



PRESS RELEASE

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Jan Lampman is named the 2008 Strosacker Award Winner

Jan Lampman, the passion and drive behind The Arc of Midland, was awarded the 2008 Charles J. Strosacker Award on Wednesday, February 18th at the United Way of Midland County Annual Meeting.

This prestigious award was first presented in 1990, as a means to recognize individuals from United Way of Midland County partner agencies. These community advocates demonstrate their commitment to making a difference. The nominees of this award embody the very qualities that Mr. Strosacker himself exhibited: compassion for those in need, strong community leadership, and an innovative spirit.

Serving as the Executive Director of the Arc of Midland, Jan works tirelessly to promote the general welfare of individuals with developmental disabilities, and to foster the growth of programs and services necessary to promote their presence, inclusion, and participation in our community. “Jan cares about each and every person that is a part of the ARC. She is passionate about their rights while at the same time making sure they are protected,” stated Doreen Allen, Chief Probate & Circuit Judge.

Jan is known and applauded for her “Can Do” approach to everything. When Medicaid eliminated dental benefits for people with disabilities, Jan rallied volunteer dentists to offer services to those who could not afford it. When the county’s Public Guardian was on maternity leave, Jan stepped up to provide interim coverage for the counties developmentally disabled clients. There are over three hundred individuals in Midland County that have a better and more fulfilling life because of Jan and the efforts of The ARC of Midland.

James Heffel, Past President of the ARC of Midland understands first-hand the passion that has for those in our community with developmental disabilities. “I have never worked with anyone who is able to turn a crisis into an opportunity, as Jan can do.”

This year’s slate of nominees all embody the qualities that Charles J. Strosacker himself held dear. Each was celebrated at this year’s United Way of Midland County Annual Meeting. This year’s distinguished nominees include:

Alison Ginter, Youth and Family Program Manager, Midland Community Center

As the Youth and Family Program Manager, Alison has been an advocate for area youth since joining the Midland Community Center in 2001. Alison's passion for the Summer Camps program has seen an expansion to include over 100 themed choices, including preschool, sports, theatre, and even the amazing race. The center's preschool program alone is at 96% capacity at any given time, and continues to open additional classes to meet the growing need of our community's families.

Alison also spearheaded the Kids Corner, a drop-in babysitting service for kids ranging in age from 6 weeks to 12 years old for parents working out at the Community Center. In addition, Family Fun Nights have become a huge success, averaging nearly 150 people at each themed event. These nights, held the first Friday of each month, encourage families to enjoy quality time together with a host of fun, family-friendly activities.

“Alison Ginter is a mother of a one year old son, Thomas, but a friend and nurturer to many children at the Midland Community Center.”

--Renee Yates, Midland Community Center

Wendy Plewa, Lead Preschool Teacher, West Midland Family Center

Wendy Plewa has helped shape the future of 174 children over the past eight year, as the Lead Preschool Teacher at West Midland Family Center. She takes children from high-risk homes and puts them on the path to educational success, both in and outside the classroom. Always a fierce advocate for at-risk children, Wendy goes into the homes of these students to nurture a relationship with their parents and develop a better understanding of the needs of each child.

Wendy understands the importance of education first hand, considering it to be the best investment any of us can make. Her strong belief in involving the entire family in the learning process led her to study for a week in Reggio Emilia, Italy, where they are world re-known for their philosophy of involving family in education and learning. She actively incorporates this philosophy in the programs at West Midland Family Center each and every day.

“Wendy tries to see the world from the child's perspective and it makes all the difference in the world to some of these kids.”

--Greg Dorrien, Executive Director, West Midland Family Center