

Congrats

Some much deserved recognition

We'd like to offer a pat on the back to some folks who received some much deserved recognition this week.

The Pharos-Tribune formally presented its third annual Beacon Award on Wednesday to Joyce Gebhardt, executive director of the Cass County United Way.

In her 10 years leading the organization, Gebhardt has done much to improve the quality of life in her home county. She has led the United Way to new fundraising heights. She has helped to win funding for the Reading Railroad, an effort to instill a love of reading in Cass County youngsters, and she has worked to help the county embrace its newfound diversity through an effort called Diversity Dynamics.

At the same event, Pat Hann, the Cass County building supervisor, was named recipient of the Spirit of the County Award, and Peak Community Services was awarded the Spirit of the City Award.

Commissioners President Steve Kain said Hann had been singled out for recognition because of his work in coordinating Christmas gift drives for children.

Through the efforts Hann and other county employees have made, Kain said, hundreds of children have been provided gifts and a chance to talk with Santa Claus each year.

Mayor Mike Fincher, meanwhile, singled out Peak Community Services for its efforts in providing skills training and jobs for the developmentally disabled. The agency hasn't waited for government funding, he said, but it has gone out and raised the money it needs to provide the services its clients require.

Because of those efforts, he said, Peak's clients have a chance to earn a living and function as contributing members of the community.

Typically, Gebhardt and the others were modest in accepting their honors.

"There are so many people right here in this room who deserve it more," Gebhardt said.

In accepting the award, she quoted Gandhi.

"Be the change you wish to see in the world," she said.