

Citizens

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the community, donating money and time to a long list of organizations. He provides 400 tickets each year for FFA students to see the Farm-City Pro Rodeo, sponsors the calf-dressing contest, purchases multiple 4-H and FFA animals at the auction each year, and donated much of the irrigation equipment used to support the Umatilla County Fair.

"I don't know if any kid ever came in here that didn't leave with something," Frasier quoted one of Lyons' employees.

He described photos and letters displayed at Lyons' business from people who shared the impact Lyons had on them as a young person.

"They say if you fly the

flag, you'd better walk the walk, and the flag he flies says, 'I care about youth,'" Frasier said.

Awards at the banquet are always kept a secret ahead of time, but Woman of the Year Cindy Meyers was especially shocked. As a Hermiston Chamber of Commerce ambassador, she would normally be in the loop on who the chamber was giving awards to, but had been given a fake name.

"I'm speechless," she said, wiping away tears as her family joined her on stage.

Presenter Bob Green, a fellow chamber ambassador, called Meyers a woman of integrity who was humble, resourceful, diligent, elegant, witty, thoughtful and many other traits that make her a role model. He highlighted her service in community organizations, such as Altrusa Interna-

tional, Agape House and Umatilla County Fire District #1's board.

He also highlighted her professional successes as a vice president at Banner Bank. He said her excellent customer service was well known, and she had attended weddings and funerals of longtime customers with which she had formed bonds.

"As a banker the past 37 years she has excelled as one of the most accomplished bankers in the area, in the words of her peers," Green said.

The Bob Severson Rotary Business of the Year went to Medelez Inc., a family owned, Hermiston-based trucking company.

Presenter Tammy Smith said they started in the early 1980s with just three pieces of equipment, and today have more than 150 trucks and more than 300 employees. Their business provides

support along Hermiston's supply chain, from farms like AgriNorthwest to processing plants like Lamb Weston to retailers like Safeway.

Beyond that, they have been major sponsors of projects such as Kennison Field, community events such as the Farm-City Pro Rodeo, and nonprofits such as Farmers Ending Hunger and the Agape House.

As the Medelez brothers took the stage to accept the award, Benny Medelez said they wouldn't be successful without their employees, and the support community.

"We came here in 1974 because we thought Hermiston would be a good place to raise our families, and we were right," he said.

The Merit of Honor Award went to Made to Thrive, a Hermiston nonprofit that helps at-risk youths participate in extracurricular activities. The

organization pays fees, provides equipment and snacks, gives rides to practices, encourages parent involvement and sends mentors to cheer on students at their games and performances.

Made to Thrive was started by Kriss Dammeyer in 2014 and has since helped more than 1,500 children ages 4-18 in Umatilla County. Presenter Phil Hamm said Dammeyer has the foresight, energy and commitment to make a real difference in the community.

"She's not afraid to shed light on the sadder parts of the community, but she's always ready with a solution," he said.

Hamm said she exemplifies what it means to love one's neighbor, and read letters that explained how Dammeyer had changed students' lives for the better.

"We have our heads down and just going, and sometimes we don't take the

time to reflect on the impact we are making," Dammeyer said as she accepted the award.

Besides the awards presented by the chamber, Umatilla County Fire District #1 also presented their Fire Service Award to Jessica Marcum, the district's community paramedic. Marcum visits patients in their homes to help prevent future ambulance rides and emergency room visits. Preventative actions she takes include measures such as auditing the home for fall risks, making sure the patient is taking their medications correctly and performing blood pressure checks and other tests.

Stanton said Marcum "truly embodies the word professionalism" and represents the district well.

"She has almost by herself grown the program to be one respected throughout the state," he said.

Educators

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recently nominated for a Read180 educator award.

"My favorite saying of hers is 'It's OK not to know, but it's not OK not to try,'" said student Max Hernandez in her nomination video. "I really feel like that's what stands out."

When Fisher isn't teaching, grading, serving on the educator leadership team for Hermiston High School or advising the school's National Honors Society, she's also a building representative for the Hermiston Association of Teachers.

"That was really important to me," she said. "Part of me thought, I don't need more to do. But the bigger part of me wants to continue to improve education for students and teachers. When teachers are supported in their jobs they pass those outcomes

along."

She's also prepping for a few triathlons this spring, including the Walla Walla Onion Man triathlon in May.

"Mrs. Fisher is very dedicated to the constant improvement of her craft," said Superintendent Tricia Mooney at the Distinguished Citizens Awards last week.

"Not only does she work tirelessly to help students learn and improve, but her students do so at an above-average rate."

Fisher wasn't the only educator to receive high praise at last week's award ceremony. Each year, the district selects an educator of the year for each school.

Hermiston High School

In addition to Fisher, art teacher Nici Silver was selected as an educator of the year at the high school level. Silver teaches AP Media Art and advises the

Art Club.

"Mrs. Silver's classroom is constantly buzzing with activity," Mooney said last week. "She encourages her students to find ways to artistically improve their immediate surroundings."

Armand Larive Middle School

Melissa Purswell teaches sixth grade at Armand Larive. She also heads up the Armand Larive Kindness Club.

"Mrs. Purswell cares about every student, whether a Bullpup or not, and she is dedicated to growing them as students and as individuals," Mooney said.

Sandstone Middle School

According to staff and students at Sandstone, music teacher Daniel Allen is known as "Mr. Awesome."

"He is a team player, and he epitomizes the idea of how learning can happen all the time, in all kinds of

ways, and with all types of students," Mooney said.

Desert View Elementary

First grade teacher Shelly Lillie recently finished serving on the Desert View leadership team.

"Mrs. Lillie will drop everything to help her colleagues. She always makes time for staff in need and is a champion for students, wanting the best for each and every one," Mooney said.

Highland Hills Elementary

Marian Koenig teaches kindergarten at Highland Hills. She is known for using rhymes and music to keep her students involved and engaged.

"Ms. Koenig is a dedicated teacher, who instills the love of learning in her students," said Mooney. "Upbeat and bubbly, her teaching style helps each of her students

feel proud of their daily accomplishments."

Rocky Heights Elementary

A Title I teacher at Rocky Heights, Holly Moss helps coordinate parent nights, gather data and run student learning intervention meetings. "Her patience is unmatched, and her care for others is extraordinary," Mooney said.

Sunset Elementary

Shawna Yeager teaches physical education at Sunset Elementary School. Her peers know her for her flexibility and caring personality.

"She does not seek attention and is happy to quietly work in the shadows, but Sunset folks know how valuable she is," said Mooney. "(She's) a great example of a Sunset Star."

West Park Elementary

Amy Springstead teaches second grade at West Park

Elementary School. According to her peers, she stays ahead of the curve and her students are better for it.

"She strives to create activities and lessons that challenge her students. She is the queen of rigor," Mooney said.

District Office

At a district level, Pam Schaffeld is the special education facilitator. According to her peers, she is highly organized and driven.

"Mrs. Schaffeld is a solution-oriented individual. She strives to create processes that are easy to understand and that support student learning and needs," Mooney said.

Mooney was also named as the district's Administrator of the Year, for recent accomplishments including completing a doctorate in education, being appointed to the Oregon Quality Education Commission and helping the district pass an \$82.7 million bond.

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