



Thomas C. Wales Award for Passionate Citizenship

The recipient of the 2009 Thomas C. Wales Award for Passionate Citizenship is Charles Duze. On October 3rd we will honor Charles and the top four honorees: Ari Kohn, Akemi Matsumoto, Rev. Rick Reynolds and Mary Jean Ryan, at our 8th Annual Night Among Heroes Gala & Auction. Please join us as we recognize these extraordinary individuals who are examples of active, engaged and passionate citizens of our community.

The Award Recipient: Charles Duze



Charles Duze is the founder of LittleDrops Orphanage Fund, in addition to his full-time career as a software engineer at Microsoft. LittleDrops is entirely volunteer-run and currently supports 26 orphanage homes throughout Africa and has helped over 2000 children.

The Top Four Honorees:



Ari Kohn is co-founder and director of the Post Prison Education Program has made it his life's work to change the lives of former prisoners and their families by supporting them on the road to higher education or vocational training.



From her early Peace Corps to her recent retirement as a community college counselor and diversity trainer, Akemi Matsumoto has been a community activist, organizer and educational leader in the Japanese American and Asian Pacific Islander communities.



For 25 years Rev. Rick Reynolds has been a late night presence in homeless encampments, neighborhood bars, and under I-5, providing friendship, along with humor and grace. He has committed his life to serving the marginalized and voiceless.



Mary Jean Ryan, is Chair of Washington State Board of Education, and is a tireless advocate for quality public education for all students. She championed the raising of high school graduation requirements and has increased accountability of under-performing schools.