

Biographical Sketches of 2011 GOCA Awards Nominees

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR/CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY (vote for one for Citizen & three for Contribution)

Joe Buffington

Joe serves the community in many volunteer capacities including with the Olney Chamber of Commerce, as the Chamber liaison to the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA), and with the Olney Town Center Advisory committee (OTCAC); assisting with the Montgomery General Hospital Women's Board annual picnic; fundraising for the OBGC renovation of Falling Green, and more. Joe and his family, owners of the Buffington Building, make the Olney Community Room available for community groups such as GOCA, OTCAC, numerous homeowners associations, and dozens of other groups. This is a valuable community asset that could be generating rental income, so the foregone rent is a direct contribution to our community. Joe makes a significant contribution to the Chamber as a member of its Board for many years and having chaired their annual Community Night and Taste of Olney for a number of years, and assisting with National Nite Out, the Chamber's scholarship program, funding for the Olney Police Satellite Station, and a variety of other programs designed to promote businesses in the Olney area. He also makes significant contribution to the town center through his participation in two of the OTCAC subcommittees. As Chair of the Small Business Property Owners Subcommittee, he created a group of the small property owners within the town center to keep them informed and participating in town center developments, and to help them address common issues impacting their properties and businesses that may be outside of the mission of the OTCAC. As a member of the Redevelopment Subcommittee, he reviews plans for redevelopments in the town center and makes recommendations to developers and contributions testimony presented to the Planning Board relating to development proposals. As the OTCAC worked with the Safeway development team responsible for the renovation of the Olney Safeway, Joe pressed for improvements to the public area at the rear of the property and as a result of his perseverance, Safeway made modifications to their original design that created a much more useful public space for the community.

Dawn Cutwright

Montgomery County Police Officer for the past 4 years who, throughout her service, has made it her business to get to know the community. And, in the Olney community she has made it a point to establish a rapport with both young and elderly folks, suspects and victims, and everyone she comes in contact with. Her familiarity with Olney and its residents helped solve a string of armed robberies in the surrounding area where a former Olney resident was one of the key suspects. Her determination also was vital in solving a rape that occurred in Olney this past summer. She came in contact with a youth who, based on his comfort level with her, advised her about someone "I used to hang around with that thought rape was okay". Based on this statement she went to the victim's school and spoke to security, then looked through a year book, and then obtained a search warrant for DNA. All this information convinced the suspect then to make a full confession. No doubt, her efforts were critical in the apprehension of the individual who committed this crime. Throughout her career, she has earned a reputation of "going beyond the call of duty and always going the extra mile". Her diligent efforts are helping keep Olney safe.

Future Farquhar Community Coalition

A coalition of parents of current and future students of Farquhar Middle School that came together because of concerns about a Montgomery County Public School proposal to house the Farquhar students at the Tilton Holding Center during the two years Farquhar would be modernized to work for a plan that they felt was better for their children. The Coalition worked to make the community aware of their concerns and to garner support for their effort to oppose busing the Farquhar students to Tilden for the two years the school would be modernized, proposing a number of alternatives to that plan. Though the issue is still not completely resolved, the hard work and persistence of the Coalition contributed to the MCPS decision to look into a land swap with the property adjacent to the school that was to be dedicated as parkland which would enable the students to remain in the existing school building during the construction of a new school on the adjacent property as their primary option.

