

Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce

33rd Annual Community Awards Banquet

Wednesday, April 26, 2017 from 6 to 9 pm

At **Hollywood East Café**, 11160 Veirs Mill Road, Westfield Wheaton Mall, Wheaton, MD 20902

2017 Award Winners

The 2017 Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce Tribute Award: Fitzgerald Auto Mall-Wheaton is one of the area's largest car dealers, and excels in fair prices and customer satisfaction. They have been selling and servicing cars, and helping the community in the Wheaton area for 47 years, and have been a great supporter of the Chamber. Their association with our community goes back to 1970 when Jack Fitzgerald purchased Wheaton Dodge. The Fitzgerald Automotive Family has grown to 15 locations and 35 franchises in MD, PA and FL. They employ over 1,500 associates, and have three generations of families as employees.

Jack Fitzgerald encourages his associates to participate in community organizations, such as the Yellow Ribbon Fund, the Washington Animal Rescue League, the County Safe Kids Coalition, and the Child Safety Seat Program that aims to reduce the number of injuries to children caused by crashes, and provides child safety seat training for employees who volunteer their time to help the public. Over 100 Fitzgerald associates have been trained to become certified Child Safety Seat Technicians. More than 45,000 child safety seats have been installed and inspected, and the percentage of incorrectly installed car seats has dropped significantly in the area. Accepting the award is Wheaton General Manager George Sydnor, who has been with Fitzgerald Auto Mall for 36 years, and at the Wheaton location for 17 years.

Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board Awards

The Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board Citizen of the Year: Christina Swan is the President of Friends of the Library, Aspen Hill Chapter since 2008. Ms. Swan has contributed on an ongoing basis, many hours, and much effort and care to the community served by the Friends. Her focus is on providing services, programs and structure. She has unstoppable energy, skill and time that she has given to each task. She's also been active in her Homeowners Association, as the Secretary from 2006-2009, and on the Board of Directors since 2007; as well as in the Strathmore Bel Pre Civic Association on the Board of Directors since 2007, and newsletter editor in 2010.

The Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board Community Association of the Year: St. John's Lutheran Church has been serving the Aspen Hill community for close to 60 years and has worked to help not just its members, but all of its neighbors and the greater community. St. John's does numerous service projects throughout the year, focusing on helping the immediate Aspen Hill community. These projects include monthly collection of food and supplies for the Millian's Food Pantry. The last few years have also culminated in a larger annual donation drive as part of their "God's Work, Our Hands" program. They have also been providing monthly meals for the residents of the Interfaith Works Women's Center; and meals for The Humble Walk: Lutheran Campus Ministry at the U of MD. They support the residents of The Village at Rockville Senior Home, and provide knitted items to various groups through their Shawl Ministry. St. John's also provides meeting space to various community groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous, 4-H and others.

Pastor Travis Kern accepting

Wheaton Urban Citizens Advisory Board Awards

The Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee Business Leader of the Year: William Moore, Owner of IHOP-Wheaton is a long-standing leader, both in the business world as well as community world. For years, he has been active not only through owning one of the most well-recognized restaurants in Wheaton, but also through his work on the Chamber of Commerce (as President and Board member), his role on the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (as an officer) and his support for various local nonprofits, including MUM. He has been the go-to business when nonprofits want a business partner. William's downtown Wheaton business has been a fixture for decades, and he is a lifelong resident of the Wheaton/Kensington area. Though William runs another IHOP in Takoma Park, his commitment to Wheaton is unique. While the bottom line of a business is making a profit, when it comes to IHOP under William's leadership, his bottom line also includes collaborating with the community, helping to sustain and strengthen the nonprofit sector, and having an impact with integrity and commitment.

The Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee Best Property Improvement of the Year: Seoul Food DC

Anna and John Goree began offering their Korean-Mexican fusion cuisine from a food truck in Arlington and built a loyal following for their healthy, sustainably sourced, delicious food. They moved to a permanent location in Wheaton in June 2013. Anna and John have transformed a space shared with a gas station into a cozy, lively, welcoming, eclectic space that reflects both their cuisine and the lively neighborhood around it. This is most surprising given that the restaurant is in a gas station. Their food emphasizes wholesome, locally sourced ingredients and caters to a wide variety of diets, including vegetarian and vegan. They continue to improve their tiny space to make it more attractive to their loyal customers.

