



Michigan Nonprofit Association

MEDIA RELEASE

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Michigan Volunteer Champion Award Winners and Michigan Nonprofit Legislative Caucus to be announced at Giving & Volunteering Celebration *Latest Giving and Volunteering Report to be Released*

April 7, 2009 - Lansing, MI – Michigan Nonprofit Association is pleased to recognize four legislators with the 2009 Michigan Volunteer Champion Awards. Representative Alma Wheeler Smith (D-Ypsilanti) and Senator Bill Hardiman (R-Kentwood) will receive the Volunteer Spirit Award for their exemplary service in support of volunteerism, and Representative Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City) and Senator Deb Cherry (D-Flint) will receive the Servant Leadership Award for their outstanding personal dedication to civic engagement and service.

In celebration of National Volunteer Week, Michigan Nonprofit Association will honor the winners at the 2009 Michigan Giving & Volunteering Celebration, taking place April 22, 2009, from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the State Capitol Building in downtown Lansing. The Michigan Giving & Volunteering Celebration is an annual event that celebrates the many ways in which Michigan volunteers and philanthropists are making a difference in their communities. In addition to a formal presentation of the 2009 Michigan Volunteer Champion Awards, the celebration will launch the Michigan Nonprofit Legislative Caucus and share the latest giving and volunteering statistics for the state.

The Michigan Nonprofit Caucus will be a bipartisan, bicameral forum through which lawmakers can lead and collaborate on legislative and regulatory issues impacting charities and foundations in Michigan. The caucus will focus on issues that globally impact the nonprofit sector, monitoring and taking a leadership role on legislative issues that impact Michigan's nonprofit sector. The caucus is to be co-chaired by Senator Hansen Clarke (D-Detroit), Senator Mark Jansen (R-Gaines Township), Representative John Proos (R-St. Joseph) and Representative Rashida Tlaib (D-Detroit).

Michigan Volunteer Champion Award Winner Biographies:

Representative Alma Wheeler Smith, (D-Ypsilanti) serving House District 54, is a former state senator who has also served the people of Washtenaw County as a Cablecasting Commissioner, a School Board member and president, and County Commissioner. Representative Wheeler Smith is a true believer in Human Services and is well known for recognizing the importance of community programs and initiatives. She has been a long-time supporter of aging

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programs and specifically the Senior Corps Volunteer Programs, and as a member of the House Appropriations Committee, is a strong voice for programs that support the community.

Senator Bill Hardiman, (R-Kentwood) serving Senate District 29, has been very active in his community for many years. In addition to be elected to the State Senate, he has served as Mayor of the City of Kentwood from 1992-2002 and served on the board of directors for the Grand Rapids Transit Authority, the Gerald R. Ford Council of the Boy Scouts of America, Grand Rapids Housing Center, and United Way of Kent County to name a few. His commitment to the community and youth have brought him awards such as the Michigan Assisted Living Center Leadership Award in 2006, Michigan After School Partnership “After School Champion” Award in 2007, and Orchard’s Children’s services “Champion of Children” Award in 2007.

Representative Wayne Schmidt, (R-Traverse City) serving House District 104, was elected five times to the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners , holding terms as vice chair and chair of the board. He has been actively involved in his home community of Traverse City for his entire life, serving with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Northwest Michigan, Michigan Association of Counties Human Services Committee, Great Lakes Community Mental Health Authority, National Cherry Festival, Trout Unlimited, Economic Club of Traverse City, Kiwanis Noon Club, and the Boardman Neighborhood Association.

Senator Deb Cherry, (D-Flint) serving Senate District 26, has served her community for over thirty years. She is a regular American Red Cross blood donor, and has volunteered and supported efforts of the Michigan Habitat for Humanity, including Genesee County Chapter. During her years of public elected office, she has supported volunteer efforts of many groups and organizations. Senator Cherry serves on numerous boards, including Chairman of the Greater Flint Health Coalition and a member of the Michigan Fitness Foundation, the Michigan Prospect, the Genesys CEO Council and the IMA Board, a group that provides educational and recreational opportunities for children and youth.

For more information about the 2009 Giving and Volunteering Celebration or to register, visit www.mnaonline.org or contact Tiffany Aurora at taurora@mnaonline.org. Please note, the *Giving and Volunteering in Michigan 2008* report will be available online after April 22.

Michigan Nonprofit Association increases the capacity of Michigan’s nonprofits to serve, strengthen and transform communities. With more than 1,100 members, MNA serves as a statewide network for the sector, a resource center on effective management practices, and as an advocate for the nonprofit community.

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