hundreds through its stage productions, readings, talkbacks, classes, and community celebrations. Its first production—For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf—was a bold choice and included a series of 20 poems expressing the struggles African-American women face. ERP provides weekly theater classes for students at Grand Rapids Public Schools' Coit Academy and play-writing camps during school breaks where children are given safe spaces and artistic guidance to express their experiences. Using the Loving v. Virginia Supreme Court case, which decriminalized interracial marriage, as its backdrop, ERP hosts the annual "West Michigan Loving Day Celebration", a weekend of art and entertainment recognizing multicultural families and inclusive communities.

Whether on-stage or in the classroom, Edye uses music and theater to introduce us to new ideas and experiences; to shape how we view one another; and in doing so, enables us to grow together as a community.

BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, INDUSTRY, AND LABOR



Deborah Phillips
Senior HR Business Partner
HR Collaborative LLC
Nominated by Beth Kelly

Achieving goals requires effort, purpose and direction, attended to by people who are supported and valued. It is what grows companies, expands a non-profit's ability to care for those it serves, and transforms communities. For numerous businesses, agencies, and individuals, Deborah Phillips is the person who has enabled them to succeed. Her gifts for strategic thinking, tactical planning, and employee development have turned their visions into their reality.

Deborah contributed to the exponential growth of Priority Health, now West Michigan's largest health insurance provider. The organization has more than 700,000 members and a provider network representing 95 percent of Michigan's practicing physicians. As Chief Administrative Officer, she worked with senior leadership to align the organization with a common mission, vision, and strategy. She was equally instrumental in creating a supportive and inclusive work environment, successfully lobbying for the adoption of family friendly policies, formal mentorship initiatives, domestic partner benefits, and a diversity supplier initiative.

After joining HR Collaborative in 2013, she worked with numerous clients on growing their businesses and most recently joined her client, Natural Choice Foods, a fast-growing wholesale

and retail food distributor, putting into place the policies and systems needed to manage their exponential growth from 40 employees to over 300.

Despite advances, there remains a conspicuous absence of women in senior executive leadership positions. To address this, Deborah has dedicated much of her skill and time to coaching women who are moving into those roles. She was also an early supporter of Inforum – a women's networking and development organization – and served on the West Michigan Inforum Council.

Deborah has had an equally positive influence in her volunteer roles. She has been a board member and board chair at Spartan Stores YMCA, Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women, and Women's Resource Center. With the Michigan Women's Foundation, she has helped grow their girls' leadership camp and aids MWF in their strategic planning. Deborah was integral in the process that separated John Ball Zoo from Kent County and successfully established itself as a non-profit.

Those who have had the privilege of working alongside her describe Deborah in heartfelt terms: valued colleague, inspirational mentor, trusted friend. And it is in that way – how she elevates those around her for the good of all – that is perhaps the greatest measure of Deborah's influence.

COMMUNITY SERVICE



Jennifer Deamud
Chief Operating Officer/
Associate State Director
Michigan Small Business
Development Center at GVSU's
Seidman College of Business
Nominated by Deb Tuitel

Both professionally and personally, Jennifer Deamud sees her life as one characterized by service to others.

As the Michigan Small Business Development Center's (SBDC) COO, she is charged with ensuring the right resources are available to help small businesses succeed. Small businesses employ nearly 50 percent of people in Michigan, significantly contribute economically to local communities, and can be the gateway to self-sustainability for otherwise marginalized groups – single moms, refugees or immigrants, or formerly incarcerated women and men. As a result of her success, Jennifer earned the National Association of Small Business Development Center – Michigan's State Star Award, and serves on their national Accreditation Team.

Recognizing the intrinsic relationship between the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors, Jennifer generously shares her experience and expertise in a variety of board and volunteer roles with Michigan's Main Street Program, Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women (GROW), and the Woman's Resource Center (WRC), among others.

As a first-generation college graduate, Jennifer is committed to making higher education accessible. As chair of the ATHENA council she led the pursuit to establish an endowed scholarship as

part of the Grand Rapids Chamber's ATHENA Awards. Personally, she and her husband established the "Be the Change Endowed Scholarship" for GVSU students with an incarcerated parent.

