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For Immediate Release:  
Porter County Community Foundation celebrates outstanding achievements

VALPARAISO - The Porter County Community Foundation recognized the remarkable work being done by individuals and local nonprofit organizations by awarding four Outstanding Achievement Awards at its annual celebration held on July 14 at Aberdeen Manor.

"We began presenting the award in 2001 as a way to recognize the great work that is being done by so many," said Mark Maassel, Vice Chair of the Porter County Community Foundation Board of Directors. "We wanted to recognize volunteers, nonprofit organizations, nonprofit staff members and professional advisors because each plays such an important role in building a stronger community for us all."

The *Outstanding Nonprofit Staff* award was presented by Barb Young, President of the Porter County Community Foundation, to Opportunity Enterprises President and CEO Gary Mitchell for serving the community for the past 25 years. "As Gary looks to retire this year, he can look back over his career at Opportunity Enterprises with a great deal of pride in what he has accomplished," said Young. "As he moves on to the next chapter in his life, all of us in Porter County want to say a great big thank you for all you have done to make Porter County a better community and a community that understands and values the importance of every citizen regardless of their capabilities or disabilities."

The Valparaiso Family YMCA received the *Outstanding Nonprofit Organization* award. The organization was recognized for its commitment to building a better community today and at the same time preparing to serve the many generations to come through its endowment building.

The *Outstanding Volunteer* award was present to John Craighead. Craighead was nominated by the Portage Township YMCA where he has been a volunteer for more than twenty years. He served two full terms on the YMCA's Board of Directors and shared his financial expertise spearheading several fundraising campaigns.

William Wagner, a partner with the law firm of Hoepfner Wagner & Evans, was recognized as *Outstanding Professional Advisor*. Wagner has worked with many nonprofits to help them

create and build endowments such as the Visiting Nurse Association, Valparaiso University, the Porter County Community Foundation, and Immanuel Lutheran Church.

Along with the outstanding achievement recognition, each recipient is awarded \$1,000 to direct to the nonprofit endowment fund of their choice. “We thought a legacy gift in honor of these outstanding individuals and organizations seems like the most fitting way to pay tribute to their accomplishments,” noted Maassel.

The evening reception also served as a time to review some of the highlights from the past year and recognize the newest members of Porter County Community Foundation giving societies. “We have much to be grateful for in Porter County and we wanted to take this opportunity to not only acknowledge our successes but to say thank you to all of our community partners,” said Young. The Porter County Community Foundation ended 2009 with nearly \$30 million in total assets. “Our growth has been made possible because of the wonderful generosity of our donors,” Young remarked.

The Porter County Community Foundation leads, unites and supports giving to make a difference in Porter County today, tomorrow and forever. For more information, contact the Porter County Community Foundation at (219) 465-0294 or [www.portercountyfoundation.org](http://www.portercountyfoundation.org).

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