

**THE STAR**  
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## Worth their weight in gold



Gene, Julie and Stephanie Sonnenberg of Garrett were presented with a “Heart of Gold” award at the DeKalb County Community Foundation’s annual meeting, held Wednesday at the Butler Public Library. Michelle Dapp, right, nominated the Sonnenbergs for the award.



Auburn resident Barb Morrow, right, was presented with a “Heart of Gold” award at the DeKalb County Community Foundation’s annual meeting Wednesday at the Butler Public Library. Nancy Mertz, left, nominated Morrow for the award.

### **BY JEFF JONES**

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BUTLER — Recipients of the DeKalb County Community Foundation’s “Heart of Gold” awards are simply thankful being able to help others.

Auburn resident Barb Morrow and Gene, Julie and Stephanie Sonnenberg of Garrett were recognized at the foundation’s 13<sup>th</sup> annual meeting Wednesday morning at the Butler Public Library.

Award recipients have the opportunity to direct foundation grants to the charities of their choice.

“Every one of you in this room has contributed to the betterment of this community, this county. It’s all of you who have nurtured me,” Morrow said. “I feel so blessed I was convinced to move here in 1979,” she continued. “It’s a wonderful place to live. It’s a wonderful place to give. I feel very humbled.”

Reading her letter of nomination, Nancy Mertz described Morrow as a “multi-faceted woman.” Mertz cited Morrow’s volunteerism and leadership in the Rieke Park and Crop Walk activities, as well as organizing celebrations of McIntosh School and Eckhart Public Library’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Morrow also is a leader in her church through several committees, mission trips and church choir. An accomplished writer, Morrow was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and is the author of several books. “Barb is a gem of a woman and deserving of the Heart of Gold award,” Mertz said.

The Sonnenbergs were recognized for their dedication to St. Martin’s Health Care Clinic in Garrett. Through their friendship with Tammy Stafford, RN, medical director at the clinic, the Sonnenbergs’ involvement with the clinic grew.

“Julie had been helping out cleaning,” explained Gene Sonnenberg. “At one of the banquets — I had done a little bit of maintenance work there — (Tammy) announced I was their new maintenance man.”

“Any time the clinic has a need, we know we can count on this family at a moment’s notice, and they will be there to pitch in with

smiles on their faces,” said clinic dental coordinator Michelle Dapp, who nominated the Sonnenbergs.

“The true testament of their commitment came with our recent two-week renovation,” Dapp said. “The Sonnenbergs were there every day, and there wasn’t a room at the clinic that wasn’t touched by this family. “They stripped wallpaper, tore up carpet, moved furniture and equipment, painted, cleaned and helped put the clinic back together” after carpet and tile had been installed, Dapp explained.

In addition to helping with the remodeling, the Sonnenbergs have been involved in fund-raising activities, serving on committees and taking out the trash at the clinic. “They are always the first to show up and the last to leave,” Dapp added.

Because recipients don’t learn of the awards until they are announced, Stafford promised the Sonnenbergs breakfast in order to get them to the meeting. “I just told them I was picking them up. I didn’t tell any of their friends or anybody, because I knew (Julie) would try to wiggle out of it,” Stafford explained. “They didn’t even know where they were going.”