

FVUW honors those who give back at breakfast



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From left, Fox Valley Building and Construction Trades Council (FVBCTC) Trustee Greg Elsbree, Bricklayers Local 21 Recording Secretary Pete Culver, President of FVBCTC Scott Roscoe, Vice-President of FVBCTC Brian W. Dahl, Fox Valley United Way Board Chairman Melinda James, Financial Secretary of FVBCTC Rick Dunlap, and Laborers' Local 149 Business Manager Dan Brejc.

From left, Battalion Chief Don Davids, Assistant Chief Tom Greiner, Chief Hal Carlson, Fox Valley United Way Board Chairman Melinda James, Deputy Fire Chief John Lehman.

**By Jennifer Rice
Managing editor**

The Fox Valley United Way (FVUW) has a long history of serving the Aurora area. It is a very dependent organization — without help from individuals and businesses, the FVUW would not be successful.

And so, as a way to show its appreciation and love for those that help the FVUW the most, it honored its 'superheroes' on May 19 during its annual breakfast at the Piper's Banquets, inside Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Local 501 in Aurora. More than 300 people attended the event.

The FVUW helps individuals throughout the year with several events, including, Operation Helping Hands, the Souper Bowl of Caring Food Drive and its Holiday Assistance program.

Involvement from several individuals and organizations allow the events to be successful. FVUW CEO Michael Meyer said its Holiday Assistance program last year helped more than 200 individuals. When you consider the other agencies it collaborates with, the number grows exponentially.

"Altogether, we have 12 agencies coming together and we've helped more than 4,300 people," Meyer said.

The Fox Valley Building and Construction Trades Council was instrumental in helping with the success of the Holiday Assistance program, earning a Community Action Award for its efforts. These awards are given to individuals or organizations that have helped the FVUW with many of its fundraising events throughout the year.

"They have donated gift certificates

and monetary donations that allow us to give each family enough money to purchase a meal to eat at Christmas," Meyer explained. "They not only give gifts, but they give meals and that is very, very important."

The Aurora Department Water Rescue Team also was given a Community Action Award for its help during the FVUW's Campaign Kick Off What Floats Your Cardboard Boat Race.

"We need those guys," Meyer said with a laugh. "Because without them, we might lose a few people on the water."

Several individuals were surprised with awards. Dorothy Fairbanks was named the Outstanding Community Volunteer for the work she does at the Ginger Creek Community Church, the FVUW's Holiday Assistance program and other programs that help residents at the Eastwood public housing complex.

The award acknowledges Fairbanks untiring time, effort and devotion to the success of the FVUW and the communi-

ties it serves.

Joel Ottoson was named the Rita Anderson Smith Award. Besides being a Sunday school teacher and baseball coach, Ottoson volunteers with Kendall County PADS and Caring Hands Thrift Store.

His award acknowledges his leadership, creativity and dedication to the FVUW and the communities it serves.

Executive Directors of the Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry and the Kendall County Food Pantry, Marilyn Weisner and Maria Spaeth, respectively, shared in the honor of being awarded the Live United award for creating opportunities and inspiring hope for a better tomorrow.

"Without volunteers, we simply wouldn't be able to do what we do. These are people you need to know and we're happy that we know them," Meyer said.

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Jennifer Rice photo

FVUW CEO Michael Meyer speaks at its annual breakfast May 19.