

ABVI-Goodwill president chosen as executive of the year

Gidget Hopf, Ed.D., president and CEO of Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI)-Goodwill of Greater Rochester, Inc., was recently recognized as the 2009 Executive of the Year through the Greater Rochester Awards, sponsored by the United Way of Greater Rochester and the Rochester Business Journal.

The Greater Rochester Awards celebrate the exceptional work accomplished through the community's not-for-profit health and human services sectors. The Greater Rochester Awards honor non-profit staff, executives, volunteers and programs that make the community a greater place to live and work.

According to the event's organizers, Hopf embodies the very heart of this award. She is a respected and recognized business leader who has helped shape both the present and future of the Greater Rochester community through leadership, innovation and an unparalleled entrepreneurial spirit, they say.

"I am truly honored and genuinely humbled to be recognized by our community in this way," said Hopf. "I have had the pleasure of working for an organization for which I care deeply, doing a job I have loved for more than twenty years, in a community that is unlike any other. An honor such as Executive of the Year is truly a defining moment in my career."

Hopf has served as president and CEO of ABVI-Goodwill for nearly 23 years. Under her leadership, ABVI-Goodwill has become one of the premier providers of vision rehabilitation services in the country and one of the most entrepreneurial and successful not-for-profit organizations in New York state.

In 1994, Hopf spearheaded the affiliation of ABVI with Goodwill Industries International, creating a unique and dynamic organization with a renewed purpose and vital mission. More than 15 years later, ABVI-Goodwill operates eight retail stores throughout the Greater Rochester area which provide revenue to support the organization's programs and services, as well as offer challenging job opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired or have other barriers to employment and independence.

Hopf has worked tirelessly and enthusiastically to transform ABVI-Goodwill to a business-focused organization that is both strategic-minded and forward-thinking. She has accomplished this while also working diligently to change the way in which the community thinks about and responds to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, helping to break down stereotypes and create greater awareness of the capabilities and true potential of people who are blind or visually impaired.

Don't touch that dial—and stay healthy

Video producer tackles health issues in her "A Prescription for Life" TV series

By Mike Costanza

Looking for information and tips on health-related topics? Just tune to Maryann Cianciotto's show, "A Prescription for Life." Cianciotto writes, films and produces videos on important health-oriented topics.

"I kind of wanted to combine both of my loves—the video production and the health care field," the Greece resident says.

The all-volunteer, shoe-string operation has produced three polished videos on important topics.

Cianciotto, a senior technical assistant in the visual and performing arts department of Monroe Community College, has spent nearly three decades producing films and videos for a variety of organizations. In early 2008, she decided to turn her hand to independent health productions, and contacted the Genesee Valley Nurses Association for ideas.

"We work to promote health care," says GVNA president Louise Amberger. "We work to promote the nursing care of people, and also work on behalf of the profession of nursing." After talking to Amberger, Cianciotto decided to tackle the issue of lead poisoning.

Lead is a metal that was used in paints prior to 1978. The primary source of child lead poisoning is deteriorating lead paint, which children can imbibe in the form of dust or flakes through hand-to-mouth behaviors. Even small amounts of the metal can damage a child's developing brain.

"The damage occurs at a point in time when there's some significant growth occurring," Amberger says. Those poisoned with lead can suffer a host of difficulties that includes attention deficits, hyperactivity, delayed growth, hearing loss and an appreciable loss of IQ. "Once the damage occurs, it's irreversible." According to the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning, over 300 of Monroe County's children suffered from lead poisoning in 2007.

Armed with her own palm-sized digital camera, microphone and tripod, Cianciotto set out to film a documentary about lead poisoning and the



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problems it causes locally. Over the next three months, she wrote the script for the video, filmed interviews and presentations, and edited and polished the resulting material on her home computer.

WXXI-TV 21 public affairs producer/reporter Carlet Cleare donated her

time to the project, interviewing local educators and medical experts concerning the risks and effects of lead poisoning and the ways to avoid it, and opening and closing the film. Some of the interviews took place at medical facilities and in other locations, and one featured a presentation on deteriorating lead house paint and ways to prevent it from poisoning a household. The result of all those efforts was a nearly 30-minute, broadcast-quality video.

"When I first viewed the lead poisoning show, my response was 'My God, this woman's nailed it, and she did it so eloquently,'" Amberger said. Cianciotto's second show took

an in-depth look at the human papilloma virus, a sexually transmitted disease that can cause genital warts and cancer, and at the vaccine by which a young woman can avoid the affliction. Episode 3 of "A Prescription for Life" took on stress and its effects on the individual.

Stress results when we encounter a perceived, real or imagined threat with which we feel we can't cope. While we all encounter and deal with stressful situations without harm every day, chronic or excessive stress can help bring about deadly results. For Monroe Community College professor of health and physical education Karen Cardillo, the subject has grown in importance with the increasing pace of society.

"It's almost as if the more you have to do or the more stress you have, the more important you feel or people perceive you," says Cardillo, who was interviewed on-camera

for the film. "Many people don't really perceive how really stressed they are." Stress can act in deadly combination with diabetes, high blood pressure and other medical conditions.

"Chronic stress does increase the inflammation inside the arteries of the heart, which then predisposes those arteries to clog up, ending up with atherosclerosis, heart attacks, that sort of thing," Cardillo explains. The nearly 24-minute episode presents the general causes and effects of stress, and healthy means of dealing with it that range from nutritional changes to massage and acupuncture.

Cianciotto says that she sends DVDs of "A Prescription for Life" episodes to all of the community access stations in the Rochester area, which show them as their schedules allow. The three existing episodes can also be found at Gospel House, a Web site run by a friend, but she doesn't intend to stop there.

"I think that the fourth show will probably be on [medical] specialists," Cianciotto says. She's hoping to obtain grant funding for new, more professional equipment, and to take on more meaty subjects in the future.

"Eventually, I'd like to tackle some of the bigger issues, like stem cell research, cancer, and maybe brain mapping or brain injuries," she says. "I'm ambitious."

A 'Prescription for Life' on the Web

To access online episodes of "A Prescription For Life," go to www.gospelhouse.tv, and click on the blue "on" button of the remote control on the left. When the Gospel House Network window opens, click on "On Demand," and then on "A Prescription for Life."

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