



Early Career Service — Antonio Alba Merez, Extension Educator in Family Resource Management

Antonio is an extremely passionate Educator who always sees opportunities connecting with new and diverse audiences. Antonio defines the meaning of being a team player and taking on a significant part of the work, but never asks for recognition in the teams' success.

Mid-Career Service Award — Suzanne Driessen, Extension Educator in Food Safety

Early in her career, Suzanne solidified a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health which has served as a cornerstone for her work . She is a leader in design of innovative programming that helps ensure the safety of Minnesota's, consistently working this plan under the radar. Suzanne has provided association leadership, currently serving as the secretary of ESP-Pi Chapter Board

Distinguished Service Recognition — Toni Smith

Toni retired this past year after a distinguished Extension career. Her nominators said, "I always think of Toni as a 'bridge'. She builds connections and understanding, helping people come together to advance relationships, programming and policy. Her leadership as a 'bridge builder' is evident in her work with Extension associations, Extension administration, and internal and external partners.

Distinguished Team Award – "Educational Response to Families Financial Situation after a Natural Disaster."

This multi-state team from Minnesota and North Dakota developed a much needed tool to assist families and individuals recover financially from a natural disaster. Recovery After Disaster: The Family Financial Toolkit is available online 24-7 and is designed to be customized by each state. It has been utilized in over 15 states by disaster survivors. The team conducted multiple national trainings for Extension and disaster professionals and continues to develop new supplemental tools, train professionals, and evaluate the resources. Members of the team include the following ESP-Pi Chapter members: Shirley Anderson-Porisch, Extension Educator; Sara Croymans, Extension Educator; Rebecca Hagen Jokela- Extension Educator; Rosemary Heins, Extension Educator; Phyllis Onstad, Extension Educator; Cindy Petersen, Extension Educator

Diversity/Multicultural Recognition – Deb Zak, Regional Director, Northwest

The nominator said, "Deb has the ability to listen and build relationships within Native communities that has resulted in innovative, sustainable programming impacting Minnesota citizens. Her work on the White Earth reservation has laid the groundwork for Extension's American Indian Taskforce whose vision is to increase the number and effectiveness of the ways in which Extension works with Native American populations and their governments in Minnesota



Pi Chapter Awards 2012 continued —

Administrative Leadership Award – Kelly Kunkel, Extension Educator – Health and Nutrition

Prior to stepping into her role as an Extension Educator for Health and Nutrition and a Nutrition Education Program Supervisor, this year's recipient served as a Regional Director located in Mankato. In each of these organizational roles, Kelly strives to make an impact with internal and external stakeholders by paying attention to both the program and the important administrative responsibilities needed to support this programming.

ESP-Pi Chapter Friend of Extension Recognition - Duane Bakke, Fillmore County Commissioner

In the turbulent restructuring period of University of Minnesota Extension, Duane's voice of reason and strong support of Extension helped maintain a strong local presence in Fillmore County. Duane is quoted as saying, "We're not down and out as a state, but we need to use every tool at our disposal to balance the budget including redesign, reductions and revenues to return the state to solid fiscal ground." Duane Bakke has been a Fillmore County Commissioner since January of 1999, is a member of the Fillmore County Extension Committee, and Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) president in 2011.