WUDAC member Dan Thompson accepting

The 4th District Police Public Safety Award: Sergeant Keith Duggan & Sergeant Phillip Meyer together run the 4th District, Shift 8 (midnight shift) with 14 officers from 8:30 pm to 6:30 am. Through their leadership, dedication, tenacity, and overall pride, Shift 8 outperformed the entire 4th District in traffic enforcement and criminal arrests, and arrested more impaired drivers, 264 DUI arrests, than any other District in the County! There is a direct correlation between excellent leadership and job performance, and Shift 8 has consistently been strong in both traffic and criminal performance but this year was the best overall. In 2016, Shift 8 issued 4448 traffic citations, 3410 traffic warnings, made 24 felony arrests, 60 misdemeanor arrests, and issued 325 criminal and civil citations. Their due diligence was instrumental in making both our streets and community safer for all to enjoy.

Sgt. Duggan is an 18-year veteran and has been a Sergeant for the past nine years, serving almost his entire supervisory career as a midnight Sergeant in the 4th District. A strong leader who can be counted on to make difficult decisions, he deploys his troops efficiently and effectively in response to serious situations. Sgt. Meyer joined the Department in 2003 and was promoted to Sergeant in 2015. A dynamic, hands-on person who genuinely watches out for his troops, he leads by example and does not hesitate to get involved. Sgt. Meyer coaches youth softball, baseball, football, and basketball... and still has time to play softball.

The Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad Public Safety Officer of the Year Award:

Mr. Robert "Bob" Lawson has served in every WVRS leadership position for sixty years, mentored every leader of the past and present, and has collaborated on, contributed to, or initiated every major

undertaking of the WVRS. Bob remains active in the WVRS and is responsible for managing the Green Room, a community room used by the public for meetings and social events. As the longest serving member in the history of the WVRS, Bob lifetime of service to the community embodies the tradition of volunteer service and inspires excellence among those who follow in his footsteps.

The Kensington Volunteer Fire Department Public Safety Award: **Lynn Tantardini** is the long-time Corporate Secretary having joined KVFD in October of 1990. Her immense responsibilities include maintaining meeting records (both the Corporation & Board of Directors) and compiling and managing the LOSAP (Length of Service Award Program). LOSAP is complex and Lynn manages all the details and records processing for over 175 members of KVFD annually through specific county and state offices. LOSAP provides members of the department with tax benefits and a retirement benefit based on each member attaining a specific point level based on activities with the department. Lynn has previously been recognized with over 12 awards, from both KVFD and the county. KVFD would not function well without the amazing efforts and management Lynn has devoted to it.

High School Awards

9) The Einstein High School Teacher of the Year Award: **Mr. Peter Smeallie** is completing his 31st year of service at Einstein HS. After his first year, he was asked to take over the after-school drama program, Einstein S.T.A.G.E. and he has continued producing dramatic fall plays and entertaining spring musicals ever since. Through theater, Mr. Smeallie has inspired his students to grow, doing things that they would have never imagined for themselves. The results have been a truly wonderful production company. Many of Mr. Smeallie's graduates are now affiliated with local and regional theatres as well as appearing in Broadway, off-Broadway and touring productions. His countless hours of dedication to rehearsals, stage building and breakdowns, concert practice, and so on, has created an atmosphere that supports and encourages artistic expression for countless students.

10) The Einstein High School ESOL Student of the Year Award: **Ms. Rediet Betru** is a senior who came to Einstein almost 2 years ago and exited ESOL last year from a Level 4, as she demonstrated a phenomenal capacity to learn English. She is now in Honors classes and holds a 3.05 GPA. She is also a member of the Key Club, the International Honors Society and the Ethiopian & Eritrean Club. Ms. Betru has mentored other Einstein students from Ethiopia without compensation or SSL hours. She is also a beautiful singer who has performed at Taste of Einstein – an international night featuring food and performances by students from a wide variety of countries.

11) The Einstein High School Student Community Service of the Year Award: **Ms. Rocio Alvarado** is a senior who has earned over 500 hours volunteering her time at Harmony Hills Elementary School for the past 4 years. Ms. Alvarado, along with other teens, takes care of young children while their parents attend English courses in the evening. She plans activities for the children, including going outside to play or getting help with their homework. Ms. Alvarado enjoys seeing the kids having fun with each other and not being attached to a screen. This experience has taught her that all kids really need – is a bit of your time and attention to be happy. Ms. Alvarado plans to attend Montgomery College next year and major in photojournalism.

The Kennedy High School Teacher of the Year Award: Mr. Brian Schutt began working as a Mathematics teacher at Kennedy HS in August 2013. Previously he had spent 8 years in the US Navy working with nuclear reactors, mostly onboard the USS Enterprise & USS George HW Bush. His experience in this field culminated in a Bachelor in Nuclear Engineering from Excelsior College in 2012. In June 2013, he received certification to teach Secondary Mathematics, and is currently enrolled in Master of Arts in Education at UMBC.

