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WEDU Be More Awards winners named

Tampa Bay Business Journal

West central Florida's largest PBS television station recognized more than 85 local nonprofit organizations in the fourth annual WEDU Be More Awards.

The accolades were handed out Jan. 15 before a luncheon crowd of 350 at the A La Carte Event Pavilion in Tampa. Achievements of the winners were celebrated in the following nine award categories:

- Be More...Involved:

The award was named for and presented to WRBQ-FM host Mason Dixon as the Mason Dixon Be More Involved – Award for Volunteerism. Dixon was recognized for community work, including his varied personal philanthropic efforts and his charitable foundation, the **Mason Dixon Christmas Wish Fund**. In 2010, the award will be driven by an online poll on wedu.org with the winner being chosen by a tally of popular votes cast by the general public in the WEDU viewing area, a release said.

- Be More...Informed:

A marketing award for the organization that demonstrated creative, original marketing through broadcasting, print material and/or community awareness campaigns. The winner was Meals on Wheels of Tampa.

- Be More...Entertaining:

The award honors the organization that has hosted a wide variety of special events or one

particularly original special event or fundraiser for community benefit. The winner was **Family Service Centers Inc.**

- **Be More...Brilliant:** An award for the organization that displayed the most imaginative, creative and innovative use of original ideas to achieve organizational goals. The winner was Girls Incorporated of Sarasota County.

- **Be More...Knowledgeable:**

This is an award that recognizes the educational outreach tools an organization has employed to educate the community through guidance, knowledge, emotional or physical support, and/or a mentorship program. The winner was Sunrise of **Pasco County Inc.**

- **The Community Foundation of Tampa Bay Community Spirit Award:**

This honor recognizes outstanding achievement by a nonprofit organization within its service area. The winner was The Children's Home (Hillsborough).

Three additional awards celebrated community support, overall appeal and outstanding achievement, the release said.

They include:

- **Be More...Humble:**

This was a people's choice award decided by an online poll. More than 50,000 "unique visitors" cast votes, a release said. The winner, for the third consecutive year, was Big Cat Rescue in Hillsborough County. The top vote getters included the **American Red Cross** Manatee County Chapter, Early Learning Coalition of **Pasco and Hernando Counties Inc.**, Tampa Bay Computer Society and Tampa Area Marine Parents Association (TAMPA).

- **Be More...Encouraged:**

A panel of independent judges decides this award, which is based on an organization's overall appeal and likeability. There was a dual winner — Little Red Wagon Foundation in partnership with **Lazydays Partners Foundation.**

- **Be More...Unstoppable:**

A coveted award that, according to a release spotlights a nonprofit group as “Nonprofit Organization of the Year 2008.” Judges looked at overall excellence demonstrated in the selected category and fulfillment of four commitments to the community including service to the organizations’ constituency, level of community impact, financial viability and embodiment of overall community goodwill, the release said. The winner was Meals on Wheels of Tampa.

970-AM WFLA host Jack Harris emceed the luncheon that had attendees from throughout the west central Florida area, WEDU said. The event can be seen as part of a special airing on WEDU Feb. 19 at 9 p.m.

Nonprofit WEDU reaches 16 counties including the Tampa, St. Petersburg, Pasco, Polk and Sarasota areas through multiple media platforms including on-air broadcasting and online experiences. Its goal: to “broaden horizons, transport and transform and open gateways to new ideas and new worlds.”

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