



Making Democracy Work Congratulations Ann Muenster

The committee and the League believe that to earn an award that honors effort and execution in the name of strengthening democracy, a person needs an unbending, undeniable ethos. Our 2015 recipient, Ann Muenster, has just that.

Of course, she demonstrates this ethos in her many very effective efforts to help create a vibrant community, --for example,

--Fox Cities Advocates for Public Education – a nonpartisan advocacy group to assure good public schools,

--Move to Amend, an effort to educate and mobilize people around the need for campaign finance reform.

--helping to get people involved in a Flag Day Parade float,

--and her work on the gun violence prevention efforts such as Wisconsin Anti-violence effort, or Moms Demand Action.

But the list of activities is less important than her ethos – time and time again, people cited how she focuses on how to engage others, and how is always willing to share with others her skills of knowledge – because, as she stated recently, “I share with people because we need to increase the capacity of those who want to strengthen our democracy”.

Her priority is not necessarily to lead or be in charge, but to make sure that people are excited and engaged and effective in trying addressing the issue.

Her nominator, Connie Raether, sums this ethos up very nicely:

“If you want to get people mobilized around an issue, the first person I call is Ann. She knows everyone, is a champion networker, and she has the ability to get people to speak up. She understands that even though sometimes it is easier to do something yourself than involve others, involving others is the only way to make true change happens”.

Her nominator goes on to say --

“Ann’s ability to draw people in and find their own voice is amazing. People just want to be involved. Even though she affiliates with a particular party, she isn’t political. She is willing to engage anyone who cares about making the Fox Valley a better community”.

Consistent with this ability to encourage and mobilize others, she is focused on voting. Part of the League’s mission, as all of us know, is voting – the basis of our democracy. It is telling that when Ann ran for the county board, she focused in substantially increasing voter participation, she wanted to prove it was possible to get people out to vote, even for something like a county position. Her goal was to get more people out to vote in her district than any other district in the county. By walking the county, and talking to everyone, she was able to do just that. While she lost in a close race, she was thrilled by the turnout.

“That is what is important to me,” she said, “I believe that each of us is truly equal when we vote”.

I think you will agree that this ethos is at the core of why Ann Muenster was selected to receive the 2015 Making Democracy Work Award!

Congratulations, Ann!