Paul Jarosinski

Has served the Cherrywood Community for over 20 years, including serving as President of the Cherrywood Homeowners Association (CHOA) for more than 10 years. He has worked diligently for the betterment, not only for his own, but for the greater Olney community as well through his work with GOCA. His accomplishments include: pursuing a red light camera at Old Baltimore and Georgia Ave due to fatality of a Cherrywood resident; restoring the Cherrywood Stone Monuments; replacing the Cherrywood entrance signs; recruiting Cherrywood board members and volunteers; meticulously organizing and preparing presentations for the annual CHOA meeting; and constantly monitoring CHOA membership, very closely watching delinquencies, and promptly recommending the necessary legal action to be taken for each Cherrywood property involved. He was instrumental in having the property lines re-established and in having a cherry tree planted as a better entrance to his neighborhood; was responsible for establishing "Crime Watch" in Cherrywood; has very carefully monitored the proposed Olney Assisted Living development project being proposed to be built on Georgia Avenue bordering Cherrywood, exhausting all questions to ensure that ample diligence and considerations were given to water runoff, having discussions with the other directors, county officials and residents to ensure that all concerns were addressed; and taking all opinions into consideration. Paul has served on the GOCA Transportation Committee for many years, including serving as its Chair for the past 2 years. He worked closely with the Maryland State Highway Administration's (SHA) Outreach staff during the planning and construction of the ICC to minimize the impacts of the roadway and its construction on the Cherrywood and the greater Olney community. He also has and continues to work tirelessly with the SHA on improving the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Route 28 and lessening as much as possible the impact of the Inter-County Connector (ICC) on both Cherrywood and Olney. He has directed his persistence addressing other needed improvements along Rtes 97 and 108.

Olney Home For Life

A newly-formed all-volunteer organization dedicated to helping seniors and the disabled safely remain in their homes for as long as they wish. This model of neighbors helping neighbors is a nationwide movement referred to as developing "villages". Discussions about this concept and the feasibility of establishing an Olney "village" began in the Spring of 2011. And, by the end of January 2012, will launch their initial program by offering transportation services. Volunteers will drive seniors or disabled persons living in the Greater Olney Area to doctor's appointments, shopping, outings, community/senior centers and local events. They are helping Montgomery General Hospital by picking up and taking home patients who are receiving cancer treatments. The Olney "village" has created a partnership with the County's *Senior Connection* who will provide volunteer drivers with an orientation, will facilitate coordination of the services of volunteers with individuals needing transportation services, and will provide insurance coverage to their volunteers under their liability policy. Later this year they will add additional services such as: offering "friendly visits" where volunteers look in on seniors and provide conversation and activities such as playing cards or other games or offering assistance with light maintenance such as changing light bulbs, resolving simple computer issues, and changing smoke alarm batteries. They also plan to vet local service providers so they can offer a list of reliable, quality companies to help with larger maintenance issues. In a matter of just a few months, they are beginning to build a community for all ages in which they hope to bring seniors and students together to work on resolving community issues or problems. This is an effort that clearly supports the long-standing goal of the Olney Master Plan to make Olney a full-life cycle community.

Never Back Down Foundation

A foundation, established in memory of 17 year old Alex Popeck, an honor roll student and athlete at Sherwood High School who died in January 2011 from injuries sustained in a car crash while on his way to basketball practice. Alex's family, his father, Bart, mother, Betsy, and younger brother, Matthew created the foundation to influence teens to recognize that an individual can make a difference in their community, specifically, to recognize teens who notice and act upon a challenge, injustice or need for change in their community, school or family. Alex was known for acting when saw an opportunity to make a difference. The Foundation raises funds via community-based events and other means to award scholarships to Montgomery County, Maryland high school students planning to attend post-secondary educational institutions. The mission of the Foundation intended to celebrate Alex's memory is to recognize students "not just for academic excellence, but also, and most importantly, for demonstrating how they have made a difference in either their community, school, family, or an individual's life by adopting Alex's *Never Back Down* approach; to *see and act.*" Their fund-raising events have included, the first annual Alex's Run that

attracted 1,100 runners, a golf tournament that drew 136 golfers, and a day at the Greene Turtle where a percentage of the day's proceeds went to the Foundation. An upcoming event is a 3-on-3 basketball contest. Students from all of the County's public and private high schools are being invited to apply for their scholarship. The first *Alex Popeck Difference Makers*, seniors whose applications best embody Alex's qualities of caring, compassion, humility, honesty and his "Never Back Down" attitude, will be recognized this spring and then each successive spring. Later the Popecks, who feel that "what happened to Alex was that he came upon an unexpected situation and he was just not ready, hope the foundation will be able to offer teen driving safety programs to help young drivers be better prepared to react to the unexpected.

