

Heroes

Countywide HomeTown awards to be presented March 29

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Hail to the heroes — especially the HomeTown variety!

Six of Oakland County's top volunteers — those who give so much to society and ask little or nothing in return — will be honored at the inaugural HomeTown Heroes Luncheon at noon Wednesday, March 29, at the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham. Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson will speak at the event. The first to be held in the Townsend's new addition, Paul W. Smith, radio personality from WJR, will emcee.

"I've always felt that the fine work of volunteers in Oakland County needs to be recognized," said K. Noreen Keating, CEO of Lighthouse, a Pontiac-based women's shelter and a sponsor of the new honors program, along with The Eccentric Newspapers, HomeTown Newspapers, Mirror Newspapers and Crain's Detroit Business. "And now we have a wonderful vehicle with which to do that."

HomeTown Heroes honors volunteers in six categories: Seniors, Youth, Boards and Commissions, Faith-based, Direct Service and Business. The winners were chosen by a committee that included representatives of the volunteer community and the newspaper.

Winners are:
■ Boards and Commissions —

■ **Six of Oakland County's top volunteers — those who give so much to society and ask little or nothing in return — will be honored at the inaugural HomeTown Heroes Luncheon at noon Wednesday, March 29, at the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham.**

Dennis S. Bernard, a Birmingham resident and president of the Bernard Financial Group of Southfield. Among his many volunteer duties: Chairman of the board of the Jewish Vocational Service, a \$20 million a year human service agency with six locations in the Detroit area. "Dennis is truly committed to giving back to the community," said Laura Blake, a company employee who nominated him. "His priorities of family and community first are an example to everyone."

■ **Faith-based** — Joseph Roberts (aka Joey the Clown), a West Bloomfield resident. A furrier by trade, Roberts organizes parties through Temple Israel's Caring Center at shelters,

orphans and nursing homes. He is a member of Temple Israel's Board of Directors and serves on numerous committees. "The care and attention Joe takes to organize and make certain each party is extra special is evidenced by the smiles and hugs our volunteers receive," said nominator Kari Provizer, a Temple Israel employee.

■ **Direct service** — Vicki Spohr of Madison Heights who works with computers at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak and volunteers with several organizations. She helps the Southfield-based Arthritis Foundation, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, National Multiple Sclerosis Society and the Animal Welfare Society. "She also cares for a senior couple who has no family local-

ly," said nominator Mollie Conway of the Arthritis Foundation. "Vicki spends her time helping others — to us that's a hero."

■ **Senior** — Robert J. McLiveen, an 88-year-old retiree from Birmingham who spends 60 hours a month volunteering at St. Joseph Mercy-Oakland and Beaumont hospitals and the Peachwood Nursing Home. He gives out candy and trading cards to children entering the hospital, and volunteers in the rehab unit, helping stroke victims and other physically challenged patients. "After losing his wife of more than 50 years and his only child, Bob keeps himself busy and happy helping so many others," said Coleen Giniel, director of volunteer services at St. Joseph Mercy. "We love him."

■ **Youth** — Kevin Michael Greenless, a Waterford Township 18-year-old who volunteers as a tutor at Washington Middle School in Pontiac. His other volunteer activities include Karmans Cancer Institute, Operation Help! and Koute for Kids. "Kevin continually strives to help others," said nominator Shana Burnett, tutorial services director at Washington Middle School.

■ **Business** — Jane E. Buell, a Birmingham resident who has served the community in a variety of causes — especially Variety, the Children's Charity — for more than 40 years. As a member of Variety's Board of Directors and a past president (the first in the charity's 65 years), she "has helped to raise millions

to help needy children in southeast Michigan," according to nominator Steve Lipsen, a Variety member. A former model and teacher, Buell is now a Realtor.

The luncheon will be sponsored by the Bloomfield Hills-based Northern Trust Bank. Proceeds from the \$40-a-seat event will be used to help establish A Volunteer Place, a recruitment and placement center to be built in Pontiac. The purpose is to connect Oakland volunteers with programs needing help. Lighthouse is seeking corporate sponsorships for tables at the luncheon so that volunteers who might not be able to afford it can attend. A table of 10 costs \$400.

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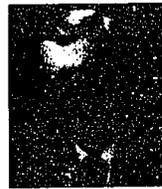
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