

ANNETTE P SCHMITT UNSUNG HERO AWARD TO LEO SANFACON

JANUARY 22, 2008

LACONIA: The 7th annual Annette P Schmitt UnSung Hero Award was presented to Leo Sanfacon of Gilford at the 2008 Belknap County Convocation on Children and Families on January 22, 2008 held at the Opechee Inn and Conference Center in Lakeport. Presented by Hon. Willard G Martin, this award honors someone who has worked behind the scenes on behalf of children and families in Belknap County.



Judge Martin (l) presents the 2008 Schmitt UnSung Hero Award to a surprised Leo Sanfacon (center). Looking on is student emcee, Mae Baker, youth president of the Boys & Girls Club of the Lakes Region, where Sanfacon spends many hours as an energetic volunteer.

This award is given each year in memory of Annette Schmitt, a woman from the Hanover and Lebanon area who at her death awarded a large portion of her estate to improving the lives of children and families in the Lakes Region and in New Hampshire.

In presenting the award, Judge Martin said the following about Leo Sanfacon:

“This year’s recipient is being honored for long-standing work and involvement in many segments of the community and most particularly, for an intense interest in children and youth, especially those considered high risk because of problems or challenges beyond their control.

“The 2008 Schmitt UnSung Hero Award winner is fortunate to have been successful in his work life. Yet the prestige that he has earned through his professional career has never detracted

from his volunteer efforts in the community. His commitment to “community” is broad and reflects his varied interests and skills. This year’s winner is someone who has served on business, economic, and leadership development committees. He has been both a member and a chair of school and municipal committees and has



Dr. Leo Sanfacon, the winner of 2008 Schmitt UnSung Hero Award

been a member and leader of local and regional initiatives in his chosen profession.

“But a look at his volunteer history shows that his primary interests are those that improve the lives of children and youth. He is a mentor, a role model, an innovator, and a hardworking friend of children and youth in Belknap County. The most frequent comments that others say about this person is that he is absolutely passionate in his beliefs, making him a true advocate for kids.

“In his role of advocate for youth, especially those who may not have been dealt a fair hand in life, he has been steadfast. His commitment to children and youth embodies the three components of Community Justice which are (1) Preventing problems before they occur, (2) Developing the natural strengths and assets of a community, and (3) emphasizing a “restorative” rather than a “punishing” approach to juvenile and criminal justice incidents in the community.

“His volunteer work on behalf of youth includes:

- Volunteering with the Youth Services Bureau where he organized the Teen Court Program,
- Chairing the Belknap Juvenile Justice Initiative, the predecessor to the current Citizens Council on Children and Families,
- Helping to develop the Belknap County Juvenile Restorative Justice, Program, serving as an adult panelist for youth cases, and participating as a member of the program’s Advisory Board, and
- Most currently, serving as a Board Member for the Boys & Girls Club of the Lakes Region.

“In addition to spending many hours working with established programs that serve children, this person is known for the strong stand he takes in public and town meetings in support of children and youth. When his community suggested cutting the budget of a municipal committee that provides activities for youth, he testified in a public meeting by saying: “This is a new time. From a preventive point of view, we should all be trying to keep these kids occupied so they do not go unsupervised, where they are likely to drink, do drugs, and all kinds of other destructive behaviors.”

“In his support of activities for youth, he is not content to just draft policies and oversee budgets.



Leo offers a few comments after receiving the 2008 Annette P Schmitt UnSung Hero Award at the Belknap County Convocation on Children and Families on January 22, 2008. Friends and family were present to congratulate him.

He rolls up his sleeves and gets right in the middle of things.

For example, just during this past year this year's winner:

- Connected the Boys & Girls Club with an Italian cook so they could sponsor their first Bike Week Spaghetti Dinner. But he didn't stop there. He even helped the kids and chef prepare the spaghetti sauce!

- Arranged medical care so that a teen could be seen by a local physician,
- Organized dental clinic visits for youth attending the Boys & Girls Club and then making sure every member had a new toothbrush,
- Pulled together a Boys & Girls Club community forum that was attended by a dozen or more community members,

- Helped to open the doors for more youth from Gilford to attend the Boys & Girls Club, and
- Guided several worthy youth through the process of getting admitted into college.

“Listen to what others say about this year’s winner:

- He is sincere and just an all around nice guy!
- Nothing that he does is ever just “half-done”!
- When he gets on a mission.....look out!
- He shows passion and determination for what he does. He is a “doer” and a “persuader”.
- We don’t know where our Restorative Justice Program would be without his involvement.
- He is absolutely persuasive and passionate regarding Restorative Justice and Teen Court.
- He believes in the kids of today. He goes to the Boys & Girls Club just to hang out with the kids.
- I don’t know where our program would be without his involvement!
- After knowing him for ten years, I can say that he is my mentor!”

Martin concluded by calling Leo Sanfacon to the platform to receive his award. Leo Sanfacon joins eleven other “UnSung Heroes” who have been honored over the past seven years with this coveted award.