

Region 4 - The Great Lakes Region
Submitted by John Colilla, Regional Director

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Great Lakes Region Award show and Banquet – June 8-9, 2024

Up, Up and Away could not have been a better theme for the Great Lakes Region show and Regional Banquet this past weekend! Let's begin with the show! We had our show at the Columbus State Fairgrounds. This show hall is huge, with more than enough space for everyone to stretch out! The show had so many amazing vendors, with something for humans and our furry friends. Although there were 3 other banquets and shows going on this weekend we want to give a huge shout out to all the exhibitors who came out to support the show. We want to thank the region and all who donated towards helping to make the raffle table such a successful one! We had a lot of spectators who got to enjoy watching all the beautiful cats being judged. Speaking of being judged, thank you so much to all our amazing judges, who, as always handled our babies with love. I cannot even imagine the time and talent it took for Dianne Dodd to hand craft the beautiful decorations for the show, her hard work helped bring the theme of Up, Up and Away come to fruition. All in all the show went off without a hitch and I know all the spectators and exhibitors had such an enjoyable time! Now let's get to the Awards Banquet! Where do I even start? When exhibitors have worked so hard all year we cannot wait to get together and celebrate those wins with our fellow friends and exhibitors. So from the second we walked in to the Banquet we were all completely transformed into another realm. When you are already on a high from winning and you walk into a room full of balloons, flower centerpieces with twinkle lights, and hand made hot air balloons, it literally felt like we were all flying high. The banquet was amazing, but as we all know, these things do not just happen on there own. Without the hours and hours of hard work none of this would be possible, so let's get to it. Thank you to Teresa and Edwin Sweeney for the months and months of planning and coordinating this entire event. Teresa not only spent countless hours booking and planning, but she also did an amazing job helping John Colilla serve as Master of Ceremonies. In addition, Teresa helped create memorable items such as engraved trophies and rosettes for those who won special awards, in addition to making sure all of the top winners had a beautiful bouquet of flowers. So it came as no surprise when Teresa was awarded one of The Spirit of The Great Lakes Region Awards!! So we have the Banquet hall, but how do we transform that into a work of art? Here comes Sabrina Grisier and Dianne Dodd. Not only did they help come up with the Up, Up and Away theme, they are the one's who put the theme into a vision. Their creative and talented minds, were challenged, and that challenge was not only met, but exceeded anything we could have imagined! So now we have the banquet, and the decor, but where do we sit? Thank you to Sandi Douglass for all your hard work in coordinating reservations and seating, even with the challenges that entailed, you did an amazing job!! Now that we have all been seated and served, it is time to get the "show" started. Here comes

Carmen Lawrence to the rescue. We can always count on Carmen to make our "On the Road presentation" one to remember. It is always so fun being able to look back at all the memories we made over the past year. While enjoying the video, we all get to look through the stunning program that Bethany Colilla year after year puts her heart and soul into. We can't thank you enough Bethany for giving us a memory we get to take home with us. Next comes the Audio/Visual part of the Banquet. Where would we be without the lovely voices of Tyler and Jennifer Deel endlessly announcing all the winners? Thank you to the both of you for always stepping up to the plate. What would the Awards banquet be without the actual awards? We cannot say thank you enough to Beth Holly for all your hard work with the Rosettes and Awards, you are a rock star! In addition to Beth, we want to say thank you to those who helped Beth hand out the awards; Debbie Allgire, Rick Hoskinson, Jim and Kathy Simmons and Brooke Cole. We all know after a long year of spending money running our cats, asking for sponsorships is never an easy task, However, Linda Murphy and Mariane Toth made that task look a little easier. So thank you Linda and Mariane for stepping into this new role! As well as a huge congrats to Linda for winning the Hall of Fame Award!! Thank you so much to Ginger Meeker and Wendy Lorch for all your fundraising efforts, via individual donations and region clubs donations to create an amazing basket full of gift cards and cash. What an original and thoughtful idea! Congrats to Kathleen Doyle who was the lucky recipient of this awesome basket! We also want to say thank you to Eddie of EDLEGO photos for your talented photography. A big congrats to Joan Daily and Cindy Rich for also winning the Spirit of The Great Lakes Award and to Jacqueline Bates for the Clerk of the year award. Our last Spirit of The Great Lakes Award was a very emotional one, as we lost our dear Kent Thompson recently. His loss has broken the heart of us all, but his memory will never be forgotten. Last but not least, we all want to thank our fearless leader, our Great Lakes Regional Director, John Colilla. You are such a kind soul, and we are all better for knowing you. Thank you for all the hard work you continue to do to help keep our Region one to be proud of! The phrase "it takes a village" wasn't just a phrase this weekend. It takes a group of people who all share a love of cats, who share a passion for showing, who share the willingness to put aside their selfishness and be selfless for the good of everyone else. The show, the Banquet, the success of them both would not have been possible without all of these people mentioned here, and even those that may not have been mentioned. The endless hours, the literal blood sweat and tears did not go unnoticed, and there are never quite the right words to express the gratitude we all feel. We all had a night we will never forget and The Great Lakes Region will no doubt continue to persevere as long as we have all of you in our corner. Raise a glass and cheers to you all!!