Understanding the life-long impact incarceration can have, Jennifer is exploring the idea to create a "Prison Entrepreneurship" program that will help incarcerated individuals find self-employment after their release. Additionally, through the WRC's New Beginnings program, Jennifer mentors women prior to their release from jail and afterwards with the goal of helping them reestablish themselves in the community, gain job and life skills, connect them to resources, and most importantly, gain a positive forward looking perspective on their future. Jennifer also enjoys mentoring other women in the community.

Jennifer was engaged in the 2010 WGVU Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans event and the 2017 WGVU LZ Michigan event to honor and recognize all Veterans. She serves as Vice-President for the Byron Days Festival board. She is a Girl Scout Troop Leader and actively involved in her children's schools. Jennifer has been honored as part of the Grand Rapids Business Journal's "40 Under Forty" recognition, presented with GROW's LeAnne Moss Service award and has been recognized in other ways for her community service.

Whether opening doors of opportunity, removing obstacles, or paving the way for others to follow, Jennifer demonstrates that serving others and giving back can be both a personal and a professional calling.

PROFESSIONS



Valerie Carrasco

Detective – Family Services Team
Grand Rapids Police Department
*Nominated by Lieutenant
Kristen Rogers*

One in four women is abused by an intimate partner at some point in her life. Given their unique dynamic, domestic violence cases require a highly specialized approach, in large measure because of the control assailants wield over every aspect of their victims' lives, creating practical disincentives for victims to engage with law enforcement. Victims are fearful of reaching out and risking an assailant's reprisal. Assailants often isolate victims from a supportive network of family or friends. If an assailant is the primary wage-earner, his incarceration could mean eviction and homelessness for a victim and her children. It is incredibly challenging work reserved for particularly gifted officers, and Detective Valerie Carrasco has done it for almost two decades.

During her tenure, Det. Carrasco has investigated over 16,000 domestic violence cases. She is skilled in her ability to develop trusting relationships with victims that allow her to aid them in extricating themselves from violent relationships, navigating a complex and intimidating judicial system, and connecting to resources that allow them to move forward.

Addressing the source of violence is an equal priority for Det. Carrasco. She works closely with Silent

Observer and GRPD's Fugitive Arrest Team to ensure violent suspects are quickly arrested. She regularly refers assailants to counseling. She also conducts threat assessments on the families she works with to identify the level of danger an assailant poses and outlines a responsive intervention plan to improve their safety.

Within GRPD, Det. Carrasco has worked to maintain its prioritization of domestic violence cases, effectively lobbied for increased resources, and worked to improve internal coordination. As a result, Det. Carrasco has been a Police Officer of the Year nominee and earned a Letter of Recognition.

She is a member of Kent County's Domestic Violence Coordinated Community Response Team, a collaboration among key participants in our community's education and intervention efforts. She has been a strong proponent of current efforts to establish a local Domestic Violence Court, which would consolidate domestic violence cases with a single judge and improve the speed, consistency, and sensitivity with which they are handled.

The scale of domestic violence is astonishing, yet in the words of her nominator, "She has the same amount of energy for it as the day she first started." For Det. Carrasco, it is more than a profession. It is a passion.

SPORTS, FITNESS, AND WELLNESS



Sara Knoester
Head Coach, Girls Volleyball,
Ottawa Hills High School
Founder and President, Mixed
Staffing + Recruiting
Nominated by Cara Jones

Girls' sports are vital. Girls who participate are less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, or become pregnant before graduating. They do better academically and have strong self-esteem. Sports are a training ground for the next generation of female leaders, and it blunts the influence of factors that might otherwise derail girls' life goals. However, by age 14, girls drop out of sports at twice the rate of boys. Costs to participate exacerbate the challenge of staying involved for girls in poverty. Further, the sports programs for cash-strapped schools with student bodies from lower income homes often experience frequent coaching turnover and lesser equipped facilities. OHHS' volleyball program was no exception, but Sara met the challenge head-on.

During her coaching tenure, she has established a level of discipline and stability that winning programs require, and recruited a team of assistant coaches who share her vision for what their players can achieve. As a result, each of her players maintains a 3.0 or better GPA, all of this year's seniors plan on playing in college, and OHHS' Bengals won the program's first conference match in over 10 years.

