



FOR RELEASE: APRIL 16, 2010, AFTER 2 P.M.

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Six Greater Clevelanders Named “Most Treasured Volunteers” of 2009

(CLEVELAND, OHIO) Six area residents, nominated by community organizations, were named Greater Cleveland’s **Most Treasured Volunteers (MTV) of 2009** at today’s 68th annual Human Services Institute of **The Center for Community Solutions**:

Carolyn Brown, Domestic Violence Center

Turning her passion for the issue and her commitment to the welfare of children and teens into action, Carolyn Brown took on the fight against domestic violence. She was introduced to Domestic Violence Center by donating items to the shelter program. But that was just the beginning. To engage community leaders and others, she created the Mask-or-Aid Ball. She organized “Respect Week” —an entire week of raising awareness among adults and at local high schools—and leveraged her connections to involve the Cleveland Cavaliers and the media. Through her words and deeds, she has helped break the silence about a life-and-death issue, transform the way domestic violence is viewed, and further efforts to stop it in Northeast Ohio.

Pete Guinto, Rose-Mary Center School [Resident: Independence]

Full-time executive and father of seven, Pete Guinto plays a significant role in Rose-Mary Center School’s “family.” Every week for more than 20 years, “Mr. Pete” has gone to the school to engage students with severe and profound mental and physical disabilities to learn and simply have fun. He takes them on bike rides, plays in the gym, helps with trips to the movies—activities that may seem ordinary to some. But his time, his attention, and his smile mean the world to these children. He is a consistent presence in their lives, evidence that people care about them. The love and appreciation they feel is written all over their faces...the moment he walks through the door.

Bonnie Lindberg, Judson at University Circle [Resident: Cleveland Heights]

Dedication, enthusiasm, tenacious kindness, and a charitable spirit—those characteristics are personified by Bonnie Lindberg and manifested in her experience with Judson at University Circle. For more than 20 years, Bonnie has taken the initiative to fill needs as they arise. She organized regular family gatherings for the residents and their guests. She created an intergenerational program, so that high school students in formal attire visit the residents as part of their prom experience. And she maintains a very hands-on approach to her volunteer service by helping residents travel to special events and by bringing her dog to visit four days each week. She is treasured by the residents whose lives she touches.

Ulysses Salett, Greater Cleveland Volunteers [Resident: Cleveland]

Understanding what it is like to be an inner-city child unprepared for school, Ulysses Salett believes that children must be able to read by the third grade in order to be successful as adults. He puts his belief into action by tutoring second graders every Tuesday and Thursday, and has been doing so for three years as a member of Greater Cleveland Volunteers' Experience Corps. He doesn't just read with them; he offers support and guidance, sometimes simply talking about life matters with the children. For some, he may be perceived as their primary caring adult and role model. Ulysses uses volunteer service to put his personal motto into practice, "Everyone has an obligation to help the next generation."

C. Tyehimba Thonor-Kuykendall II, Adult Guardianship Services [Resident: Cleveland]

Deep compassion moves Bishop Thonor-Kuykendall to dedicate himself to people who are truly the most vulnerable, those who have nothing and no one—and are dying. Tyehimba has been a volunteer with Adult Guardianship Services for 12 years and is currently the guardian for three people, ages 36 to 86, all in different nursing homes. He makes medical and placement decisions for them and uses every avenue at his disposal to ensure their final wishes are followed. Whether or not anyone comes, he provides an appropriate funeral service for each of his wards, even performing gravesite services himself when necessary. His may be the kindest—and last—human touch experienced by the people he serves.

Ann Weinzimmer, West Side Ecumenical Ministry [Resident: Cleveland]

"Youth is wasted on the young." Or so the saying goes. Not so with Ann Weinzimmer. She began her volunteer career while very young by creating a service learning program for middle- and high-school students that still exists today. Following law school, she discovered and acted upon her volunteer passion for feeding people with little means through the West Side Ecumenical Ministry. For nearly seven years, she has poured herself into hands-on meals service and leadership roles. She raises money, recruits volunteers, and creates events and opportunities that are relevant, responsive, and attractive to young people—a new audience for the organization. She leads by example and sets the bar high for her generation and those that follow.

In announcing the awards, **Stephen Squeri**, vice chair of Community Solutions' Board of Directors, said, "Daily we hear about our region's problems; today's awards are an opportunity to celebrate people who are creating solutions by giving of their time, talent, and treasure—really, by giving of themselves." He commented to the MTV Award winners, "You've provided an example for anyone who wants to make a difference in the lives of others."

The annual MTV Awards are sponsored by **Medical Mutual of Ohio**.

The Center for Community Solutions provides strategic leadership to improve health and social conditions. Nonpartisan and nonprofit, it is focused on policy and system reform. Established in 1913, it is a United Way agency.