

## **Excellence in Philanthropy Awards Presentation at 2010 Annual Meeting**

### **Outstanding Individual**

The Excellence in Philanthropy award for Outstanding Individual Philanthropist goes to Mary Jo Schuler.

Mary Jo has shared her time, energy and financial support, providing the Park District of Oak Park, Seven Generations Ahead, the Children's Clinic, West Suburban Hospital, Opportunity Knocks and other organizations, agencies, and educational institutions with essential resources. She has been a strong philanthropic supporter of the YMCA's "Invest in Youth" annual support campaign, providing scholarship support to children, adults, and families who otherwise could not afford to participate in the YMCA programs. Directly and through the "Good Heart Work Smart" family foundation, she has set a benchmark for the ideal of philanthropy in our community through selfless giving and a commitment to volunteer service. She leads by example. Her incredible energy matches her vision for a thriving and healthy community. The Excellence in Philanthropy Outstanding Philanthropist Award includes a grant of \$1000 to a nonprofit organization serving the local community chosen by Ms. Schuler. Mary Jo has selected the Community Leadership Program as the recipient of the \$1000 grant in her honor.

### **Outstanding Business or Group**

The Excellence in Philanthropy award for Outstanding Business or Group goes to The Rotary Club of Oak Park-River Forest for its philanthropy in 2009 and for its commitment to volunteer and financial support.

In 2009, the Rotary Club of Oak Park-River Forest celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> year of service above self with a goal of creating a better community and world through service. The Rotary Club supports local organizations and projects, presents service awards to college bound students, vocational students, and makes significant contributions to the enrichment awards given by the Oak Park and River Forest High School Alumni Association. The Club also supports the Holiday Food & Gift Basket program each year. In 2009, the Club provided more than \$26,000 to fourteen local organizations, including: Hephzibah, the Animal Care League, the Oak Park Public Library and the Oak Park-River Forest Day Nursery. One of the grants provided a refrigeration unit for the Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry. Another assures that every third grader in Oak Park and River Forest receives a dictionary from the Club, promoting literacy and reading skills. A Saturday morning program at the Oak Park Public Library targeting early literacy skills is also fully funded by the Club. The Excellence in Philanthropy Outstanding Organization Award includes a grant of \$500 to a nonprofit organization serving the Oak Park-River Forest community to be chosen by the Rotary Club. The Rotary Club has chosen the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation Rotary Haitian Relief Fund as the recipient of the \$500 Excellence in Philanthropy grant in their honor.

Accepting the award on behalf of the Rotary Club of Oak Park-River Forest are Jack Barclay and Ginny Cassin. (Jack is the club member of longest duration - 47 years. He is also a past president ('77-'78), a Paul Harris Fellow, and a Rotary Foundation Sustaining Member. Ginny is a 22 year member, the first woman to join the club, a Paul Harris Fellow + 1, a Rotary Foundation Sustaining Member, and a recipient of the Carl Winters Award.)

## **Outstanding Youth**

The Excellence in Philanthropy award for Outstanding Youth goes to the 700 Bonnie Brae Lemonade Stand.

The 700 Bonnie Brae Lemon Aid Stand was established in 2002 in memory of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The neighbors felt called to remember this day by doing something positive in the community. Each year, the families of the 700 block of Bonnie Brae nominate local organizations supporting children to be the beneficiary, and then a vote is taken to decide on the winner. The children of the block volunteer for various jobs such as contacting the media, making lemonade and popcorn, baking cookies, distributing flyers, making announcements at local schools, helping with set up and clean up. When the collected funds are presented it is usually in conjunction with a tour of the facilities and/or a presentation at a board of directors' meeting. In doing this, the children of Bonnie Brae develop a direct connection between the Lemon Aid Stand, the organizations, and the clients they serve. Over the past 8 years, the 700 Bonnie Brae Lemon Aid Stand has raised approximately \$24,000 for local charities. In 2009, the youth group donated \$8,500 to The Children's Clinic. The Excellence in Philanthropy Outstanding Youth Group Award includes appointment as advisor to the Foundation's Young Philanthropist Fund for 2010, during which grants can be made to organizations supporting young people in varying amounts with recommendations from the group. As advisor to the fund, the 700 Bonnie Brae Lemon Aid Stand will work with the Foundation to learn how the Foundation evaluates funding opportunities and the impact that awards may have.

Accepting the award on behalf of the 700 Bonnie Brae Lemonade Stand are the 2009 co-chairs, Madeline Strand and Alec Birmingham.