

## Foundation honors Walk & Knock leaders

Joe and Teresa Pauletto named 2010 Philanthropists of the Year



Photo by Steven Lane

Teresa and Joe Pauletto were honored as the 2010 Philanthropists of the Year — and gifted with a bag of donated groceries as encouragement — during The Community Foundation for Southwest Washington's annual luncheon on Wednesday.

By Scott Hewitt

Columbian staff writer

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To seed his next endeavor, Joe Pauletto was presented Wednesday with a paper bag full of groceries.

The gift seemed a well-meant gag for the president of the annual Interservice Walk & Knock food drive — until it was also announced that an anonymous donor in the audience at the downtown Hilton Vancouver Washington had promised Walk & Knock 3,000 more pounds of food for the needy.

The occasion was the annual luncheon of the Community Foundation for Southwest Washington, Clark County's premier local philanthropic organization. Since its founding in 1984, the multifaceted foundation has granted local charities and nonprofit endeavors with more than \$90 million.

On Wednesday, nearly 700 people turned out for the luncheon, whose main focus was honoring Joe and Teresa Pauletto as the foundation's Philanthropists of the Year and Vernon Peterson as its 2010 Friend of the Foundation.

The Pauletts were recognized for their giving and their personal involvement in causes far too numerous to mention during the ceremony — but listed in the program.



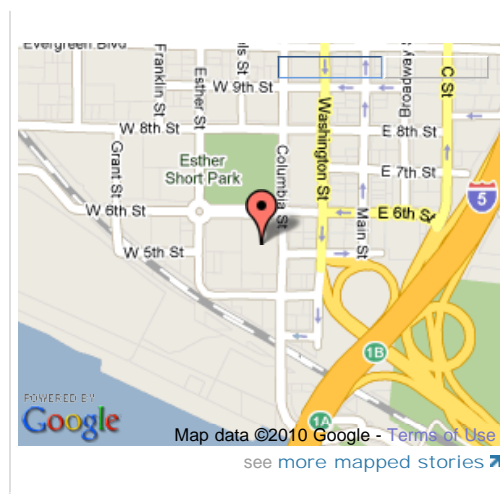
By Steven Lane

The Columbian

Certified Public Accountant Vern Peterson was named the Community Foundation's 2010 Friend of the Foundation for his professional services aimed at encouraging local philanthropy.

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They include everything from the Southwest Washington Medical Center Foundation and the Columbia Land Trust to Evergreen Habitat for Humanity, the Fort Vancouver Regional Library Foundation and the YWCA Clark County.

And yet, it became clear to the audience Wednesday, the Pauletts are quiet people who work for the community simply because it's in their blood. Joe Pauletto told the crowd his grandparents were in their 80s when they drove meals to shut-ins younger than themselves; Teresa Pauletto said her mother — who died this past Christmas season — gave freely from the family larder to neighbors in need.

“Philanthropy is about more than money,” said Joe Pauletto. Because he enjoys physical labor, the retired civil engineer said his volunteerism extends to pulling weeds in local parks, folding church newsletters and working in the warehouse of Northwest Medical Teams.

“Even to plant an extra row in your garden for the needy, or to help a child learn to read — all those things make us all philanthropists,” said Teresa Pauletto.

Steve Oliva, a previous Philanthropist of the Year winner, pointed out that under Joe Pauletto's leadership, Walk & Knock — a single-day, all-volunteer food drive — broke all previous records for enlisting volunteers and amassing community donations in 2009. It brought in 162 tons of food and \$50,000 in cash.

Certified Public Accountant Vern Peterson was named the 2010 Friend of the Foundation for his professional and personal work on behalf of the Community Foundation and philanthropy in general. Foundation president Rick Melching spoke of Peterson's “vast knowledge” of the world of charitable giving and his advocacy of building philanthropy into people's financial plans — plus, Melching said, his encouragement of the foundation's development of many small, individual- or family-based “donor-advised” funds.

Peterson, who founded accounting firm Peterson and Associates in 1962, recited a rhyming ditty of thanks — aimed most especially at his wife, Jelene, for keeping the award winner decently dressed and presentable to the world.

But the show stealers were 13 high schoolers from all over Clark County who were showcased in a video about their own philanthropic grant-making process. The Community Foundation's new Youth Philanthropy Program had the kids meeting for five months to consider the needs of local youths and evaluating grant applications; the group ultimately decided to steer money to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Washington; Northwest Children's Outreach; Rocksolid Community Teen Center; and Share's backpack program for hungry kids.

The program closed with a tribute to two giants of local philanthropy who died since last year's luncheon: Wes Lematta and Ray Hickey. Both men came from humble beginnings to own successful businesses — Lematta was CEO of Columbia Helicopters and Hickey of Tidewater Barge Lines — and then to embark upon celebrated philanthropic careers. Hickey was instrumental in bankrolling the Ray Hickey Hospice House, among many other causes, and Lematta — with his wife, Nancy — contributed millions to cancer research, forestry education and college scholarships.

“There are no finer legacies than what was left by those two,” said emcee and Foundation board chairman David Nierenberg.

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