

W-S Foundation gives 2016 awards



Submitted photo

The Winston-Salem Foundation (WSF) presented the 2016 ECHO Awards to five recipients, who are shown with others in the photo. On the front row (L-R) are Laurie Coker, WSF Committee Member Sylvia Ramos, Robin Embry, Sylvia Oberle, Dr. Carolyn Pedley of Goler Community Garden. On the back row (L-R) are WSF Committee Chair Stan Kelly, Chris Dyer and Drew Dixon of F3 Winston-Salem and Robert Jones of Goler Community Garden

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Foundation hosted its annual Community Luncheon on May 4 with a record-breaking crowd of over 1,200 community members in attendance. The Foundation also announced the recipients of the 2016 Winston-Salem Foundation Award and the 2016 ECHO Awards.

The keynote speaker was Jamie Vollmer, an engaging speaker, author, and public education advocate working to raise public support for America's schools. Once a harsh critic, he has become an articulate champion of America's public schools. In 2010, he published the book "Schools Cannot Do It Alone." Over the past 20 years he has worked with educators, parents, and community leaders across the country to secure the understanding, trust, and support they need to help local school systems increase student success.

The Winston-Salem Foundation Award was established in 1996 and is given to individuals who demonstrate the Foundation's values of generosity, excellence, inclusion, and integrity along with visionary leadership in a community activity or on behalf of a community organization, particularly in the recent

past. 2016 Winston-Salem Foundation Award winner Sylvia Oberle recently retired as executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County, a position she has held since 2006.

Foundation officials said in a news release that under her leadership, Oberle has redefined what Habitat has been able to accomplish, expanding its impact throughout the community in innovative ways and positively impacting Habitat and non-Habitat homeowners alike.

Oberle has led Habitat's Neighborhood Revitalization program, transforming blocks in the

Boston-Thurmond neighborhood, where now new Habitat homes and families are complementing newly-renovated and remodeled homes. She led the opening of the new Habitat ReStores in Winston-Salem and Kernersville. Through private fundraising efforts steered by Oberle, a former furnishings building and warehouse were remodeled to serve as Habitat's new headquarters, with Oberle, staff, and the board deciding to locate in the very neighborhood in

which so much of Habitat's work is taking place. Its new education center now offers space for hands-on workshops on home repairs — both

Habitat homeowners and community members are now benefitting from these classes. Oberle is a transformative leader who has opened dialogue about how to improve neighborhoods. She brings together people of diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and faiths. She has made sure homeowners have a voice in the rehabilitation of their areas. With this recognition comes a \$10,000 Foundation grant, which Oberle has designated to two organizations — Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County and to the Bethesda Center.

2016 ECHO Awards

The Foundation presented the 2016 ECHO Awards to five recipients who are creatively building social capital. Each recipient is uniquely connecting people and building trust among people in order to make our community stronger and each will receive \$1,000 to grant to a nonprofit organization of their choice.

*Laurie Coker — Embry is a social capital builder for individuals with mental health challenges.

In 2012, she founded the GreenTree Peer Center, a peer-operated support center where diverse community members form meaningful relationships — finding hope, health, and mental well-being. Lasting bonds have also formed between service providers and clients who are homeless or in transition.

*Robin Embry — In 2011, Embry founded the Carolina Center for Cognitive Rehabilitation, which empowers individuals living with cognitive and communication disorders resulting from brain injury or stroke. She uses a group and peer mentor model that breaks down walls of isolation while creating lasting relationships among a diverse population, spanning race, age, gender, and income level.

*F3 Winston-Salem — Fitness, Fellowship, and Faith is an informal group connecting men of all ages, backgrounds, and fitness levels through free outdoor workouts. According to its nominator, "sweat is a great equalizer" no matter who you

are, and since 2014 the group has created relationships and a strong physical, mental, and spiritual support system for a very diverse group of men, including homeless guests at Samaritan Ministries.

*Goler Community Garden at the Downtown Health — Founded in 2009, this garden is located on the campus of the Downtown Health Plaza. Initially led by six physicians, it has flourished to become a community-led gathering space where the medical community, patients, neighborhood residents, and community groups are working together and building community. Diverse city residents are connecting — sharing stories, gardening tips, and healthy recipes as they tend the garden.

*Sylvia Oberle — Oberle has led the transformation of neighborhoods

and built innumerable trusting relationships in our city thanks to her inclusive leadership. From Habitat's Unity Builds that intentionally includes many faiths and ethnicities, to its neighborhood revitalization programs, Oberle has purposefully led the effort to bridge social capital among diverse community members, whether volunteers, homeowners, or neighbors, while empowering residents to create change based on their own assets, skills, and talents. (Note: Oberle also received The Winston-Salem Foundation Award.)

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City approves airport deal with County

BY TODD LUCK THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem City Council approved an agreement with Forsyth County to provide capital funding for the Smith Reynolds Airport during its Monday, May 16 meeting.

Approved last week by Forsyth County Commissioners, the inter-local eight-year agreement has the city and county each providing \$150,000 annually for capital uses at the airport, which is located off Liberty Street. It's the result of negotiations between the city and county, after stormwater fees and city property taxes had become a source of tension between the two governments. The county, which owns the airport, and Airport Commission, which runs it, said the taxes and fees made it less competitive and had begun to explore the idea of de-annexing the airport. The new agreement is contingent on the airport remaining part of the city.

At last week's finance committee meeting, City Council members said they were glad they'd resolved the airport issue.

"We have an airport that survives and that's what it does, it survives," said finance committee chair Robert Clark. "This challenges the airport authority to give us an airport that thrives."

During the committee meeting, Airport Commission chair Scott Piper also said he was

*The council approved a \$1.3 million no-interest loan for S.G. Atkins Community Development

"I can't think of another time in history that the county and the city got together in an economic development light for the benefit of the airport."

—Scott Piper, Airport Commission chair

"excited" about the deal. "I can't think of another time in history that the county and the city got together in an economic development light for the benefit of the airport," said Piper. "... Now it's incumbent on us to get creative and think of ways that we can grow this."

The city's public works committee is still exploring the possibility of stormwater fee credits for businesses that install stormwater reduction measures.

Also during Monday's meeting:

*The city sold a 7,500 square foot building in Brookwood Business Park for \$525,000 to Dr. Cullen Taylor of Carolina Tissue Initiative LLC, whose trade name is GLAS. GLAS provides human tissue for research. The business park is located off Liberty Street and is near Piedmont Park and the airport.

Corporation for the construction of ten additional houses in the Ridgewood Place subdivision.

*Dan Besse was the sole "no" vote on a speed cushion for Kingstree Neighborhood, which was supported by most residents, because he said that such traffic-calming measures are being overused and may hinder some emergency vehicles.

*During the public comment session, two speakers asked for a ban on wild circus animals like the ones used by Ringling Bros. Circus, saying that the treatment of those animals is unnatural, inhumane and can result in dangerous situations for humans who come in contact with them. City Council Member James Taylor said he'd research the issue and bring a resolution.

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