



615 Griswold Suite 1805, Detroit, MI 48226  
T: 313 969 7140 | F: 313 962 0797  
[sbaker@mi-community.org](mailto:sbaker@mi-community.org) | [www.mi-community.org](http://www.mi-community.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MICHIGAN COMMUNITY RESOURCES CELEBRATES 15 YEARS OF PRO BONO  
AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE**

DETROIT - December 3, 2013 - Michigan Community Resources (MCR) honored four individuals and organizations who demonstrated outstanding commitment to pro bono and community-based service. Hosted at Virgil Carr Center on Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, MCR's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration acknowledged the amazing work of its volunteers and the transformative progress community groups make in their neighborhoods.

Awards were presented for Law Firm of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Partner of the Year, and Outstanding Community Action.

The 2013 award winner for Law Firm of the Year was Bodman PLC for their longstanding commitment to pro bono values, which was further demonstrated by the recent hiring of Pro Bono Counsel, Kim Paulson. Under Kim's direction, Bodman attorneys provided hundreds of hours of pro bono legal assistance to almost 20 clients statewide this year.

"For Bodman, pro bono service is an essential element of our social responsibility philosophy, and for our attorneys, it's an integral part of a full and satisfying legal career," said Paulson.

"Working with MCR helps our attorneys focus their efforts on important projects and allows them to see the positive impact their work has on our communities."

This year's award winner for Partner of the Year was presented to Helen Broughton of the City of Detroit's Buildings Safety Engineering & Environmental Department for her assistance with MCR's efforts to improve code enforcement.

Broughton served as an excellent resource to MCR; sharing information, explaining processes, and providing connections as staff from MCR researched Detroit's code enforcement policies and developed educational programs for community members. Broughton also served as a panelist and presenter on code enforcement at MCR's vacant property coalition meetings and vacant property education series workshops. Due to Broughton's assistance, MCR is in position to develop a new approach to code enforcement that has garnered the attention and support of peer organizations and funders.

The Volunteer of the Year award was presented to William J. Perrone of Dykema for his service in helping MCR build its statewide programs and for the pro bono assistance he provided to Allen Neighborhood Center (ANC) of Lansing.

**MORE**

Perrone's legal assistance was vital to help ANC build the Allen Market Place, a non-profit food hub that houses its award-winning farmers market, an incubator kitchen open to the community, and an innovative marketplace exchange that links rural growers to in-town restaurateurs, food service managers, and other procurers. Perrone's assistance to ANC was so valuable that it named its new community education room the "Bill Perrone Classroom."

Perrone said that he volunteers with MCR because, "It is a more unique pro bono experience. It is working with good people who provide direct services to those in need. Corporate structures, contracts, leases and employment issues are not things that many volunteer organizations are familiar with, but are always necessary in order for them to fulfill their own charitable mission. MCR does the legal side for them, so that they can do the services side."

The Outstanding Community Action award was presented to Creekside Community Development Corporation for its cooperative blight elimination and neighborhood cleanup projects. In 2013, Creekside surveyed over 4,000 properties and is now working with several partners to house this information in an interactive database to help target strategies and resources for the greatest impact.

Creekside CDC is strategic in its neighborhood cleanup projects as well. It coordinated their cleanup with Detroit's quarterly bulk pickup dates and also built a core of volunteers who are responsible for maintaining its blight elimination and cleanup efforts.

"Community action is about inspiring, organizing and mobilizing a group of people to achieve their common vision and goals," said Sharon Meadows of Creekside CDC.

"For us, that means engaging residents and owners to play a major role in planning and making Jefferson-Chalmers into the community of choice that we want to be, and MCR is a wonderful community of organizations and people who are dedicated to working with others to make our home communities what we want them to be."

Over 150 guests helped MCR honor all of its award winners and celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This event showed that despite any negative spotlight on the City of Detroit right now, amazing and positive work is transforming Detroit's neighborhoods. This event celebrated the work that happens day in and day out to help build communities.

"Taking the time to honor successes like these is so important," said Jill Ferrari, chief executive officer of MCR. "They show a little bit can do so much to help improve a community; that everyone has a role they can play, and MCR is happy to help community organizations make their goals a reality. We look forward to what we can accomplish together during the next 15 years."

Sponsors of MCR's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration were JPMorgan Chase Foundation, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, Ford Building, Hennessy Engineers, O'Brien Edwards Construction, and First Merit Bank.

### **About Michigan Community Resources**

Michigan Community Resources supports and empowers Michigan nonprofit community organizations serving low-income communities by providing pro bono legal, educational, technical and community outreach services. The result is stronger organizations and revitalized low-income communities. Key programs include the pro bono referral program, mini-grants, Vacant Property Education Series, and Vacant Property Coalition of Detroit. Since 1998, it has served over 1,200 nonprofit community organizations, leveraged over \$13 million in pro bono legal assistance through its pro bono referral program, and provided vacant property related technical assistance on over 200 matters.

**MORE**

**About Bodman PLC**

With more than 140 attorneys in offices in Detroit, Troy, Ann Arbor, and Cheboygan, and an affiliate office in Dallas, Bodman attorneys provide expert counsel to some of the state's most successful companies and wealthiest individuals on a broad range of issues.

Deeply rooted in the communities we serve, Bodman lawyers provide clients with the personal attention of a small firm combined with the talent and expertise expected of the nation's leading attorneys.

**About Helen Broughton**

Helen Broughton has worked with the Woodward Corridor Initiative as a Business Advocate in the Buildings, Safety Engineering & Environmental Department since November 2012 with a focus on internal and external communications, transparency and process change. In 2008 she left a career in nonprofit development to serve as Community Manager with Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative where she created the Clean Neighborhoods program for neighborhood blight remediation and code education and was an initiator for the nonprofit People for Palmer Park, which has become the model for the city's Premier Parks program.

**About William J. Perrone**

William J. Perrone is the Office Managing Member for the Lansing, MI office of Dykema. Perrone is an attorney whose practice is focused in the area of state regulations, real estate and mortgage financing for clients in the manufactured housing, energy and insurance sectors. From his office in Lansing, he also provides counsel to clients in all sectors on commercial transactions, commercial lending, consumer credit, consumer protection, professional licensing and regulatory issues, administrative law, corporate law and civil litigation matters.

**About Creekside Community Development Corporation**

The mission of Creekside Community Development Corporation is to promote our southeastern Detroit neighborhood as a diverse and healthy community of choice by:

- Preserving and building affordable and high quality housing
- Protecting and enhancing our parks, waterways, and other natural resources
- Encouraging resident engagement in sustaining a clean, safe and beautiful community
- Safeguarding and enhancing all its current assets

###