

WEST CHESTER

6 'Heroes of Character' to be honored in Butler County

Annual event celebrates 'being a good person.'

By Denise G. Callahan
Staff Writer

WEST CHESTER — The Character Council in West Chester Twp. will honor six Butler County "Heroes of Character" next month at the Savannah Center.

The Character Council will honor a dozen character heroes from across the region on Nov. 14 and one "Lifetime Hero of Character" who is also from Butler County, Dave Belew, former president of Beckett Paper in Hamilton.

When announcing the event, the council noted the importance of promoting good character and why they honor the special children and adults every year. "Just as the West Chester area creates a connection between Cincinnati and our northern neighbors, so too, does character connect each and every one of us. Character is a choice, each and every day, that brings us closer together," the council wrote. "When we choose to do the right thing, no matter the cost; when we choose to care for our neighbors in need, despite our personal burdens; when we choose to fight injustice for those unable to fight for themselves, that is when our character makes the connection."

The five character heroes from Butler County are Tina Osso, executive director of the Shared Harvest Foodbank, Paul Thoms a community volunteer, two seventh-graders from Garfield Middle School, Skylar Carlyle and Briella Combs and Carol Combs, a student at Miami University Regionals.

Jacqueline Schmucki, executive director of the council, said this year the organiza-



Dave Belew, former president of Beckett Paper Company, has been named a "Lifetime Hero of Character" by the West Chester Twp. Character Council. NICK GRAHAM/STAFF

tion partnered with Hamilton City of Character Council, and this is the eighth annual event honoring the heroes in the Tri-State area.

"What's really great is a lot of the people that we honor tend to come to us and say 'you know I never win anything, I'm not the best in school or I was never the fastest or anything like that,'" she said. "Just by being who they are and being great people, respectful, responsible, kind, compassionate... it's a really great thing to be recognized for being a good person."

Schmucki said "anybody can nominate anybody" and they received about 20 to 25 nominations this year. She said the theme this year is "Character Connects Us All" and since it is a construction or building theme every guest will get a building block with a character quality on it. Creating a structure out of the building blocks will be one of the activities guests will enjoy during the \$75 per person fund raiser.



Tina Osso is the retiring executive director of the Shared Harvest Foodbank.

Terry Perdue nominated Osso.

"In the early 1980s Butler County was in desperate need of a collaborative food distribution network for people living in poverty. Tina answered the call and persevered with a fervent compassion to meet the need," Perdue wrote about the retiring food bank founder. "She united the efforts of existing charities, helped build others and independently pro-

cured resources to establish Shared Harvest Foodbank. She formed systems and processes to serve people in a way that preserved their dignity."

Osso told the Journal-News while she doesn't want to disparage the award, she believes heroes are military and first responders.

"My belief is you do the right things and right things happen, and you have faith in the higher powers and our neighbors to step up when needed," Osso said. "So I think that deserves awards, I think that's the way everybody should live."

Schmucki said they are expecting 250 to 300 people this year at the Savannah Center, 5533 Chappell Crossing Blvd. People can sign up on the website at: <https://www.charactercincinnati.org/events/>

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