

Shining Light Awards Honor Four For Outstanding Commitment to Region

Written by Australian Business

DETROIT, Sept. 11, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- The 2013 Shining Light Regional Cooperation Awards will be presented to Ismael Ahmed, Dan Carmody, Noreen Keating, and Alexis Dishman for their important contributions to regional progress, cooperation, and understanding in Southeast Michigan. They will be honored on October 10, 2013, at a special breakfast ceremony at the Ford Conference & Event Center in Dearborn, Michigan, beginning at 8 a.m.

The seventh annual awards ceremony and breakfast is open to the public. Tickets are \$50; tables of 10 are \$500. For ticket information, go to www.shininglightawards.com or call 248-336-8623.

Ismael Ahmed, Associate Provost for Metropolitan Impact, University of Michigan-Dearborn, will receive the *Neal Shine Award for Exemplary Regional Leadership* for decades of service on behalf of immigrants, children, and workers, and building bridges and cultural understanding across the community. The *Neal Shine Award* honors those who are having a regional impact and are willing to take risks to further progress, cooperation, and understanding. Ahmed grew up in the shadow of the Ford Rouge plant, and put himself through school working in auto plants and on ocean freighters. In 1971, he helped

Shining Light Awards Honor Four For Outstanding Commitment to Region

Written by Australian Business

found ACCESS, and helped build it from a storefront staffed by volunteers to a \$17 million agency with affiliates in 12 states and a staff of 300 that assists 900,000 immigrants of all backgrounds and people in need with health, education and the arts, and employment. He also served under Governor Jennifer Granholm as director of the Michigan Department of Human Services, leading reforms that improved access for low-income residents. He currently serves his alma mater by connecting the university to the region, with more than 3,000 students volunteering and doing research across metro Detroit.

Governor Granholm says of Ahmed, "He insisted that we focus on people who were unseen – the poor, the homeless, the chronically unemployed. He has a heart as big as a barn and a passion for people." Hassan Jaber, current executive director of ACCESS, said, "Ismael has never lost focus on putting the interests of the disadvantaged and the poor before anything else."

Dan Carmody, President, Eastern Market Corporation, will receive the *Eleanor Josaitis Unsung Hero Award* for his outstanding vision and hard work that have made Eastern Market a nationally recognized regional food hub. This award recognizes an individual who may not have yet received the widespread recognition he or she deserves for longstanding efforts to serve the community and further regional progress. Under Dan's leadership, Eastern Market has made \$12 million in physical improvements, expanded its operations, and addressed food access, nutrition education, economic and community development, workforce training, job creation, and more... contributing to the health and well being of regional Detroit.

Brian Holdwick, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation executive vice president and treasurer of the Eastern Market Board said of Dan, "He's there to do a job and takes pride in his work. It's night and day from when he took over, from where the Market was before, and it's largely because of his leadership."

Noreen Keating, Executive Director, Oakland Parks Foundation, also will receive the *Eleanor Josaitis Unsung Hero Award* for her commitment to bettering the lives of those in need. From starting the first soup kitchen in Pontiac

Shining Light Awards Honor Four For Outstanding Commitment to Region

Written by Australian Business

and transitional housing center in Oakland County

, to leading and growing Lighthouse for 20 years from a small operation to a Point of Light Presidential Award winning agency with an \$8 million

budget and 90 employees, to raising millions of dollars for worthy causes throughout the region, and serving on more than a dozen boards and committees, Keating attributes much of her success to others. She believes in the power of volunteers; giving people the opportunity to come together to do incredible things.

Dan Stencil, executive officer of the Oakland County Parks Commission, where Keating is now the volunteer executive director, praises her ability to collaborate and get people and organizations out of their comfort zones. Overheard of Keating, "She's one of those people, if she hooks her wagon to something; everyone wants to hook their wagon to hers."

Alexis Dishman, Vice President and Alternate Group Manager, Business Banking, Comerica Bank, will receive the *Dave Bing Future Leader Award* for her commitment to community service that began while a student at Mercy High School, where she learned to lift others up while making her own progress. Whether assisting small business clients or fellow employees at Comerica, teaching financial literacy, supporting the arts through dance, or serving on the Boards of several non-profits, Dishman puts this principle into practice. She mentors, educates, and empowers people around her so everyone can make a contribution and do their part.

Linda Forte, a senior vice president and chief diversity officer at Comerica says, "I think Alexis is just one of those people with a powerful north compass... willing to do what needs to be done through hard work, strategies, and ideas to move things forward."

Debbie Dingell, Chair of the Metropolitan Affairs Coalition said, "We are fortunate to have such outstanding honorees. Each of them has made an effort to promote greater understanding and pull people together. This was the toughest year so far for selecting winners because there were so many strong nominations."

The *Detroit Free Press* and Metropolitan Affairs Coalition launched the Shining Light Awards in 2007 to highlight the critical importance of regional leadership and cooperation to the success of Southeast Michigan. The awards are named in honor of the late Neal

Shining Light Awards Honor Four For Outstanding Commitment to Region

Written by Australian Business

Shine

former

Detroit Free Press

editor and publisher, who consistently demonstrated his dedication and commitment to the Greater Detroit

community. Visit their Web sites –

www.ShiningLightAwards.com

,

www.mac-web.org

, and

www.freep.com

and

www.freep.com/e

to learn more.

SOURCE Shining Light

RELATED LINKS <http://www.shininglightawards.com>