

Rosewood Club Distinguished Service Award 12/7/15 - Susan Morehouse

Susan Morehouse, a native Rochesterian, graduated from Nazareth College with a teaching degree. She and her husband, family physician, Dr. Bill Morehouse have been married 40 years, raised 4 children and now enjoy 6 grandchildren. Their faith is important to them and they are members at Joy Community Church at Bay and Goodman. Susan and her husband established His Branches, a Christian health outreach ministry in the 19th Ward, the neighborhood they have lived in for 40 years. Susan is a professional harpist and has 3 recorded CDs.

Susan heads up the Arnett Block Association which is under the umbrella of His Branches. Under Susan's leadership the Arnett Block Association:

- Meets monthly with CPOs and concerned citizens addressing drug, gang, and crime issues as well as tenant/landlord problems and neighborhood issues.
- Developed and maintains the Arnett Bird and Butterfly Park, a community pocket park at Wellington and Arnett. It won first prize as a Community Enhancement Garden this year. At the garden, a 12-15 foot Holiday tree is erected each year and decorated by School #29. One evening in December, neighbors sing carols around a container fire, roasting marshmallows. There is also an Easter Egg hunt in the park in the spring.
- Worked with others to start the only city library "Friends" group. This Friends group renovated the children's room and foyer of the Arnett Library. Susan organizes and runs a 2x a week Storytime as well as a Music Series at the library.
- In May, hosts a Bike Clinic in collaboration with R Community Bikes and raffle off 15 rehabbed bikes for free to kids who don't have a bike. Thanks to RPD, helmets and bike locks are given out as well.
- In August, hosts a large block party with horse rides on the street, hot dogs and snacks, free raffle prizes, clown, juggler, magician, story time and book giveaway, health booth, K-9 visit, etc. This is the highlight of the summer for many children on the SW side of Rochester.

In the fall of 2013, Susan pulled together a dynamic committee that worked with RPD, NYS Attorney General's office, and others to host the SW Gun buyback. It was Rochester's most successful buyback, bringing in 242 guns.

After the buyback the committee re-formed as the Front Row Coalition and together with Rochester Community TV, RCSD, RPD (Wayne Harris was a great support), Pathways to Peace and several churches created a 20 minute antigun violence video. "The Front Row" has surpassed all expectations. It is being used in Rochester City and charter schools, libraries, Rec and youth centers, Pathways to Peace, RPD, Church youth groups, Hillside, Monroe County probation and parole, and other places. It has been shared and copies given to police departments in many major cities in the US as well as around the world. Recently, the UN Committee on Violence requested a copy.

When asked about the overwhelming success of the video, Susan says, "It is way beyond anything I could have done. It is a 'God thing' - an idea that's time was right and the need was very great. It's a tool that was needed to address the serious problem of violence among youth worldwide. What an awesome committee I was given to work with to create this video."

Comments by Captain Joe Sturnick (ret.)

Susan's Acceptance Comments

I am extremely honored to be the recipient of this award.

I must give credit to the exceptional people who I have worked with, especially the Front Row Coalition.

It is true that if you surround yourself with great people ...they make you look good.

The Front Row Coalition is an amazing group of dedicated and caring individuals genuinely concerned for the youth in Rochester. I learned so much from each of them. I was challenged and stretched by them to see the youth in Rochester with compassionate eyes. I count it a privilege to have worked alongside them in this project.

Wayne Harris, Jackie Shuman (members of the coalition) , Tim Tompkins from Rochester Police Foundation, and Chief Ciminelli have been a huge support and encouragement in the Front Row video project and the SW Gun Buyback. Thank you all!

It is rewarding to live this brief life with a God-given purpose but then, to see some of the fruit of your labors in this life is a gracious gift. For that I am thankful to the Lord.

Thank you again! I am deeply honored and grateful!



The Award



Deputy Chief Wayne Harris and Susan