



Green Ribbon Initiatives AWARD

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NEWS RELEASE: contact J Borgschatz for more information
jpb@greenribbon.info
651-454-8848

Green Ribbon Initiatives, a non-profit corporation is pleased to announce its recognition of a significant community partnership. Recognition is being given to the Pop-Up Produce Partnership which includes The Open Door, Pinewood Elementary School, St. Thomas Becket Catholic Community, and the Eagan YMCA. Last summer the partnership provided food and healthy produce to as many as 70 to 80 families (including children) weekly in the Emerald Hills Mobile Home Park. Through this partnership great strides were made in addressing the issues of access to good nutrition in our larger community. The success of the Pop-Up Produce Partnership providing fresh and healthy produce led to the expansion of the partnership to include The Open Door's Mobile Lunch Box program, another great opportunity to serve the families and children in the Emerald Hills Mobile Home Park.

Jason Viana, Director of The Open Door Food Pantry, explained "The Open Door has been able to provide so much more necessary food to children and families with active partnerships with other organizations."

The Social Justice Community at St. Thomas Becket desires to address the hunger problem within the community and is excited to multiply its efforts through the synergy of effective partnerships. The community is enthusiastic about continuing this work.

Schools are intimately aware of the impact of hunger on the ability of children to engage in school and to learn and advance with their peers. Through the efforts of Pinewood Elementary staff and with the trust they had developed, effective communication with Emerald Hills/Pinewood families was possible. The program was able to start fast and expand quickly in meeting needs.

Given its location the Eagan YMCA was a valued partner in providing outdoor and indoor space, as needed, for the program. Not only was location important, but according to Nate Danielson, Eagan Branch Director, the partnership hit on all three of the YMCA's mission areas of focus. Youth Development—nurturing the potential of every child and teen; Healthy Living—improving the nation's health and wellbeing; and Social Responsibility—giving back and providing support to our neighbors.

As this partnership shows, through leveraging common interests, passions, and resources, needs can be identified and addressed to the benefit of the entire community. Over 50 volunteers contributed to make this a successful partnership and a community example of what can be done by getting involved.

Community engagement connects people from all walks of life. Connected communities enjoy a higher standard of living and improved overall wellness. This

recognized partnership helps in meeting basic needs, enhancing lives, and providing opportunity, and everyone benefits from viewing the world through the eyes of others and in serving others.

Green Ribbon Initiatives desires to see community engagement awards that:

- Increase the sense of community in Eagan.
- Increase the ability to improve the community at all levels.
- Increase the utilization of volunteers, especially the aging in place.
- Increase awareness of community engagement by a wider circle of persons.
- Recognize community engagement by increasing volunteerism and voter turnout.

Green Ribbon Initiatives was formed in 2013 for the purpose of identifying and celebrating significant community engagement initiatives and partnerships in Eagan. Awards are presented to exemplary initiatives in Eagan which build relationships and a collective sense of community in Eagan while promoting sustainable action that strengthens community engagement.

- The recognition process is meant to support and encourage the cultivation, motivation and coordination of multiple levels of community resources available to strengthen community.
- Community engagement is understood as individuals and organizations working together on common interests for mutual benefit and in the interest of the larger community.
- Green Ribbon Initiatives seeks to weave engagement into the community fabric and address barriers to engagement when they are identified.

This partnership is exemplary and significant and meets all selection criteria; we are pleased and excited to make this award.

Green Ribbon Leadership Team

Jim Borgschatz (president), Gene VanOverbeke, Tom Hedges, Brenda Johnson, Dave Unmacht, Mark Streed, Don Hoeft, Dianne Miller, Jamie Hopkins

More information about Green Ribbon Initiatives Awards, nomination forms, application forms, and ways to help can all be found at www.greenribbon.info.

Green Ribbon Initiatives continues to solicit community partnerships to recognize as well as friends who are interested in being financial partners and in providing other support.