

My name is Barbara Fry, and it is my honor and distinct privilege to announce the first recipient of the 2015 Civitas Award.

This neighbor moved here in 2004, and from the very beginning, has worked hard to be hospitable to all neighbors, particularly new ones. I think it is simply her nature, and she's made it her cause, to go out of her way to help newcomer's feel welcome in I'On.

She created the Ladies' Lunch Bunch based upon her experience in Detroit with a group of women friend's. The Lunch Bunch along with the Women's Coffee is often the first occasion many women have to meet others in the neighborhood. This person not only started it, but has mothered it over the years to make sure it continues.

The Sparkles Dance group in the 4th of July parade as well as the Kitchen Witches for Halloween in the 'Hood were begun under her charge. She and her friend Theresa Green started the Annual Yard Sale that we continue to hold every November here in I'On.

As a friend said from the I'On Trust, she and her husband have both volunteered for just about everything the Trust does, including the Home & Garden Tours, concerts, 4th of July parade and Halloween in the Hood (BTW – both she and her husband were on the planning committee HITH for several years).

But not only has she helped a lot of adults to connect ... she's also helped a lot of our kids.

This woman was the first official Art teacher hired by the East Cooper Montessori school that was opened here in I'On in 2005.

She taught art to all of the children in the school - grades one through eight. As principal Jody Swanigan said:

"She had a beautiful way of bringing out the talent in even the most reluctant artist."

During her tenure, the students participated in numerous local art contests. A few include:

1. The Turtle project sponsored by the Aquarium ... This woman designed and created a huge mama turtle and the children in the school created baby turtles that were placed on her back ... this turtle was auctioned off and purchased by the Mt. Pleasant Hospital!
2. Every year, under her guidance, the graduating class created a gift for the school ... One of these projects was a giant broken glass Palmetto Tree that now hangs in the new school located on Rifle Range Road. Each student also designed a ceramic tile that is a permanent part of the school in I'On that is for sale.
3. And 3 of her students over the years won first place in the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition Art Contest. One of those winning drawings was actually turned into a t-shirt that was sold during the exposition!

And according to Principal Swanigan, she had some very big shoes to fill after this woman retired just last year. The school went thru two art teachers, but fortunately after the 3rd hire, they were able to fill the position!

She is also a Fellow with the Gibbes Museum in Charleston, and has donated pieces of her artwork to several non-profit groups.

And when she's not making friends, or volunteering, or teaching art, you can find her EVERY Tuesday night, at O'Brion's, helping the Maybank Greenies win yet another Trivia Contest.

And BTW ... her cupcakes are to die for!

As I said, it's my honor and distinct privilege to announce the honoree of the 2015 Civitas Award, Linda Hanson.