Despite their success, Sara acknowledges that her own background did not prepare her well to recognize what many of her players were

experiencing. Poverty. Violence. Homelessness. Discrimination. She credits them with helping her to understand. "They were frank and honest. They opened my eyes."

Today, Sara approaches her role with two aims: Developing her team's skills and removing barriers that hinder her players' success off the court. Sara helped found GR8 Girls, an initiative of the Grand Rapids Student Advancement Foundation to bring together women to support girls' athletics. She volunteers with Grand C.I.T.Y. Sports and Endless Opportunities among others. Sara serves on numerous agency boards and committees focused on helping children, including Living Stones Academy, The Chris Sain Mentoring Program, Saint John's Home-Kids First, Hope Network, and Junior Achievement.

Sara's experiences working with her players and in her volunteer roles have also informed her business. In a market saturated with staffing firms, Mixed Staffing + Recruiting has carved out its niche by building relationships with companies in traditionally overlooked communities and by providing training and support to individuals, such as former inmates, with employment barriers. In five years, MSR has grown from a \$26,000 loss to \$1.7 million in revenue.

Whether measured in dollars or championships, Sara's success demonstrates that investing in people has life-changing benefits.

JUDY LLOYD STUDENT LEADERSHIP 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 people to follow her lead. She was a role model for us all, the most graceful and respected of leaders. Judy led in a quiet, unassuming way as she connected 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, which the YWCA has housed at the Grand Rapids Community Foundation and directed to long-term support of our services — all to create a community supportive of women and their families that Judy loved so much.

Judy's two decades of influence at the YWCA is immeasurable. She participated on the Tribute Planning and Selection Committees and helped establish and grow the YWCA's Circle of Women Celebration (now Open Circle) 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 lay the foundation for fundamental change in the national YWCA. In 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 scholarship should bear her name.

Inspired by Judy's life and work, the YWCA Board of Directors chose to establish the Student Leadership Scholarship in her honor. It is designed to offer practical help to 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

RECIPIENT OF THE JUDY LLOYD STUDENT LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP



Binti Abdi
Senior, Union High School
Nominated by Alane Rozelle

Binti Abdi has seen more in her young life than most experience in an entire lifetime. As part of the East African Wazigua tribe, her people are persecuted. Genocide forced her family from their home when she was a young child. They fled from Tanzania to Somalia, and ultimately to a Kenyan refugee camp. Eventually, when Binti was 8 years old, they immigrated to the United States, ultimately settling in Grand Rapids. She describes the move as frightening. The language was strange. The weather was cold. The culture was unlike anything she had seen. She was convinced that she wasn't supposed to be here.

Binti's parents worked hard to provide the stability and sense of rootedness that she and her siblings desperately needed. They encouraged her to explore the opportunities their new home offered. Over time, her nightmares came less frequently. Slowly, she began to heal.

Today, Binti personifies what are quintessential American ideals. Hard work. Optimism. Ambition. Discipline. Curiosity. Community. Kindness.

She maintains a 3.3 GPA and is President of her school's honor society. Binti is Battalion Commander of her Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (JROTC), an Explorer Cadet at the Grand Rapids Police Department, and cadet/volunteer with the Grand Rapids Fire Department. In September, Binti was elected as one of two student

liaisons in the district to the Grand Rapids Public Schools Board of Education.

Binti was a member of her school's cross-country team. Two years ago, she broke the girls' track record for the mile. She is one of two girls on the school wrestling team and plays tennis. Binti is also the top female shooter in her GRPD Explorers program and having achieved the Expert-ranking in her JROTC group, she is their top overall sharpshooter.

In numerous venues, Binti acts as a bridge between groups and communities. English is one of four languages she speaks fluently, so she is often called upon by members of her cultural and religious communities to interpret, advocate, and teach. She has been especially powerful in educating her peers and instructors about Islam and the Muslim culture. She joined her school's LGBT group and serves as an informal ambassador between it and her ethnic and religious community.

With wisdom beyond her years, Binti chooses activities that challenge her and provide a foundation for her life goals. Upon graduation, Binti will enlist in the U.S. Army, something she decided to do because she wants to provide an alternate, positive example of a soldier to the people in her native region where corruption in the military is rampant. Afterwards, Binti plans to return to Tanzania for college. She has set her sites on government service, aiming to become a Prime Minister.