



MICAH Community Hero Awards 2017

Representative Karen Clark

Elected in 1980. Karen represents an inner city district in South Minneapolis, the lowest income Legislative District in Minnesota, and consistently receives 75-85% of the vote from her constituents. Karen is a frequent speaker on her innovative and "cutting edge" legislation to local, national, and international audiences. She is known among her colleagues for her coalition-building skills and her persistent community-based advocacy on behalf of her inner-city constituents and of low-income and minority-status Minnesotans throughout the state. Rep. Clark has championed environmental health and affordable housing legislation that challenges the status quo and promotes economic and social justice options.

Karen Fitzpatrick

MICAH NE Chapter-Karen Fitzpatrick has been an active member of MICAH NE since around 2005 and was a supporter for many years prior to that. Karen, along with two other women all members of Guardian Angels Church in Oakdale, was a co-founder of the Hope for the Journey Home shelter for families experiencing homelessness in 2012. Karen serves on the Justice and Outreach Commission at her church, is a Bread for the World Metro Committee member and volunteers at her local food shelf.

Cathy Walter

Housing For All /MICAH NW Chapter- Cathy has been volunteering since she was a small child. She has been part of a small faith sharing group for several years studying issues around poverty, immigration, criminal justice, racism, homelessness. Instead of entering into more study the group collectively decided to start being the hands & feet of Jesus and put their energy into the Dayton Trailer Park. Cathy was also instrumental in developing the community support for the new housing development in Dayton

Grace Lutheran Church, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Spirit of Life Presbyterian Church, and Easter Lutheran Church

MICAH South Chapter recognizes the four congregations who were willing to open their doors to 78 of our community members and host a warm, safe 24 hour temporary crisis shelter during bitterly cold days in December and January. Treated with dignity and respect singles, youth and families who had no other option for safe shelter, found rest, warmth, help and peace with these four hosting faith communities.

Through their faith, courage and commitment numerous other Dakota County community partners, elected officials, congregation members and organizations have become aware of the need for a safe shelter for our neighbors. Hundreds reached out in support of the shelter guests last winter. They have given of their time, donated needed supplies, contributed financially and are seeking ways to be part of the effort to establish a permanent safe shelter for our neighbors. A vital initiative has developed through these four congregations who on short notice answered a critical community need.

Chip Halbach

Organized the Minnesota Housing Partnership to create a statewide voice and support organization for affordable housing development (where he has served as executive director for 28 years.) Advocated alongside MN Coalition for the Homeless to create the state's housing trust fund (the first housing trust fund across the country that prioritized resources to house lowest income people).A catalyst in organizing the Homes for All coalition. Through Common Space helped organize Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers and community based housing trust funds – including Central Community Housing Trust (now Aeon)

Alan Arthur

Alan Arthur has led Aeon over the past 29 years with the vision that every person deserves and has a right to Home. As the Twin Cities continues to lose affordable housing rapidly, Alan and Aeon work hard to preserve Homes in our community and prevent individuals and families from being displaced. Aeon continues to grow under Alan's leadership, and the organization now serves over 5,000 individuals.

Aeon

For over 30 years, Aeon has been providing high-quality, safe and stable housing to populations who face great barriers — including homelessness, extremely-low income and disabilities. With a vision that every person has a Home and is interconnected within community, Aeon's mission is to create and sustain quality affordable homes that strengthen lives and communities. The organization currently owns 44 properties and serves over 5,000 individuals.

Richfield Council Member Maria Regan Gonzalez

As new council member, Maria Regan Gonzalez is the complete package for an "affordable housing champion" who works with the people and for the people. She was instrumental in saving Seasons Park, a 420 unit Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) project in Richfield with Aeon.

Jean Lee

Founder, President, Executive Director Children's Hope Intl/R & R Family Centers and APAHC – the Housing Consortium which operate locally, statewide, nationally and internationally - created R & R Family Centers as Minnesota's first Asian Pacific shelter (private) and first Asian Pacific housing and other services. Jean has over 50 years in housing, advocacy and helping children, women, families, seniors, the disabled, minorities, the low-income and others in need including in homes for all; safe, accessible and affordable housing.

First Lutheran Church

Is an Evangelical Lutheran Church located in historic Swede Hollow neighborhood of Dayton's Bluff on the proud Eastside of St. Paul. "It is our hope that those who come, not only experience the sense of deep history in this place, but also the all embracing feeling of welcome and love that is the challenge of the Church in this century- to reach out beyond our walls and live out love of Jesus and his breathtaking message: God loves everyone without exception or reservation! As we speak the words every Sunday" Come just as you are! All are welcome!"

Pastor Chris and Brenda Olson Bingea

Pastor Chris has been the pastor at First Lutheran Church for thirteen years. It is her second tour having been the youth director at First Lutheran in the late 1980s. After coming to First Lutheran, she found out that her grandmother grew up in Swede Hollow and was confirmed in the Swedish Confirmation Class of 1907 at First Lutheran. In 1919, her grandparents were married in the present sanctuary two years after it was built. Chris and her wife, Brenda, both work at First Lutheran and with Bay Lake Camp, Wellness Center, and Heavenly Day Café and Catering.