

Employees of Laura Baker win Human Rights Award



Employees of Laura Baker Services Association received the 2020 Human Rights award given out by the Northfield Human Rights Commission. The award was presented during the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. community celebration on January 20 at Emmaus Church.

The Northfield Human Rights Commission considered local individuals, groups and organizations that have demonstrated a long-standing commitment to the advancement of human rights in the Northfield area, either through volunteer or professional efforts for the award.

“We like the Human Rights Award to go to organizations and individuals who do not just meet the requirements of their mission statement, or their job description, but who go well beyond that,” said Angelique Dietz, member of the Northfield Human Rights Commission.

The Laura Baker Services Association has served those with special needs in Northfield since 1898 – over 120 years. They launched their annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner about 20 years ago. The event invites local

area residents to join Laura Baker residents and their families for dinner. Over the years, it has become “the thing you do on Thanksgiving Day” for many.

It was the initiative of staff members Eileen Anderson, the dietary services manager and Jayne Overstreet, the community engagement director. They organize this huge volunteer effort and make the Community Thanksgiving Dinner happen year after year.

“We believe that their work towards serving those with special needs combined with their volunteer efforts towards bringing people together who otherwise would never meet or interact, is in the spirit of what Dr. King encourages all of us to do, every day,” said Dietz. “We’re delighted to offer this year’s Human Rights Award to the employees of the Laura Baker Services Association. Thank you for all you do for our community.”

Recipients from the past five years include Community Action Center (2019), Jennifer Lompart (2018), Father Dennis Dempsey (2017), Susan Sanderson (2016), and The Key (2015). All past recipients dating back to the first Human Rights Award in 1998 may be found on an engraved plaque in the parking lot entrance of City Hall.