



United Way honors 6 'Pillars'

By Kim Hughes

Special to Treasure Coast Newspapers

When Mary Sawyer, executive director of the American Red Cross, Martin County Chapter, arrived at work Thursday morning, she was greeted by a surprise: Holly Laiben and a conference room full of people.

Her immediate reaction: "What are you all doing here?"

Laiben, director of United Way of Martin County's Character Counts! program, and others had gathered to present Sawyer with one of this year's 2010 Employee Pillar of Character Awards.

The awards recognize "unsung heroes" of the workplace for consistently demonstrating one or more of the six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

Sawyer said the pillars are similar to the principles of the Red Cross. She said the award is "another mechanism to motivate people to strive to achieve the six pillars of character."

Laiben received 39 nominations this year, the most in the program's eight-year history.

Of this year's recipients, she said, "These six people demonstrated all six pil-

WINNERS OF THE 2010 EMPLOYEE PILLAR OF CHARACTER AWARDS

- Sam Velazquez, site coordinator, Indiantown Boys and Girls Club, Indiantown
- Consuelo Macedo, eighth-grade reading and language arts teacher, Indiantown Middle School, Indiantown
- Camron Becraft, vice president of operations, TurboCombustor Technology, Inc., Stuart
- Chuck Eckhardt, recreation leader, City of Stuart (East Stuart Youth Initiative), Stuart
- Pat Pierce, office manager, Piper's Landing Yacht and Country Club, Palm City
- Mary Sawyer, executive director, American Red Cross, Martin County Chapter, Stuart

lars. Their work ethic is very, very high."

Consuelo Macedo, an eighth-grade reading and language arts teacher at Indiantown Middle School, was among the recipients.

Upon learning she was receiving the award, Macedo said, "I was completely speechless. It's phenomenal.

"It's nice to know other people recognize the hard work and effort and heart I put into my job."

For Chuck Eckhardt, a recreation leader with the city of Stuart, this wasn't his first encounter with Character Counts!

In 2000, as a senior at Martin County High School, Eckhardt was awarded a Character Counts! scholarship.

Seeing Laiben this week

at his workplace surprised him.

"It was kind of a very heartfelt moment," he said. Eckhardt said he always strives to be a role model for the kids.

This award helped them "see what we as a staff and I go through to make an impact."

Camron Becraft, vice president of operations at TurboCombustor Technology, Inc., said, "It's very special."

He was honored to be singled out because, he said, "we have so many employees here that make it happen every day."

In addition to an award certificate, recipients also received gift certificates to Luna Italian Restaurant and the Lyric Theatre in Stuart, courtesy of the Firefly Group.