Friends Program Celebrates Volunteers and Presents Steven Arndt with 10th Annual Doremus Award

CONCORD - Friends Program Trustees, staff, and supporters came together on Thursday, October 5th to recognize the efforts of some remarkable volunteers. The gathering also gave the Friends Board of Trustees the chance to present this year’s 10th Annual James S. Doremus Award to Steven Arndt.

In selecting the honorees, program staff chose volunteers who are emblematic of what the Friends’ Four Programs represent. “Volunteers are the essence of our organization,” said Friends Board of Trustees Vice President, Catherine Devaney. “Universally they are caring, giving individuals who place great value on helping others in their communities. Tonight’s honorees are well deserving of recognition and represent all of the other volunteers who support our Four Programs.”

Among those honored at the event was Emergency Housing Program volunteer Marcy Charette, Foster Grandparent Program Community Partner Belmont Elementary School, RSVP Program volunteer Ralph Appleby, and Youth Mentoring Program volunteer George Smith.

Marcy Charette has been a volunteer with the Emergency Housing family shelter since early 2014 when she reached out to see if the families in the shelter could use a home cooked meal. Since that initial email, Marcy has supported our program and cooked for our families with a sincere passion to help. She has been so giving of her time and resources, from grocery shopping and preparing meals for 8 families to taxi fares each month to transport them. Her personality has always been uplifting and encouraging. She has always referred to the families at the shelter, as “our families”.

The Belmont Elementary School, its administration, faculty and staff have been strong supporters of the Friends Foster Grandparent Program for over 20 years, and they consistently show their appreciation for Foster Grandparent volunteers during the school year. Throughout the school, it is understood that older adult volunteers have gifts to share with the children of their school and they make it possible for these volunteers to serve with children who need extra attention. The intergenerational relationships formed during service enrich the lives of our volunteers beyond measure.

Ralph Appleby has been a driver for the Friends Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for the past 14 years along with helping at many other area charitable organizations. Ralph’s life has been dedicated to his country through his service in the United States Air Force, and further dedicated through a lifetime of volunteering. His pride in his country is obvious, but his gentle nature and unfailing generosity is not as obvious – unless you know him or are one of the hundreds and hundreds who have received help in some way from him.

George Smith has been a volunteer in the Youth Mentoring Program for five years, a considerable amount of time as the Youth Mentoring Program requires only a year commitment of weekly meetings. Ever since George was initially matched with his youth mentee, George has been a consistent role model for a child in need of one. George has not only been an advocate for his mentee but also for the Youth Mentoring Program. He has represented the Youth Mentoring Program well and has shared his experience with others in hopes to incite them to consider mentoring other youth in need.
The ceremony concluded with the presentation of the 10th Annual Doremus Award to Steven Arndt, former Board of Trustee member and long-time supporter. The award is conferred upon a recipient selected by the Friends Board in recognition of long-term contributions to support the organization.

**Steven Arndt** was an exemplary Board member that has given back to the Friends Program in every way possible. He has volunteered for tasks large and small, whether it was moving stuff from the emergency shelter because he owned a truck or bringing friends and family to Friends Program events. He is passionate about the Friends Program mission and continues to advocate on the organizations behalf. As stated by Bob Larsen, former Board of Trustees member who presented the award on behalf of the Board, “Steve exemplifies the highest level of service to the Friends Program embodied in this recognition: the Doremus Award.”

Special recognition was given to our volunteer award winners from Senators Shaheen and Hassan, as well as Congresswoman Kuster, who sent letters of thanks and appreciation to be presented at the event.

Founded in 1975 as a youth mentoring agency, the Friends Program has evolved in the intervening years to help homeless families and offer services that promote the well-being of New Hampshire senior citizens. Over 800 Friends Program volunteers contribute 250,000 hours of annual service to meet community needs. To learn more about the Friends Program, visit www.friendsprogram.org.