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Fred Conn, Dearborn, MI Receives Crossroads “James A. McLaren” Award

October 13, 2010, Detroit, MI - Crossroads of Michigan, hosted its annual fundraiser and award gala at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.

“There is something very special about honoring one of our ‘own’,” says Mary Honsel, Crossroads of Michigan Executive Director. “Fred Conn is a devoted member of the Crossroads family who shows up again and again, quietly giving his best to this agency and our clients, providing the backbone that helps keep this ministry strong.”

Crossroads was honored to present Fred Conn, Ford Motor Company retiree and Crossroads volunteer, with the 2010 Heart of Crossroads James A. McLaren Award. In 2001, Conn came to Crossroads as a volunteer counselor. Since then, Conn has become not only indispensable as a caring friend to Crossroads clients, but he is also someone Crossroads’ staff has come to call on when almost anything needs doing, fixing or figuring out. Conn has been a valuable member of Crossroads Board of Trustees and a constant “go-to” when the “experts” fail to come through with a repair. But, Conn’s most valuable contribution has been as a compassionate partner in Crossroads’ mission to serve the poor. Conn was instrumental in developing the plan for Crossroads’ new Employment Office and has donated his time as a counselor to talk with clients, listen to their stories, allow them to lean on him and offer them the hope they need to make it through another day. “Working at Crossroads is the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done,” said Conn. In addition, Crossroads honored: Mr. Jerry Najor (Fraser Pharmacy), “Community Partner” award and Ms. Shelia Cockrel (Wayne State University/formerly of the Detroit City Council), “Gift of Hope” award.

Crossroads of Michigan, founded in 1971, helps keep hope alive by providing emergency assistance, advocacy, a weekly soup kitchen and counseling to the neediest people in the metro area. Crossroads is able to help those in need at both of our Detroit locations at 2424 West Grand Boulevard and 14641 East Jefferson Avenue. Assisting young mothers, teens, the jobless, the elderly, the homeless, the infirm and those just released from Michigan prisons, Crossroads works with clients to meet their immediate needs and help them assess their situations to lessen the likelihood of future problems. Additional information on Crossroads and its award recipients can be found at www.crossroadsofmichigan.org

• FRED CONN •

James A. McLaren Award, 2010



There is something very special about honoring one of our “own.” Those devoted members of the Crossroads family who show up again and again, quietly giving their best to this agency and our clients, providing the backbone that helps keep this ministry strong. Tonight, we are proud to shine the spotlight on one of our favorite people, Fred Conn. Fred came to Crossroads in 2001. With him came a wealth of information, education, experiences, compassion and an uncommon love for his fellow man.

Fred Conn grew up in Dearborn, Michigan. At the age of twenty, Fred joined the Ford Motor Company where he worked on the assembly line, and later, in the power and utilities department. Typical of Fred, this was not enough to satisfy his need to work hard. So, he enrolled at the University of Detroit Mercy where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology, and, eventually, a master's degree. Interestingly, Fred's master's thesis dealt with retirement and helping others - a topic he would draw on in his own life when he retired after 34 years with Ford Motor. It was about that time, while singing in the choir at Dearborn's St. Alphonsus Church, that Fred learned about Crossroads and the need for volunteers. He decided to give Crossroads a try and signed up for the volunteer counselor training. Since then, Fred has become not only indispensable as a caring friend to our clients, but he is also someone Crossroads' staff has come to call on when almost anything needs doing, fixing, or figuring out. Fred's vast store of knowledge made him a valuable member of Crossroads Board of Trustees, a vital part of the building committee that planned the move of our Main Office in 2007, and a constant “go-to” when the “experts” fail to come through with a repair. He even worked on Crossroads' geothermal heating/cooling system and the installation of our Soup Kitchen's new walk-in cooler. But, Fred's most valuable contribution has been as a compassionate, yet practical, partner in Crossroads' mission to serve the poor. He was instrumental in developing the plan for Crossroads' new Employment Office, and has donated his time there as a counselor. Each week, Fred comes to the Crossroads Main Office to talk with clients, listen to their stories, allow them to lean on him, and offer them the hope they need to make it through another day. Fred has said that, “Working at Crossroads is the most rewarding thing I've ever done.” He says this in the spirit of the words of Fr. McLaren, Crossroads' Founder, “Love, and then go where love demands.” Tonight, for these reasons, and so many more, we are proud to honor Fred Conn with the 2010 Heart of Crossroads James A. McLaren Award.

