



Char-Em United Way

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2017 John Newton Award Recipient – Lisa Blanchard

Petoskey, MI—Each June, the Char-Em United Way awards caring individuals in our community with a very special award. John Newton was an active member of our community. Not only was he a Char-Em United Way board member and president but he also volunteered his time and talents for many other local organizations.

Unfortunately, his term with Char-Em United Way ended when he suffered massive injuries from a car accident in September 2000. A model for tenacity and perseverance, he fought his way back from his injuries. He had to relearn how to perform all those daily tasks that most of us take for granted. Eventually he was able to return to work for Bank One. However, he was unexpectedly taken from us in the Fall of 2001 by complications of the accident.

The Char-Em United Way created the John Newton Award of Excellence in 2002 to commemorate John's life and the gifts he gave to our community. The award is awarded to both an individual who, through their actions, gave significantly to the health and human services in Charlevoix and Emmet counties. This past June the award was awarded to Lisa Blanchard. Lisa has served as the Board President of the Petoskey Harbor Springs Community Foundation as well as serving on the Women's Resource Center board, again rising to the position of President. She was County Commissioner at one time, runs several reading groups for elementary kids and has done so for many years. She is on the Leadership Little Traverse Advisory Committee, coordinating the Government Day and is active in her Church.

The Board of Directors of Char-Em United Way unanimously agreed that Lisa deserved this award. Lisa was not able to attend the breakfast in June, but recently met with Lorraine Manary, CEO of Char-Em United Way to receive the award. Lisa did provide a thank you note which was read at the breakfast by then Board Chair Joel Schraw.

"Thank you, United Way board, for this kind recognition. I knew John Newton and his family and commend you for having created this award in his memory. I am deeply honored to be this year's recipient.

It is a pleasure and a privilege to serve on the boards of the outstanding non-profits in our community. I am equally pleased and proud of the work accomplished on appointed boards with the capable staff of Emmet County and Resort township

I hope I am a kinder, more empathetic person thanks to friends made and stories shared in the Manna pantry and Sunday soup kitchen. I hope I remain young at heart thanks to the students in my book groups. I hope I continue to ask the right questions and push toward the best answer thanks to the examples of Maureen Nicholson, Jan Mancinelli, David Jones and Sara Ward. And to do it with humor thanks to the example of Carlin Smith. And also with intelligence & generosity thanks to the example of Paul Blanchard.

To put it simply, I love my community and I love what I do----volunteer!! I gain much more than I give!

Thank you again for this kind recognition. I am deeply honored to receive the John Newton award.”

~Lisa Blanchard

Please join us in congratulating Lisa and thanking her for her efforts on behalf of the citizens in our region.