



ArtsinStark

The County Arts Council.

Immediate Release: Annual Arts Awards Luncheon
Contact: **Robb Hankins**, President & CEO
robbhankins@artsinstark.com; 330-453-1075

Wednesday, November 4, 2009

Arts Council to Honor Seven

For the 3rd year in a row, ArtsinStark will be honoring area businesses and individuals who have embraced the arts council's mission of growing the arts to create smarter kids, new jobs and healthier communities. The ArtsinStark Awards Luncheon will be held at noon on Wednesday, November 18 in The Cultural Center for the Arts. Seven categories have been addressed this year, to recognize the efforts of those who have gone above and beyond by increasing arts awareness and action in 2009.

Among the top honorees are The Ananda Center, the Arts Academy at Summit, Kumi Day, Lois DiGiacomo, Fred Olivieri Construction Company, Sol Harris Day, and The Timken Company.

Lois DiGiacomo will take home the trophy for **Citizen Artist of the Year**. As the founder of the Rainbow Repertory Theatre in 1994 and the Canton Cabaret Theatre in 2007, DiGiacomo is no stranger to accolades. She was the YWCA Woman of the Year for the Arts in 1995, and has produced, directed, or written more than 30 plays dealing with social issues ranging from drug abuse to racism. Lois has hosted "State of the Arts" on Canton City Schools TV for more than 10 years and is a true believer in the arts. Others in her category were Kevin Anderson, the owner of Anderson Creative in the Canton Arts District and Richie Kindler, who opened Jupiter Studios in Alliance last year.

Kumi Day will be honored as **Arts Volunteer of the Year**. She became the "face" of the KIMONO AS ART exhibit, a show and overall media phenomenon that touched the lives of over 100,000 people who saw the exhibit or participated in one of the many activities, including the tea ceremonies, earlier this year. As one of the few Japanese-Americans in Stark County, Kumi spent endless hours teaching about the intricacies of the Japanese culture, even bringing her mother from Japan to visit during the KIMONO explosion in Stark County.

Also in this category were Faye Heston, a fundraiser extraordinaire and tireless volunteer with the Canton Museum of Art, ArtsinStark, and the Canton Symphony Orchestra, as well as Bob Leibensperger, a former Timken executive who has made volunteering his passion. Most recently, he has helped raise \$1 million for a new exhibit, "The Stark County Story" at the William McKinley Presidential Library and Museum.

Three area businesses, divided by numbers of employees, will be honored for their outstanding arts efforts. In the category of **Large Arts Business** (employing over 500), **The Timken Company** will be thanked for their one-two punch of financial support to both KIMONO AS ART and the \$1.45 million Annual Arts Campaign, chaired by Tim Timken. Mercy Medical Center and American Electric Power were also in this category.

For the **Middle-sized Arts Business** (employing 50 – 499), the **Fred Olivieri Construction Company**, will be recognized as an integral part of the Cultural Center for the Arts' massive renovations and the building of the Japanese tea house, working long after the dollars were exhausted. They were joined in this category by Innis Maggiore and Sirak Moore Insurance.

Sol Harris Day will take the prize for **Small Arts Business** (less than 49 employees) for their innovation in designing the new ArtsinStark administrative offices. However, a well deserved hats-off will be given to their category compadres, the Joseph Saxton Gallery of Photography and 2nd April Galerie & Studios for their outstanding presence in the Canton Arts District.

Mini grant winner, **The Arts Academy at Summit**, will be honored for the **Best SmArts project**, using their \$500 award to connect 6th graders to Spain and its culture, which includes the science of creating a working windmill. Other honorable SmArts projects, open to schools, were from Canton County Day School for their "Come Fly a Kite" program as part of the closing ceremonies for KIMONO AS Art, and Timken High School with their All School Read project featuring "The Freedom Writers' Diary."

The Ananda Center in Massillon took home the top honor for the **Most Innovative Project** with their use of an ArtsinStark grant to create "Art Displaced," one-night art shows in abandoned buildings – with five of the spaces now being rented. Accolades are also noted for Jupiter Studios in Alliance for their project "Live from Jupiter Studios," a grant project in downtown Alliance featuring a variety of musical themes. Voices of Canton, Inc., were also in the category for their involvement with 1,400 students in 10 county middle schools through a project culminating in an original chorale piece, "Songs of Creation."

*All winners were chosen by a panel of ArtsinStark board and community members. The 3rd Annual Arts Awards and Luncheon will be held on **Wednesday, November 18** at noon in the Cultural Center for the arts. **Reservations** are necessary. The cost is \$20. To attend, please call ArtsinStark at **330-453-1075** or email awadian@artsinstark.com*

The ArtsinStark Awards and Luncheon was sponsored by the following organizations: sponsored by Aultman, American Electric Power, Chase Bank, DIEBOLD, Fisher's Foods, First Merit Bank, KeyBank, Kenan Advantage Group, Mercy Medical Center, The Repository, the Timken Company and Westfield Belden Village.