



News Release

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Missouri Catholic Conference Announces 2018 Recipients of the Citizen Recognition Award

JEFFERSON CITY — The Missouri Catholic Conference is excited to announce the 2018 winners of our Citizen Recognition Awards! The mission of the Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC) is to promote the common good in the state of Missouri and our global community. Each year, the MCC recognizes a Catholic citizen, couple, or group from each of the four dioceses who strives toward the same goal, giving of themselves to better the lives of others. These award recipients exemplify good citizenship in promoting Catholic values in the public policy arena and in their local communities and parishes. Award recipients are invited to bring their family and friends to attend the MCC Annual Assembly at Helias Catholic High School in Jefferson City on Saturday, October 6, where they will receive their award, presented by a Missouri Catholic Bishop, during the closing session. The winners from each diocese are as follows. Congratulations to you all, and many thanks to those who sent in nominations.

St. Louis: Joseph and Nancy Mueller

Joseph and Nancy Mueller reside in Webster Groves and are members of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish. Through their 58 years of marriage, the couple has remained very active in their parish and has embraced Catholicism in every aspect of their lives, including sending all four of their children through Catholic schools from their elementary to professional education. Joe has been a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVDP) since he was in law school, serving as Vice President and then President from 1993-1999. He and Nancy attended countless SVDP conferences and workshops in Latin and South America, Africa, the Caribbean, as well as Europe and North America. Nancy became a member of the SVDP in the early 1970's, when women first joined the Society. She has worked diligently as an active member ever since. For decades Nancy volunteered at the Soup Kitchens of St. Patrick's Center and Mother Teresa, where she still works every Tuesday. She has served as an example to others, including her grandchildren, whom she brings to the Soup Kitchens. And for 25 years, Nancy collected parish casserole dishes each month, delivering them to the hungry and homeless among us, in whom she sees the face of Christ.

Kansas City/St. Joseph: Mary Ernstmann

Mary Ernstmann has spent many years promoting the sanctity of life as a prominent leader in Missouri Right to Life causes across the spectrum. Mary is a delegate for the Missouri Right to Life - Western Region (MRL-WR) on the state board. For over 20 years, she and her family have been involved in the national March for Life each year. She helps with organizing the annual pilgrimage to Washington, DC, regardless of the weather. She spends time volunteering at a home for pregnant teens and is involved with the Adopt-a-Baby project at St. John Francis Regis Parish, where people 'adopt' and pray for an unborn child for the length of the pregnancy, after which a baby shower is given. Mary has long-served on the Social Services Council at her parish, where she and others have helped to galvanize parishioners around social justice matters such as a newly established immigrant and refugee ministries and English as Second Language (ESL) initiatives within her parish. She is a wonderful wife and mother and is a very prayerful person who seeks to come closer to Christ through Mary. She does this by hosting Totus Tuus, attending daily Mass, through Adoration, the Rosary, Bible Study, RCIA, participation

in Militia Immaculata, and the Sierra Club to promote vocations to the priesthood. Mary does all of this with hospitality and grace, “Welcoming all as Christ,” to paraphrase St. Benedict. Her manner inspires others to pitch in just a little bit more, prompting those sitting on the sidelines to want to get involved out of the sheer sense of joy they gain from working alongside her.

Jefferson City: Cheryl Hayes

Cheryl Hayes has been a lifelong Catholic and member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Edina, MO. During her 50 years of marriage, she has mothered three children, and is the proud grandmother of nine grandchildren and two great-grand children. She attends mass regularly and has been involved in promoting the Catholic faith by her involvement in her parish, serving on different boards and committees, such as her role as the contact person for the St. Vincent de Paul Society, being a communion minister, taking up the gifts, seeing that her family is in church and helps with different projects for the community such as the “Adopt a Child” project at Christmas, which helps families in need within in the community have something for Christmas. She is an excellent example of a devout Catholic woman, wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother. By her actions in the community, everyone she meets knows she is of the Catholic faith.

Springfield/Cape Girardeau: Teresa Giarrantano

In Teresa Giarrantano’s words, “If you don’t volunteer in any capacity, you miss out on all the miracles!” She has been experiencing these miracles as the director of the St. Peter the Apostle Parish Outreach House in Joplin since 2012. The Outreach House serves a hot noon meal for neighbors in need on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and a hot breakfast on Sunday. Teresa serves to extend her faith, to be a good steward and to feel a sense of completion within herself. In the past two years, the Outreach House has collaborated with a local hospital to set up a satellite pantry in the Dialysis Unit of the hospital. The Outreach House provides food for 20 patients once a month. The organization strives to give those who come (both clients and end volunteers) an opportunity to share the means of seeing one another as neighbors. Her parish members say that Teresa just can’t stop talking about how much this work means to her.

We encourage all Catholics to join us in celebrating the great work of these Citizen Recognition Award recipients at the Annual Assembly on Saturday, October 6! You may register for this FREE event at m catholic.org or call the MCC office at 1-800-456-1679.