

Council on Aging delivers awards

Jean Bonchak

JBonchak@News-Herald.com
@JBonchak

The Lake County Council on Aging recently honored more than 100 individuals and organizations during its annual meeting, Hall of Fame and volunteer recognition event at LaMalfa Center in Mentor.

Longtime Cleveland television icon Fred Griffith welcomed about 400 people to the party center where radio personality Ray Somich was master of ceremonies. Fairport Harbor residents Tony Petkovsek and Patty Mackey accepted their place in Lake County history after being given distinct awards from the Council on Aging.

Receiving the 20th annual Senior Citizen Hall of Fame award was Tony Petkovsek, who has been on daily "polka radio" since 1961. Since the 1980s his broadcasting presence in Lake County has helped earn him the title of "America's Polka Ambassador" promoting major events and festivals and leading polka music tours around the world.

At age 72 he continues to broadcast

a weekly radio show from his Fairport Harbor home and remains a great example of a senior leading an active lifestyle, according to information from the Council on Aging.

Mackey received the 2014 "Ruth A. Densmore Senior Advocate Award." She is a longtime board member and advocate for the seniors of Lake County and she has forged new partnerships between the Council on Aging and other agencies providing benefits to citizens throughout the county.

Mackey currently works for the Lake County Probate Court and her area of expertise includes senior advocacy.

Volunteer Services Program Manager Brittney Cassi presented recognition certificates and gifts to volunteers who marked five, 10, 15 and 20 years of service for the Council on Aging. The organization noted that nearly 600 volunteers gave more than 26,500 hours of service in 2013.

Also presented were five "Helping Hands Awards" to individuals, organizations and businesses who partnered with the Council on Aging over the past year:

■ The Cleveland Coatings Society was awarded for choosing the Council on Aging for a special community service project. In January, volunteers from the organization donated their time, talent and supplies to paint more than 20 offices at the Council on Aging's East Avenue building.

■ Also receiving an award was the Sherwin-Williams Company, which worked in conjunction with the Cleveland Coatings Society, donating all the paint and products necessary for the painting project, which had a total value estimated at \$10,000.

■ A third "Helping Hand Award" was given to Computers Assisting People, which donated 12 refurbished desktop computers, flat screen monitors, keyboards and components for the senior computer lab at the Council on Aging.

■ For the past eight years Pete Sherman and various barbershop quartets have entertained at the Council on Aging's annual "March for Meals" events. In December 2013, one of these groups, the Johnnycake Ridge Singers, hosted a benefit concert for the Meals on Wheels program.

The fourth "Helping Hands Award" was given to Sherman, who was also a Meals on Wheels volunteer driver.

■ The final award was given to Leadership Lake County's Community Builders program. During the county's past winter season, the members of the class of 2014 initiated a project called "Blanket our Seniors" and collected and donated hundreds of warm blankets, many hand-crocheted. Staff and volunteers distributed the blankets to needy seniors throughout the county.

Several public officials were on hand to present various proclamations and recognize the efforts of all the recipients.

The 2013 Annual Report was made available and the Council on Aging board of directors announced the election results of officers for 2014-15: Dr. Lori Stevic-Rust, president; Patricia Schraff, vice president; Edward Ott, treasurer; and board members Lorraine Fende, Ellen Forbus, TR Hach, James R. Jenkins, Charlie Johnson, Sunny Masters, Brian Rice, Laura Sherwin, Rich Wilson and Cameron Zwagerman along with honorary member Patty Mackey.