

Ohio County Names 2021 Champions of Children

WHEELING — Since 2010, the Ohio County Partners in Prevention Team has recognized three Champions of Children in April as part of National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Although COVID-19 derailed last year's awards, the team has adapted this year's ceremony to be held remotely on the Ohio County Family Resource Network Facebook page at 2 p.m. Friday, April 23.

The 2021 Deborah Doleski Allen Champion of Children Award recipients are:

Margie Ball, longtime Steenrod Elementary School kindergarten teacher and Ohio County 4-H leader

Jill Eddy, Youth Services System director of Community-based Services

DeSean James, Wheeling Nationals youth baseball founder and coach

"Each of these individuals is a stellar example of what it means to be a Champion of Children. They were chosen by our team comprising representatives from over 20 organizations plus community members with interest in child abuse prevention," said Claudia Raymer, Ohio County Family Resource Network executive director and Partners in Prevention Team leader.

Nominations were open to the public. The winners were chosen in a blind selection process (with names and organizations removed) by team members who have participated in at least 50 percent of the past year's meetings.

Lewis Honaker, the 4-H Youth Development agent with Ohio County's West Virginia University Extension office, nominated



Photos Provided

At left, Jill Eddy, Youth Services System director of Community-based Services, displays the Champion of Children Award plaque she received based on the nomination written by Lori Garrett-Bumba, YSS Prevention Services director.

Margie Ball. Excerpts from the nomination follow:

"Margie Ball served as a kindergarten teacher in Ohio County for 42 years. When she retired, she had held the #1 spot on the teacher seniority list for several years. Why would anyone work several years after being eligible to retire? Because she is a champion of children! She loves teaching them new things, getting to know each unique personality, and watching them grow."

"Margie spent years as a 4-H club leader - coordinating club meetings, educational activities, fundraisers, service projects and more. To this day, she participates in monthly club leader meetings, bimonthly All Star meetings, quarterly foundation meetings, and helps coordinate every county event, which isn't true for many volunteers. In addition, she continues to help plan, coordinate and

staff 4-H camps. She has helped with Ohio County's overnight 4-H camp for nearly 50 years."

"Margie cares so much for Ohio County's children that she has dedicated her entire adult life to helping them grow into successful adults. Margie had a positive impact on me in the short time I knew her as teen. It's impossible to quantify the cumulative impact that she's had on Ohio County having taught and mentored over 1,000 kindergarteners and 4-H members."

Lori Garrett-Bumba, Youth Services System Prevention Services director, nominated Jill Eddy:

"(Jill Eddy) has a work ethic like no other, and the people who benefit are the children and families throughout West Virginia. ... She has dedicated her life to service and embodies the true meaning of being a social worker — from



From left, Lewis Honaker, Ohio County WVU Extension agent; Margie Ball, 4-H volunteer; and Claudia Raymer, Ohio County Partners in Prevention Team leader gather for a photo and plaque presentation ahead of the Champions of Children award ceremony to be livestreamed on Friday, April 23.



DeSean James, Wheeling Nationals youth baseball founder and coach, is a 2021 Champion of Children.

starting out at a behavioral health facility, to working with the young women and children at Wellspring Services, to spending the last several years improving the lives of those who receive services from Youth Services System."

"Jill has worked endless hours bringing new and innovative programs to the Northern Panhandle and has striven to see that each succeeds.

Even outside of her

work, she mentors a child through the YSS Youth Mentoring Network, guiding that young lady and being a source of hope and stability for the family. She gives of herself 24/7 for her friends, family, co-workers and community. She is definitely a Champion of Children."

Ron Scott Jr., YWCA Wheeling's Cultural Diversity and Community Outreach director, nominated DeSean James:

"DeSean James has been a force in the lives of Valley youth since he arrived here from Georgia. He wears the title of coach the way that it should be. He walks it and he talks it. He sets an example in his everyday life and expects the children he is involved in to follow suit."

"He has been a vital part of the Little Patriots organization, where he has made sure that his influence has been positive and influential. So much so, that he started his Wheeling Nationals Travel Baseball Team."

"Most recently, DeSean

has teamed up with Men of Change and Ohio County Schools to help develop a vocational program that targets underserved and disenfranchised Black students for the possibility of a vocational and technical career. The program is starting at Wheeling Park High School."

Raymer already presented plaques to the winners individually. The livestream on the Ohio County Family Resource Network Facebook page will include acceptance speeches and guest speaker Kelli Caseman, founder and executive director of Think Kids.

Wheeling Mayor Glenn Elliott is scheduled to read a proclamation, and the Children's Memorial Flag will be presented by Susan Harrison, CASA for Children executive director.

The awards were founded and are now named for longtime Ohio County Family Resource Network executive director and Partners in Prevention Team leader, the late Deborah Doleski Allen.

SEVEN SPRINGS SPORTING CLAYS
One of the Top-Rated Facilities in the Country!

- » FUN FOR BEGINNERS AND SEASONED SHOOTERS ALIKE!
- » ENJOY DURING ALL FOUR SEASONS
- » SAFE, FAMILY FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT
- » RESTAURANT FEATURING A FULL MENU AND DECK OVERLOOKING PIGEON POND FOR OUTDOOR DINING
- » RENTAL EQUIPMENT, INSTRUCTION AND MEMBERSHIP AVAILABLE
- » FULLY-STOCKED PRO SHOP

PENNSYLVANIA'S OUTDOOR ADVENTURE HQ
★ YOUR HEADQUARTERS FOR SUMMER OUTDOOR FUN ★

7springs.com

SEVEN SPRINGS MOUNTAIN RESORT

THIS SUMMER, MAKE FAMILY MEMORIES AT THE Wheeling Country Club

Since 1902, the club has been a retreat for Ohio Valley families of all ages to socialize and enjoy great amenities all on top of scenic Country Club Hill. Wheeling Country Club is a fun, welcoming summer destination for all, offering legendary experiences that make lifetime memories.

Members enjoy a challenging, yet fun 18-hole golf course, a swimming pool with premier views, multiple culinary experiences, a tennis program featuring Har-Tru courts, special events all year long, all provided with the Clubs exceptional personal service.

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Choose the Perfect Membership for You!

- Family Golf Membership
- Individual Golf Membership
- Social Club Membership
- Corporate Golf Individual Membership

All are great ways to socialize with family, friends and clients!

LEARN MORE AT
WHEELINGCOUNTRYCLUB.COM/MEMBERSHIP