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Office of Community Engagement Presents Annual Awards

Summary: The Office of Community Engagement presented a series of awards to individuals who have created or supported exemplary partnerships with the broader community.

(May 13, 2013)-On Thursday, May 2, the University of Minnesota, Morris Office of Community Engagement presented a series of awards to students, faculty, staff, and community partners who have created or supported exemplary partnerships with the broader community. The first of these awards, the Community Partner Award, was presented to Citlali Ibañez de Obregón of Lazos. Obregón has partnered with Morris's Jane Addams, Community English as a Second Language (ESL), and Tutoring, Reading, Enabling Children (TREC) programs and has been instrumental in connecting the Latino community—particularly women and mothers—with University resources. According to Windy Roberts, instructor of Spanish and Jane Addams advisor, “[Obregón] has been an effective mentor to our students, particularly with the Jane Addams project. Her involvement in this program has inspired others to come and share their culture.”

Citlali Ibañez de Obregón, recipient of the Community Partner Award

Michael Eble, associate professor of studio art, received the Faculty Award for Service-Learning. Eble has mentored colleagues in regards to integrating service-learning in their classes and has worked with students to create public art and fundraisers for organization such as the Salvation Army, Stevens Community Medical Center, Morris Public Library, Morris Wetlands District, Stevens County Human Services and the Prairie Renaissance Cultural Alliance. Melissa Yauk, Morris Public Library director, commended Eble and his signature Morriscapes project in her nomination, writing, “I believe that students learned from each other about different businesses and establishments in Morris...but best of all, these pieces of art are now out in the community.”

Bonnie Tipcke, executive office and administrative specialist in the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Intercultural Programs (EDI), received the Faculty/Staff Community Engagement Award, which honors a faculty or staff person who has supported the Office of Community Engagement's work and served as a role model for engagement outside of his/her job description. Nominated by Hilda Ladner, director of EDI, Jennifer Amy-Dressler, Federated Church interim pastor, and Laura Thielke '95, External Relations and Fund Development, Tipcke was recognized for “embod[ying] community in the town of Morris by always ensuring that each person feels welcome and has an opportunity for success.”

Bonnie Tipcke, recipient of the Faculty/Staff Community Engagement Award

George/Anne Meyers-Welsch '13, Menomonie, was the recipient of the Student Community Engagement Award. Her nominators included Luciana Ranelli '14, Duluth, Rose Schwietz '13, Mendota Heights, Chrissy Kolaya, assistant professor of English, Jayne Blodgett, assistant librarian, Rev. Jennifer Amy-Dressler of Federated Church, and Andrea

Pavlicek, Morris Area High School English teacher. They believe her greatest contribution to the community “is her demonstrated commitment to equality and inclusion” and that “the impact of [her] authentic engagement and advocacy will influence students beyond just the present time.”

George/Anne Meyers-Welsch '13, Menomonie, recipient of the Student Community Engagement Award

The Office of Community Engagement has involved more than 470 students in partnerships with 56 community organizations and projects this year—more than 10,000 hours of volunteer service. Argie Manolis, Office of Community Engagement coordinator, notes that “these numbers are impressive, but they mean very little compared to the deep relationships that our award winners and others have forged across the campus-community and other divides.”

Picture above: Michael Eble, recipient of the Faculty Award for Service-Learning

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.