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Philanthropy Day winners give back to Richmond community

By: [KATHERINE CALOS](#)

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When John W. Roberts thinks about philanthropy, he remembers the fireflies he and his late wife, Jane, would watch in their backyard.

The nightly spectacle in early summer didn't just happen, he said as he accepted the Lifetime Achievement in Philanthropy Award given to the couple at the National Philanthropy Day luncheon Tuesday at the Greater Richmond Convention Center.

"It takes the right setting ... the right height on the grass to keep the soil damp," he said. "It takes cultivation to nourish and support those fireflies."

In the audience of 840 people, he said, "I see a multitude of cultivators, of organizers, and of creators of the right setting. I see people who give of themselves, their time, their talents, their energy and worldly goods to others. ... To you all, I say, keep it up. It takes only a spark to get a fire going, and soon those around you will warm up to the firefly that is glowing."

The Volunteer of the Year award went to **Lisa Schaffner**, longtime anchor at WRIC and more recently the director of public relations and marketing for the United Network for Organ Sharing, which nominated her.

She thanked the village that has supported her in her volunteer work, especially her children for understanding why she missed homecoming pictures, the prom and back-to-school night yet another year.

"I am out there trying to help the kids in our community ... who didn't have a mom and dad and didn't have a support like you did," she said.

She encouraged others to continue their efforts.

"To the world, you may be just one person, but to one person you may be the world," she said.

Alan I. Kirshner, Individual Philanthropist of the Year, was nominated by The Faison School for Autism. His remarks were succinct: "Faison is a wonderful place, and all of you should learn more about it."

To **Sherry McGill**, executive director of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, named Foundation Philanthropist of the Year, the honor belongs to the local partners who "have done such extraordinarily good work." The fund was nominated by Virginia Commonwealth University.



Students from St. Christopher's and St. Catherine's Schools received the Youth Philanthropists of the Year award on Tuesday for their Saints \$100 for 100 program.

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"It is our obligation, as Mrs. duPont instructed us, to make the dollars available to help them not only advance their missions but to make life better for someone less fortunate," she said. "We are painfully aware of how tough things are, not only in Richmond and central Virginia but throughout the United States, as we continue in what we consider an economic emergency."

Linsey Kornblau received the Spirit of Giving Award for flying cross-country at age 17 to raise \$125,000 for the Massey Cancer Center, which nominated her.

Youth Philanthropist of the Year went to the Saints \$100 for 100 program at **St. Christopher's and St. Catherine's Schools**. Students have raised \$10,000 or more each year to buy \$100 gift cards at Dick's Sporting Goods for 100 kids who need help. They were nominated by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Richmond. **Landrum Tyson**, a senior at St. Christopher's, accepted the award on behalf of the group.

MeadWestvaco, Corporate Philanthropist of the Year, was nominated by The Daily Planet and Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. The program was organized by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Central Virginia Chapter.