He was given the task of teaching ESOL Geometry classes in his first year, and embraced this challenge whole heartedly. He attended and completed Sheltered Instruction Operation Protocol (SIOP) training, and took that knowledge back to his Professional Learning Community so that the strategies could be used in all Geometry classes. As the Geometry team leader he created and spearheaded an after-school program, called ‘Algebra Boot Camp’, designed to help students in Geometry classes that are struggling with Algebraic concepts. Mr. Schutt has created the JFK Chess Club, and in just their second year they placed 6th overall at the MD State Chess Championships last month. For the last four years he has volunteered his Saturday mornings to assist with the Kennedy Cluster Schools’ Family Food Market. His dedication to the families and students of the JFK community has truly made a difference.

The Kennedy High School ESOL Student of the Year Award: Yesenia Henriquez-Zepeda is a senior who came to here from El Salvador in 2013 and quickly moved through the various levels in ESOL while excelling in other classes such as math – which she describes as a language that she has always understood. Abby, as she likes to be called, has maintained excellent grades in honors, AP and IB classes (GPA of 3.80 & weighted GPA of 4.07) all while working as a teacher’s assistant, aiding other ESOL students and helping care for sick and elderly family members. She hopes to become a computer engineer and is currently an intern in the U of MD’s Engineering Program. Abby has also actively participated in the Applied Physics Lab summer program at Johns Hopkins University. She is a member of the JFK Leadership Training Institute, a JFK student ambassador and president of the JFK National Honor Society. Abby has been accepted to Catholic University, Johns Hopkins University, and Loyola University of MD.

The Kennedy High School Student Community Service of the Year Award: Emily Chaparron is a senior that has earned an astonishing 1300 Student Service Learning Hours. She has worked at the school INOVA blood drives, served as a student ambassador, volunteered with Linkages to Learning, working with young children and served as a teacher’s aide during the summer. Emily has received recognition from Harmony Hills Elementary for her extensive service to their school community. She has learned that patience and kindness are required when dealing with students. Emily credits volunteering for her own maturing by providing opportunities for independence and responsibility. She is an active participant in the Medical Careers Academy, and plans to attend Montgomery College. Her goal is to work in the medical field either in pediatrics or veterinary science.

The Wheaton High School Teacher of the Year Award: Mrs. Lauren Zolkiewicz has been teaching for 13 years, 9 of which have been at Wheaton HS. Prior to Wheaton she taught abroad at numerous schools in and around London, UK. At Wheaton, she has taught On-Level and Honors US History, as well as AP US History to 9th graders. Under her tutelage, students in her AP classes have scored well above the national average in the AP US History Exam, consistently scoring in the top third, whereas most schools only offer this exam to upperclassmen. Lauren has also been a 9th Grade House Leader for the past 8 years, collecting data for analysis and developing programs like the student mentor

program, lunchtime support, and a 9th Grade Awards Ceremony to encourage success in freshmen. She has previously served as the Varsity Girls Lacrosse Coach and the 9th grade sponsor. Lauren is currently the National Honor Society Co-Sponsor and Varsity/JV Girls Lacrosse Assistant Coach.

The Wheaton High School Student ESOL Student of the Year Award: [Gustavo Martinez](#)

[Jaramillo](#) left his native Colombia when he was 15 years old to come to Silver Spring, where he resides with his mother, sister, and 1-year old nephew. Gustavo enrolled in Wheaton HS as an ESOL level 3 student. He will graduate in June and continue his education at Montgomery College. His career goal is to become a mechanical engineer, and is currently taking Physics and has earned straight A's during semester A of his Senior year. One of his teachers regarded him as "an amazing kid" noting that he takes care of his mother, who is fighting breast cancer, as well as his nephew.

The Wheaton High School Student Community Service of the Year Award: [Chukwuebuka](#)

[Oghenerukevwe Osinachi](#) came to the US from Nigeria. Ebuka has acquired almost 750 hours on various community service projects including tutoring, feeding the homeless, raising money for cancer research, and co-founding a project to help support kids in Africa and the US through the Ange project. He also participates on the Tennis Team, Football Team, Student Government Association and Debate Team. As a member of the National Leadership Conference he has attended Engineering leadership conferences in which he shadowed and observed NASA engineers. He is also a member of the National Society of Black Engineers. Ebuka will graduate in June and attend college at either U of MD, Purdue, Hofstra or U of Illinois, to become an electrical engineer. He strives to solve the electricity problem in Nigeria, where people experience less than two hours of electricity every day.

The Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce Member of the Year: [Michèle Gordon, MiRé](#)

[Svaroopa Yoga](#) has made significant contributions to the richness of this community, and has been generous with her help, sponsorships and donations to the Chamber's various programs. She was raised in Kensington, and spent 25 years as a special education teacher, having earned her M.A. at GW University. Michèle took her first *Svaroopa® Yoga* class in 2001, and found that its relaxing, slower, healing aspects helped balance her full schedule, and reduce everyday stress. After teaching *Svaroopa®* yoga for 12 years in Rehoboth Beach, she returned to this area to open her own hatha-style yoga studio named MiRé in November 2014. Michele's vision is to help others learn that yoga does not have to be strenuous, and to manage their pain in a calming, easy, slower way. She believes that giving to a community is the responsibility of every resident, and fully supports the Chamber.

The Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year Award: [Washington](#)

[Property Company](#) is an award-winning real estate firm with commercial, residential, retail and mixed-use projects throughout the region. With projects like Solaire Wheaton, they have made significant contributions to the community, and have been a great supporter of the Chamber. Guided by core values of integrity, fairness and a commitment to excellence, WPC is dedicated to creating and enhancing value in real estate assets, offering diversified expertise in acquisition, land use, design, development, finance, leasing, construction and property management.

Charles K. Nulsen, III President established WPC in 2005, and has over 30 years' experience in commercial real estate. He and WPC have supported public-private partnerships with County Executive Ike Leggett that save residents money, enrich the community and ensure quality modern facilities which effectively serve County residents. The most recent completed P3, Progress Place, resulted from collaborative work with WPC, and provides services to the homeless in downtown Silver Spring.

The Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce President's Award: **Marian Fryer** has been a resident of Wheaton for over 45 years. She retired in 1995 after serving 34 years with the Federal and DC Governments. In 1996 she started her home-based business, Marian's Connections, selling on-consignment new and pre-owned clothing & accessories for women. Marian quickly became active in the community and served various terms on WUDAC, Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee, the Business and Economic Development and Arts & Entertainment Subcommittees, and MCCAB. She is President of the Wheaton Citizens Coalition, and a Board member of the Allied Civic Group.

Marian assisted with compiling the application for Wheaton's first submission to be designated as an Arts & Entertainment District, and has been a presenter for the County Public Schools Resource Connection, and career fairs at middle and high schools. She has served on the Montgomery County Commission for Women, and has been a presenter for Leadership Montgomery and Impact Silver Spring. She is a graduate of the Senior Leadership Montgomery charter class and has served on their Board of Directors. Among Marian's many honors, she has received the Blanche Cawton Award for Outstanding Community Service, the first Chuck Levin Economic Development Award, is an honoree of the Toyota Tribute to Working Women, and an inductee into the MD Senior Citizens Hall of Fame for Community Service.

The Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award:

Mrs. Annabelle Jaffe was born in 1922 in Cincinnati, Ohio, and had always aspired to become a teacher. This desire was first exhibited at the age of ten when she taught her younger sister to read and write. Graduating from the University of Cincinnati with a B.S. in Education, she was teaching high school English in Cincinnati through World War II. After the war she and her husband moved to the DC area, where she taught in Arlington and Washington, DC, while earning a Masters Degree from GW University. She had 10 years of teaching experience before she became a Guidance Counselor in the County Schools. In 2012 Annabelle retired after a total of 50 years in the school system, with the last 47 being at Wheaton HS. She established the Jaffe Memorial Scholarship fund in memory of her deceased husband and son. Then, in the fall of 2012, she decided that retirement was not for her, and went back to subbing in the schools. This is her 5th year of subbing and she works every day to give purpose to her life.

Surprise Special Appreciation Award:

The Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce Appreciation Award: **Ellen Riger** grew up in Wheaton, and is a graduate of the Wheaton High School class of 1965. After graduating from the University of Maryland, she set out for a career in research and writing, working abroad for a time. In 1981 she was back home in Wheaton and started her own business EllenOriginals, specializing in personalized event planning and custom gift baskets. In 2005, she channeled her love of animals to start Just Paws!, an exclusive pet sitting/walking pet care business.

Ellen has been active in the Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce since 1991, serving as President six years later. During her term of office she pioneered the Business/School Student Shadowing program at Wheaton High School. Within a couple of years Ellen had also started the Holiday on Duty program, which raises money to provide meals for area First Responders on duty during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays when most restaurants are closed.

For over 15 years now Ellen has spearheaded the Chamber's Annual Community Awards Banquet. After tonight she is stepping down as Chairperson. She will however continue to run the Holiday on Duty program until she passes from this world!