

# Announcing Recipients of the 2012 Employee Awards

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After receiving 46 nominations, including over 200 employees in six categories, we are pleased to announce the winners of the 2012 Multnomah County Employee Awards.



- [Diversity and Cultural Competency Award – Ana Schmitt, Library \(#Diversity\)](#)
- [Employee Innovation Award – Lighting Team, Department of County Assets \(#Innovation\)](#)
- [Outstanding Team Achievement Award – Grant Writing Team \(#Team\)](#)
- [Superior Public Service to External Customers – Sonja Miller, DCHS \(#External\)](#)
- [Superior Public Service to Internal Customers – Mike Crank, DCA \(#Internal\)](#)
- [Sustainability Award - Multnomah County Sheriff's Office Auxiliary Services Unit \(#Sustainability\)](#)
- [Chair's Excellence Award – Sherry Swackhamer, DCA Director and Chief Information Officer \(#Chair's\)](#)

**Please join us in the Multnomah Building Boardroom, Wednesday, June 13, from 10 a.m. to noon.** Cake and punch reception will immediately follow the ceremony.

This event is free and open to all members of the public. County employees are encouraged to attend, but must receive approval from their supervisor if attending during work hours. If you are unable to attend in person, you can dial ext. 26166 to listen to the ceremony, or [access the video live or later. \(http://multnomah.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view\\_id=3\)](http://multnomah.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=3)

## Diversity and Cultural Competency Award – Ana Schmitt, Library

Bilingual Outreach Specialist Ana Schmitt is a tremendous county asset in promoting a more inclusive library system. She has continued to leverage all that she has learned from her Leadership Academy experience by continuing to work on her "stretch" assignment to improve kindergarten readiness for Latino children.

She successfully worked on obtaining a federal Library Services and Technology Act grant "Listos para Aprender (Ready to Learn)." This pilot project will develop more culturally specific Spanish Storytimes to help Latino parents prepare their children for kindergarten. The ultimate goal will be to strengthen kindergarten readiness for one of our community's most vulnerable groups: low income Spanish speaking families.

Ana has worked for years developing and nurturing partnerships that enhance the early literacy interventions to low income Latino children and help parents learn early literacy practices to help prepare their children for school.

Ana has also collaborated with the Latino Network. Part of her role in this partnership is to provide story times while leading parent-child reading circle and early literacy training for parents. What a difference one exceptional employee can make in the lives of underserved county residents!

## Employee Innovation Award – Lighting Team, Department of County Assets

Nils Bittner, Brent Bjork, Joshua Powell, Don Novak, Katrina Thorton

Multnomah County's lighting program replaces and recycles thousands of light tubes and ballasts each year. This amazing effort is accomplished by just three lighting technicians, Nils Bittner, Brent Bjork and Josh Powell, in partnership with the Electric Shop Lead Don Novak, and the Dispatch/Scheduler Trina Thornton.

Last year they recycled 10,000 tubes - that's approximately 5,000 pounds of lighting. In addition to the everyday effort of lighting our work spaces, this small crew of technicians is responsible for building exterior and parking lot lights, egress lighting, and managing complete lighting replacement projects.

The Lighting Team completed a lighting retrofit for the Walnut Park Complex. While this was a routine maintenance project to replace lights and ballasts that were at the end of their lifecycle, the crew saw an opportunity to use new products, decrease future energy costs, and increase the lighting system's lifecycle.

The Lighting Team is extraordinary in its capacity to bring together three different shops to seamlessly plan work, communicate with the client, proactively maintain lighting systems, and ensure compliance with emergency exit and egress building codes, and repair outages – often before the client even notices the problem.

## Outstanding Team Achievement Award – Grant Writing Team

Nicole Hermanns and Debra Newton, Health  
Kathleen Treb, DCJ  
Peggy Samolinski, DCHS

Multnomah County often competes for federal and state grants to fund innovative activities. To help foster the learning and skills needed for successful grant proposal development, a Grant Writing class is offered as an introduction to the process, structure, and skill of professional proposal writing. Three years ago, Talent Development relied on outside experts to deliver Grant Writing Training – and had mixed results. For the last two years, county experts in the field of grant writing have formed a training team. The results have been outstanding and the course evaluations have been enthusiastically positive.

In addition to providing outstanding training, the team also wrote and produced a comprehensive Grant Writing Manual for Multco Learns which includes best practices and an extensive resource list. Team members have served as "county wide mentors" to employees new to writing grants. This format of training – using countywide experts – has

helped establish a model for future trainings and it promotes countywide collaboration and takes advantage of in-house expertise!