GOCA WORKER OF THE YEAR (vote for one)

Lori Goodwin

She eagerly took on the job of GOCA Recording Secretary in July of 2011 when several officers moved to different positions to fill a mid-term officer vacancy. She creates name cards for all the GOCA delegates to use at the monthly meetings that help all those present be aware of who is speaking. She has done an outstanding job of capturing the essence of the discussions and in preparing the monthly minutes in a very timely manner for the review of the other officers prior to the distribution of the draft minutes to the delegates. She also finds time to serve her neighborhood, her children's schools, and her church by serving as a substitute preschool teacher at Creative Learning Center, serving as an Executive board member and MCCPTA Delegate with the Argyle Magnet Middle School PTSA, serving as a member of the Sherwood Elementary PTA for 7 years, volunteering weekly in classrooms at Sherwood Elementary School for 7 years, and serving as a co-teacher for a 6th grade religion class at St. Peter's Catholic Church. Lori has made important contributions to our discussions by bringing an open-minded attitude, an understanding of school-related issues, and sharing very intuitive thoughts about some of the tough issues we've faced during the past year. She always approaches her position with the idea of "what can I do to help!"

OLNEY HERITAGE AWARD (vote for one)

Helene Rosenheim

For more than 25 years she has been selflessly serving the Olney community as a civic leader, facilitator, coordinator, problem solver, and consummate volunteer. She has contributed thousands of hours to helping community organizations and individual citizens, coordinating and leading community activities, bringing people together, and inspiring others. Indeed, Helene is so well respected and so highly thought of that many refer to her as Olney's unofficial mayor.

Helene's community involvement began in the early 1980s when she took the helm of her neighborhood Highlands of Olney Civic Association and became an active delegate to the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA). It wasn't long before she was elected GOCA President and then reelected to a second term. She subsequently continued to serve for many years as a GOCA officer, and to this day she continues to be an active GOCA participant, providing invaluable assistance to a succession of GOCA presidents and officers who have benefited immensely from her wisdom, experience and good judgment and from her willingness to take on a wide variety of important administrative tasks, tasks that range from producing GOCA's valued detailed meeting minutes to handling the logistics for GOCA's annual awards ceremony.

Perhaps Helene's most valuable contribution to our community is the annual weekend event known as Olney Days. For two decades Helene has spearheaded and coordinated this event, which over the course of three days brings together thousands of Olney area residents, young and old, as they celebrate their community through a variety of activities that culminate in a fireworks display on Saturday night in Olney Manor Park and the Olney Days Parade and Rock the Lot on Sunday. This is the premier event in

Olney that brings about a strong sense of community identity and community pride and it is Helene who year after year is the singular person who provides the leadership and countless hours to make it all happen.

Helene also has played a leading role in the Olney Non-Profit Consortium, a local group that brings community non-profit organizations together and produces a community calendar, and took on leadership responsibilities during the illness of the chairperson. In addition, she is very active in her synagogue, and is an active and valued Board member of Project Change. In her past role as Olney Liaison for the County, she created the successful Olney Neighborhood Network, a group of public officials, representatives of community based organizations, civic and business leaders, clergy, and school personnel who meet regularly to identify, diagnose, and resolve quality of life issues affecting the greater Olney area. She was a key player in the Olney Master Plan Advisory Group and in the group that presented the last Olney Town Meeting. She is currently serving as the Vice Chair of the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee, and in fact participates in just about everything of importance happening in Olney.

Helene has managed to do all this-and still raise a family. As a volunteer, she has devoted her nights and weekends to her community; all too often these nights stretched into the wee hours of the morning as Helene would leave meetings that ended after 11 pm and then spend hours preparing minutes, letters, and other documents. As Olney Liaison, she always went well beyond the requirements of her part-time position. In the words of her supervisor, she was "the model team player - stepping up to the plate when there are staffing needs or whenever an extra pair of hands are needed. To us she has demonstrated the most marvelous ability to expand a half-time position to however many hours it takes to get the job done."

Helene's commitment to her community, her generosity with her time, and her never ending efforts to help others whenever and however she can, have made her a role model for Olney.