



NEWS RELEASE

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COMMUNITY MEMBERS RECEIVE JOHN MURRAY AWARD FOR THEIR WORK WITH GEAUGA FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Chardon, OH. November 6, 2019 – Two community members were recognized earlier this week for their passionate work on behalf of Geauga families and children at the 10th John Murray Commitment to Families and Children Award reception held at the Geauga Public Library System Administrative Center. The Geauga Family First Council, a collaborative of local agencies and community representatives, sponsors the event.

- **The John Murray Volunteer Award was given to:**
 - **Trent Lamb** who has been a volunteer with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) for 10 years. He has devoted countless hours to advocating for the best interests of abused, neglected, and dependent children referred by Juvenile Court. Trent works one-on-one with each youth trying to do whatever it takes to help that child succeed.

- **The John Murray Professional Award was given to:**
 - **Karen Lackey** who for over 30 years has had an impact in the Geauga community on behalf of kids. She helped start and continues to run the county's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program and the community's Youth-Lead Prevention efforts. Karen also is considered the driving force behind Cardinal Community Forum and the Cardinal Middle School Pilot Project.

“This award is presented on a bi-annual basis to individuals in Geauga County, who have exhibited a continued commitment to Geauga’s families and children, coupled with a special passion for their work,” says Don Rice, President of Geauga Family First Council and the Superintendent at the Geauga Board of DD.



Since 2001 Geauga Family First Council has presented the John Murray Award to individuals who “go above and beyond” in supporting and advocating for children and families. This year the Council received nominations for 10 individuals “all of whom significantly impact the lives of Geauga’s children making the selection process extremely difficult,” according to Nancy Seelbach, the Geauga Family First Council Coordinator.

As Brad Welch, the Council’s Case Services Coordinator, said in his presentation: “all of the nominees have special qualities in common - quiet effectiveness, an ongoing commitment to Geauga children, and a passion for their work.”

The award is named in honor of John Murray, an original member of Geauga Family First Council and the Geauga County Administrator from 1993 to 1999. “John Murray epitomized the phrase ‘above and beyond the call of duty’”, Jim Adams, the Executive Director of the Geauga Board of Mental Health and Recovery Services pointed out. “John was interested in the progress of each child and in his own quiet but effective way, pushed Geauga Family First Council and other local agencies and administrators to keep the best interest of each child and family at the heart of their decision-making.”

Two other special presentations were made at the reception. Jeff Orndorff, a longtime Geauga attorney, was honored for his passionate advocacy inside and outside the courtroom on behalf of Geauga’s children and families. The Geauga non-profit Hope for Kids was also honored for its collaborative and impactful work raising funds and community awareness on behalf of Geauga’s at-risk youth.

The Geauga Family First Council is a partnership of government agencies, community organizations, and family representatives who work together to improve the well-being of children and families. Through prevention, early intervention and the provision of services which support the entire family the Council is strongly committed to helping remove barriers for Geauga’s children. The Council has helped develop, and currently funds, a wide range of community-based services which include the BRIDGES Program, the Family Stability Program, the Geauga Therapeutic Youth Center, Geauga Help Me Grow - Early Intervention, Geauga’s ENGAGE Program, and Service Coordination.

