

Three teens honored by Golden Hearts

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For more than two decades, the city of Davis' Golden Heart Awards have served two purposes: ensuring that some good can come from even the most unthinkable of tragedies, and reminding the community that for every teenager who ends up in the news for the wrong reason, there are countless more youths quietly doing the right things every day.

Such is the case with Bea Bastino, Lailah Becker-Golde and Dominick Jackson.

All three were honored by the Davis City Council on Tuesday night during a virtual Golden Heart Awards ceremony for their service to the community and overcoming personal challenges.

Since 1994, these ceremonies have taken place in a council chambers full of proud family and friends. This year's ceremony, originally slated for March, was postponed when the COVID-19 pandemic and shelter in place forced all council meetings online. With no end in sight to Zoom meetings however, the awards ceremony took place online this week as well.

The awards were created in the wake of Andrew Mockus' death 28 years ago. A 14-year-old Holmes Junior High School student, Mockus was killed by a group of Davis teens who beat him, robbed him and pushed him into the path of a moving train.

Stunned, the city responded by holding public forums to discuss the issues facing the community's youth and ways the city could do more to help. In the end, the Davis City



BECKER-GOLDE

Honored for community service

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Council adopted seven recommendations that grew out of the forums, including the creation of the Golden Heart Awards, which would honor local teens for their achievements.

For the last 26 years, the awards have been given annually in two categories: overcoming personal challenges and community service.

Members of the community are asked every year to nominate the deserving teens they know and a selection committee selects the awardees.

Among this year's winners: Bea Bastino, who graduated from Da Vinci Charter Academy in June.

Bastino has participated in Team Davis, the local Special Olympics team, since she was 13 years old. She has served as a participant, ambassador and summer camp volunteer leader.

"Even with challenges of her own, due to her intellectual disability, Bea goes out of her way to support other participants," said Mayor Gloria Partida, who virtually bestowed the award of community service on Bastino.

"Time and time again, she has reached out to a participant sitting on the sidelines to bring them into a practice session and to help create a positive experience for everyone. Due to her positive attitude, willingness to try everything and her ability to make all others feel comfortable, she was named Team Davis Ambassador of the Year."

Bastino is also a long-time volunteer with the city of Davis recreation programs, "where she has a knack for reaching out to those children needing a little encouragement."

In fact, both Partida and Councilman Will Arnold have seen it firsthand.

"I know Bea because my son is also a participant of Team Davis and I can attest to the fact that she is very deserving of this award," said Partida.

Arnold said he was glad to see Bea acknowledged for helping those on the sidelines in

need of encouragement because she's done exactly that for his own son during baseball.

Bastino thanked the council members and everyone who helped her along the way.

"I couldn't have done it without my community and friends who got me this far," she said.

Another teen recognized Tuesday night for her service to the community is Lailah Becker-Golde, now a senior at Davis High School.

Becker-Golde has been a volunteer for Davis Community Meals for the past three years, assisting the program every week.

"Laila displays selflessness, sees the need in our community and follows through," said Vice Mayor Lucas Frerichs, reading her nomination letter. "She is a rock and staple at the Tuesday night community meal served at St. Martins Church."

A consistent volunteer for years, Becker-Golde inquired a year ago if there was a permanent spot she could fill.

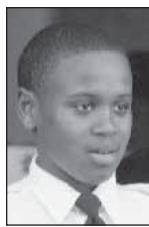
"She enthusiastically accepted work as the dishwasher on Tuesday nights and has spent over 150 hours volunteering," said Frerichs.

"She is now in charge of the entire kitchen clean up on Tuesday nights and is known for calling on friends and family when she knows they will be short staffed."

Her nomination for a Golden Heart Award for community service was seconded by many with Davis Community Meals, who cited her tremendous work ethic, dedication, reliability and conscientiousness, not to mention the way she treats everyone with compassion and understanding.

"It would be virtually impossible to provide dinner to guests without her," they said.

Also receiving a Golden Heart Award Tuesday night for overcoming many personal



JACKSON
Found a way

challenges was Dominick Jackson, a 2020 graduate of Holmes.

Jackson overcame those challenges even as he was rising through the ranks of the Davis Police Explorer program to the position of platoon leader.

"With a young birth mother that could not care for him, Dominick was often left to fend for himself," said Councilman Brett Lee.

Jackson "bravely sought out help" from friends who eventually petitioned the court for legal guardianship, said Lee. "Dominick has since become a part of their family."

Holmes Vice Principal Mike Dufresne supported Jackson's nomination, stating that, "due to a background that contributed to a general distrust of school personnel and school system, Dominick has had to work very hard to overcome significant challenges.

"He has developed close working relationships with his teachers and taken on several leadership roles in his classes and through athletics. He is in the leadership class and is often trusted with large projects and volunteers with sporting events.

"I whole heartedly support this nomination," said Dufresne.

In addition to overcoming challenges and taking on leadership roles at school, Jackson began attending the Davis Police Department Cadet program.

"Early on, Dominick was recognized to be outgoing and friendly, with great leadership capability, thus was picked to be the platoon leader of the program," said Lee.

"He effortlessly leads the group, while being kind, empathetic and understanding - such a tribute to this young man, who was brought up in a world that didn't always return the favor."

Jackson thanked the council for the award and extended thanks to Dufresne as well, saying, "He's a big part of who I am today and he was always there for me when I needed him."



BASTINO
Volunteer spirit