## Superior Public Service to External Customers – Sonja Miller, DCHS

Sonja Miller coordinates a grant to provide suicide prevention training that includes the RESPONSE, ASIST and QPR programs.

RESPONSE is a high school curriculum which trains staff and peers to recognize a student at risk for suicide. ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) is two-day training on first aid for people at risk for suicide. The training provides curriculum on specific skills in identifying people at risk, understanding risk and developing a safe plan. QPR (Question, Persuade, Respond) is a gatekeeper training for any person who wants to understand how to identify and respond to a person at risk.

In just over two years, Sonja has planned, sponsored, and conducted more than 24 trainings for over one thousand people. She has actively recruited community partners to become trainers and donate their staff time to address suicide awareness.

Sonja's creativity is not constrained by a small budget; instead she sees opportunities for mutual benefit through collaboration. Her positive attitude and response conveys a can-do presence.

## Superior Public Service to Internal Customers – Mike Crank, DCA

Mike Crank is a property manager extraordinaire. Over the past seven years he has had the unenviable task of caring for the historic downtown courthouse, amongst other facilities.

One of the most recent undertakings involved remodeling the dilapidated Presiding Judge's Courtroom. The jury chairs were faded and grimy, the benches were rickety and suffered from broken parts, the walls showed obvious patches and the carpets were soiled and thread bare. Everyone recognized the need for a facelift for the courtroom, but with limited resources, the project was deferred.

Recognizing the deteriorating facilities and increase in safety hazards from the rickety furnishings, Mike knew he could no longer set the remodel aside. Without any spare resources in his building budget, Mike took on the task, finding inexpensive solutions to rehabilitate the courtroom.

Mike managed the project and timed and coordinated the project so all the work would be done in one weekend to minimize impact to the use of the courtroom. Between the time court closed on Friday to reopening on Monday the courtroom had been transformed to a rejuvenated, serviceable and safe facility for all the users.

Mike's ingenuity and diligence kept the total project costs under \$30,000, when the projected cost for new benches alone was \$32,000. The finished courtroom is a testimony to Mike's dedication to serving his clients and the public, and is just one example of Mike much appreciated work throughout the county.

## Sustainability Award - Multnomah County Sheriff's Office Auxiliary Services Unit

The Sheriff's Office Auxiliary Services Unit staff always looks at how we conduct business and deliver services and then thinks "outside" of the box to come up with new and innovative ways to provide these services and business practices in a better, cheaper and more sustainable manner.

The Unit has developed a process to mix their own liquid cleaning product, which has resulted in approximately \$290,000 in cost savings to the county, while eliminating throwing away 132,000 one quart plastic containers each year. The MCSO Laundry Plant quit using bulk rolled plastic and a heat sealing machine to package inmate clothing and linens and instead, use a banding machine.

The result of this suggestion in August 2011 resulted in a \$58,000 savings in plastic product in between FY 12 and FY 17, but it also stopped the discarding of approximately 73 miles of plastic wrap each year. In addition, the string material that is used by the banding machine is 100 percent biodegradable and it is recovered and donated to a school for art projects.

These are just a few of the many examples of how the ASU provides an excellent example of sustainability, making every effort to ensure that nothing is wasted, and that nothing ends up in a dumpster if in any way it has or presents an ability to be reused or recycled. The members of the ASU team are:

- Amy Glenn
- Betty Beerkircher
- Cynthia Krogh
- Christopher Payne
- Christopher Wingerd
- Darlene Johnston
- Captain Dave Rader
- Gwendolyn Tyler
- Hans Urhausen
- Hoa Doan
- Idella Williams
- James Francis
- Kathy Brink
- Linda Buck
- Marsha Morgan
- Matthew Winkel
- Michael Branson
- Michael Taylor
- Michel Camacho
- Richard Jacobsen
- Robert Sumpter
- Rodney Larson
- Samuel Hill
- Sheila Reed
- Sjohn Williamson
- Stanley Kinzig

- Kathy Sanguino
- Kim Stidum
- Thomas Lueb
- Vanessa Scales
- Walter Lenon

### Chair's Excellence Award – Sherry Swackhamer, DCA Director and Chief Information Officer

A hearty congratulations to the winners, and to each and every nominee who continues to demonstrate the passion, commitment and hard work that Multnomah County employees exemplify every day.

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