

Kiwanis Awards Key Leaders

Rebecca Blue
Staff Writer

Cocktails, dinner and presentations filled the Hilton on Longboat Key Jan. 26 as the Kiwanis Club awarded those in the community who have wowed the island with outstanding leadership skills in the last year.

For the first time ever two recipients were chosen to receive the Citizens of the Year award. Andrew Vac, broker and Realtor at ReMax Excellence and Whitney Beach Plaza co-owner Dawn di Lorenzo were unanimously selected for the award.

The club received a slew of nominees, but felt Vac and di Lorenzo were this year's notable leaders.

"Andrew Vac epitomizes the very essence of a community member who has made it his lifestyle to always give something back to the community and will inspire others to do the same," said Kiwanis President Vince De Lisi. "Dawn di Lorenzo is a different community activist. She saw a void and filled it. She became the catalyst for Longboat collections and cooperation."

In October Vac provided the Longboat Key Historical Society with its first home in 25 years at the former NationsBank at 6960 Gulf of Mexico Drive. The Historical Society joined the Chamber of Commerce at the 4,700-square-foot building in January. Vac, the chamber's chair-elect, purchased the building for \$775,000.



Andrew Vac

"I believe real estate is an investment," Vac said. "I believe in both the Chamber and the Historical Society. They're a good mix."

The effort to coordinate island donations to those in extreme need set di Lorenzo out from the rest of the Citizen of the Year contestants. Not only did she collect hundreds of pounds of gifts and money for troops in Iraq and recovering servicemen and women base in Camp Pendleton in California, di Lorenzo also presented low-income Florida hurricane victims with 12 truckloads of food, furniture, children's needs and necessities exceeding \$40,000.

"The entire community is proud of her," said De Lisi.

Others were also cited for their contributions to the Town of Longboat Key.

James Linkogle, Longboat Key's public works project manager, was noted for his hard work and contributions towards the St. Junes Gourmet Luncheon. He received the community humanitarian award.

"We couldn't do it without him as he supplies the enthusiasm and know-how which affects our



Dawn di Lorenzo



James Linkogle

Gala Planners



The 2005 Longboat Key Chamber of Commerce Gala and Auction Committee prepares for the 2nd annual Celebrate Longboat Key Auction and Gala. From right is Steve Kepecz, Nancy Jorgensen, Regina Sympron, Michael Doll, Phyllis Black, Ralph Hunter, Claire Hunter, Liz Yerkes and Kerry Minar. The event is 6-10 p.m. April 16 at the Harbourside Dining Room at the Longboat Key Club.

many volunteers," said Jim Van Zandt, assistant chairman of the event.

Firefighter Mark Fultz was chosen as the 2004 Firefighter of the Year for his outstanding dedication and service to Longboat Key. Fultz is the Fire Rescue Marine Response Unit coordinator, one of the station's shift fire inspectors and often serves as acting fire marshal.



Mark Fultz

Officer of the Year. One of his most noted involvements at the Longboat Key Police Department was his successful investigation and apprehension of felons involved in an armed robbery on Longboat Key. Mislyan received his master's degree at the University of South Florida last summer.



Stephen Mislyan

In light of the event, Town officials proclaimed Jan. 26 the 2005 Kiwanis Club of Longboat Key Leadership Day.

Stephen Mislyan was awarded Police

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