

ADRIENNE DIERCKS OF PROJECT SUCCESS NAMED WINNER OF ANN BANCROFT AWARD

13th annual event to be held April 29, 2010

The 13th annual Ann Bancroft Awards, to be held Wednesday, April 29, 2010 at the Hyatt Hotel in downtown Minneapolis, will recognize four recipients for their accomplishments and support of girls and women. The four winners are: co-winners Jazzmin Brooks and Dafina Bobo; Adrienne Diercks; Cindy Reuther; and Women's Environmental Institute (WEI).

Proceeds from the event will further the efforts of the Ann Bancroft Foundation. Event sponsors include Best Buy Women's Leadership Forum, Imation, Dunn Brothers Coffee, Women's Foundation of Minnesota, KARE 11 and Minnesota Women's Press. For ticket information contact www.annbancroftfoundation.org or call Tracy Adams at 763 479-4499. The reception begins at 5:30 p.m. followed by dinner and the awards program.

The Ann Bancroft Foundation (www.annbancroftfoundation.org) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support girls and women in realizing their highest dreams and potential. The ABF endeavors to recognize individual achievement and promotes initiatives that inspire courage, risk-taking, integrity and individuality in girls and women. The ABF exemplifies the spirit of explorer and educator, Ann Bancroft. Bancroft organized and led the first all-woman expedition to Antarctica, becoming the first woman to reach both Poles across the ice. In 2001 Bancroft and Norwegian Liv Arnesen became the first women in history to cross Antarctica's landmass.

Winner of the 13th annual 2010 Ann Bancroft Awards Adrienne Diercks – Dream Maker Award winner “Individual” category (leadership and achievement)

Adrienne Diercks grew up in the Hill & Lake Press area and has many friends in the neighborhood. Since graduating college, Adrienne Diercks has had a dream of her own: to help young people believe in their dreams, to envision a future for themselves, and to take positive steps toward making their dreams become reality. In 1994, Diercks created Project SUCCESS, a model that uses goal-setting workshops, live theater and one-on-one support to help youth plan their paths before they graduate. Project SUCCESS, which serves over 10,000 young people and their families every year, discovers and reveals the possibilities that exist for students, ensuring they have the tools and vision needed to prepare for their future.

Knowing that live theater could inspire young people, offer fresh insights and open new doors, Diercks began conceptualizing a new program idea. She brought together Sheila Livingston, from the Guthrie Theater, and George Roberts, a former North High English teacher, to develop what is now Project SUCCESS. The curriculum underscored the themes of the plays, and asked local theaters to partner with Project SUCCESS and generously donate tickets. Diercks used



Adrienne Diercks

her skills as a listener, collaborator and leader to work with the school communities to give her access to students in the classroom. With patience and through the extraordinary results her approach received, she won the trust of students, teachers, principals and families.

Diercks began the workshops with the students discussing the play and its characters that resonated with their own lives. Soon those comparisons led to talking about setting goals and achieving them. Diercks saw the students open up in ways that surprised and impressed their teachers. For the past 18 years, she has worked tirelessly to see her vision become a reality and to transform lives on a daily basis.

Diercks' capacity as a leader is demonstrated by her commitment to truly work hand in hand with all partners in serving students and families. Each of the 10,000 public school students in the 17 schools Project SUCCESS serves has at least seven classroom workshops per year. The students continue to be involved in the program as they move up in grades from 6th to 12th for up to seven years. The trust that the teachers, administrators, students and families have in Diercks is exceptional. Similarly, she treats the funders who support the organization's \$1.2 million budget as true partners, along with the 27 local theaters that generously donate the tickets and 70 volunteers who help the program.

“As a mother, I have been inspired every day by Adrienne's persistence, clear vision and commitment to do whatever it takes to help young people achieve their dreams,” said Karla Ekdahl, Project SUCCESS board member and parent. “As a caring adult, leader and role

Helen Porter, A Remarkable Woman, from page 8

appear in the yard as spring unfolds.

We all know that it was not long after the party that Helen's health started to take a dive. It is so clear to me now something you, Fritz (Helen's grandson who lived with her at 2000 Sheridan), and the rest of the family no doubt knew in your hearts. Helen was getting ready to leave. Only someone this remarkable could proceed with such grace, taking care of business and wrapping up with a final fruitcake.

We in the Christian faith believe in the promise that those who live as we were taught will find reward at the end of this rainbow. Many of us like to extrapolate from that promise that our reward comes in a reuniting with the ones we love. I choose to see Helen and Bill on their special cloud, 2000 Heavenly Drive. A cloud and a half actually, Bill's Dad would have seen to that. In the back, there is a grand garden festooned with peonies and lilies bursting with color; brighter than any fireworks we know. In the front there are some huge shade trees and some saplings beginning to grow. The street glows with a reddish golden hue, reflecting the value of friendship and the warmth of love.

Helen we learned so much. Yes hearts ache, there is less golden glow on our Sheridan Avenue but you taught us that trees grow, cakes get baked and mixed in among the candied fruit and the gummy worms will be the memories. Rest assured, the joy will be found again.

model, Adrienne has had an extraordinary impact on my own daughters and their friends.”

Project SUCCESS' proof is in the numbers. More than 85 percent of the Minneapolis middle school students indicated that Project SUCCESS “helped me think about my future;” nearly 75 percent of high school students said the programs “helped me create a plan after graduation;” and 82 percent said they were “inspired and motivated to pursue my dreams.” More than half of Project SUCCESS' alumni from Minneapolis high schools said that the program “has had an impact on what I have been doing since graduation.” And when asked who assisted them in future planning, 88 percent rated Project SUCCESS second only to parents or guardians.

Diercks' success is best expressed through the thousands of lives she has touched and changed, through the many thousands who have imagined new possibilities.

Sheila Livingston, Director of Artistic Relations at the Guthrie Theater says “Adrienne has helped young people walk a road of dignity and achievement and belief in themselves.”

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