

Keep Martin Beautiful Honors Winners, Raises Funds During Awards

Just days after Keep Martin Beautiful (KMB) learned they were losing \$13,000 in funding from the Florida Department of Transportation, the KMB staff began planning for their signature fundraiser and recognition event, the Environmental Stewardship Awards (ESA) with renewed determination.

"It's always a daunting task to plan your annual fundraiser," KMB Outreach Coordinator Jessica Layne said. "It's important to improve upon years past and generate more funds for your organization, but when you learn that you are essentially \$13,000 away from your goal before you even begin, it makes the job that much harder."

Moving forward with a new sponsorship program and seeking nominations of innovative environmental initiatives from the community, KMB secured just more than \$11,000 in sponsorships and received 51 nominations for the awards ceremony. Another goal was to increase the attendance at the event, and more than 225 guests – the highest number ever – packed Piper's Landing Yacht & Country Club where the event has been held for two years in a row.

"We basically had to double our goal from the previous years to be able to position the organization for a successful 2011," said KMB President Rhonda Irons. "We had a great year in 2010 – setting records for volunteer participation during both our annual Great American Cleanup and International Coastal Cleanup events, and collecting more litter and waste from our communities than ever before. Though we are not alone in facing budget challenges, KMB needs to be able to do more than ever through the mobilization of volunteers while focusing more attention on bringing in new revenue streams. The more Keep Martin Beautiful is able to accomplish, the more the whole community benefits."

At this year's Environmental Stewardship Awards, the cross-section of the community was easy to see. From elected officials to heads of nonprofit organizations, from school children to business leaders, the crowd was diverse, yet could not have been more united in the mission to help keep Martin County a more beautiful place to live, work and play. KMB



Winners of the 2011 Environmental Stewardship Awards display the unique, recycled hand-blown glass bottle awards.



Commissioner Ed Ciampi with the team at Palm City Elementary School celebrates the win of the KMB Presidents Award for the Wildcat 2 Community Playground.

recognizes the importance of this event as not only its fundraiser, but its opportunity to thank and recognize their dedicated volunteers and the passionate unsung heroes in Martin County who quietly make things happen to keep Martin County beautiful.

The judges for the Environmental Stewardship Awards had an especially tough time this year deciding which of the 51 nominees would be chosen as the winners. "All of the nominations were worthy of recognition," said Martin County Commissioner Chairman Ed Ciampi who served on the judging panel. "How do you choose between a group of boy scouts, all under 8 years old, that cleaned a whole neighborhood by themselves and a business that 'greened' their entire building and included an educational component for visitors to learn about their efforts? They should all win."

But not all nominees could win, and the final decisions were announced on Wednesday, Feb. 2 at Piper's Landing Yacht & Country Club in Palm City. ESA Master of Ceremonies and WPTV News Channel 5 Anchor Kelley Dunn announced the winners of the 2011 Environmental Stewardship Awards. Nine groups and individuals were recognized, including the Boys & Girls Clubs of Martin County, the city of Stuart Recycling Coordinator Mary Kindel, Habitat for Humanity, the Palm City Elementary

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Wildcat 2 Playground, Stuart School of Music, Sunset Bay Marina & Anchorage, the Martin County Coastal Division Oyster Reef Restoration Project, Thelma Washington and the Treasured Lands Foundation.

"Our successful Stewardship Awards event was certainly a great way to kick off the new year," Irons said. "Now we are quickly gearing up for the Great American Cleanup which begins on March 1." KMB is still seeking sponsorships to underwrite the costs of the cleanup and community-improvement event.

A more detailed listing of the 2011 ESA winners and their projects is available on the Keep Martin Beautiful Web site at www.keepmartinbeautiful.org. For more information regarding upcoming projects and how you can get involved as a volunteer or sponsor, contact KMB today at 781-1222 or info@keepmartinbeautiful.org.

About Keep Martin Beautiful

Keep Martin Beautiful is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community organization founded in 1994. Its mission is to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Martin County through litter prevention, promotion of recycling, improvement of solid waste management practices and beautification and community revitalization activities. KMB signature events and programs include the annual Environmental Stewardship Awards Ceremony, Great American Cleanup, International Coastal Cleanup, the Adopt-A-Road program, the Adopt-A-Street program and other educational and outreach activities. Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/KeepMartinBeautiful, follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/KMBMartin or visit our Web site at www.keepmartinbeautiful.org.

2011 Environmental Stewardship Award Winners

Business/Professional Award

Sunset Bay Marina & Anchorage provides recycling bins and monofilament recycling stations along their docks, uses no pesticides or chemical fertilizers in their landscaping, and uses a solar water heater and fluorescent bulbs throughout their new "green" facility.

Government Agency Award

The **Oyster Reef Restoration Project** is focused on re-establishing the oyster population in the St. Lucie Estuary via the construction of artificial oyster reefs. In order to improve water quality and restore habitats for many species associated with oyster reefs.

Nonprofit/Civic Groups Award

Habitat for Humanity of Martin County built and donated two affordable "green" homes this year in East Stuart. The homes include features such as energy efficient appliances, high efficiency air conditioners, and double-pane insulated windows.

Youth/School Award

The **Boys & Girls Clubs of Martin County** SWAT Teams (made up of members ages 6-18) from the five Martin County branches participated in neighborhood cleanups resulting in tens of thousands of fewer cigarette butts littering our community as part of their Tobacco Litter Removal Initiative.

Unsung Hero Award

As part of her involvement in the Great American Cleanup Extreme Martin Makeover, **Thelma Washington** coordinated a neighborhood revitalization project to paint, repair and landscape homes of needy local families, including the creation of three new Habitat for Humanity "green" homes.