

DIFFERENCE MAKERS

Listed Alphabetically

In late 2008, *BusinessWest* created a new recognition program. The name — Difference Makers — captures the essence of the initiative. Individuals chosen for the award are making a difference in the community known as Western Massachusetts. Those chosen in the first two years of the program, 2009 and 2010, reflect the spirit of the program and the work being done by individuals and groups to improve the quality of life enjoyed in this region.

HONORED IN 2010



THE IRENE A. & GEORGE A. DAVIS FOUNDATION

Now 40 years old, the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation has supported countless area nonprofit groups and area institutions with donations that have ultimately touched — and improved — hundreds of thousands of lives. But Mary Walachy, long-time executive director of the foundation, says it does so much more than simply make bequests. With issues ranging from early childhood education to adult literacy to workforce-training programs, the foundation has been initiating, convening, unifying, collaborating, fact-finding, advocating, and much more. And this is why it is truly making a difference in Western Mass. communities and well beyond.



ELLEN FREYMAN

ATTORNEY AND SHAREHOLDER WITH SHATZ, SCHWARTZ AND FENTIN, P.C.

When Ellen Freyman volunteered to mentor and tutor Somali refugees in Greater Springfield, it quickly became a family affair, with her husband, Richard, and sons Neal and Stephen joining her. And soon, the scope of her involvement increased dramatically, as she became involved in efforts ranging from improving adult-education services for the refugees and others, to creating a soccer club for the Somalis. This is just one example of how Freyman has given back, with donations of time, energy, and imagination to a number of nonprofits; work to create a group called On Board Inc., which brings diversity and cultural sensitivity to area boards; and countless other ways.



JAMES GOODWIN

PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE CENTER FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

James Goodman is a Difference Maker not simply because he leads the Center for Human Development, which has dozens of programs that serve the most challenged constituencies in our society — the poor, the homeless, the physically and mentally challenged, those with addictions, the previously incarcerated, and many others. He's achieved this honor, in large part, because of his tireless work to change society's attitudes about such individuals and the work done to help them. Indeed, he and his staff have managed to convince many that programs in the broad area of human services are not costs, but investments that must be made.



CAROL KATZ

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF LOOMIS COMMUNITIES

As CEO at Loomis Communities, Carol Katz has been credited by many with transforming the way care is provided to older adults through an approach called the "patient-centered model of care." This acclaim, which she spreads to the other members of her team at Loomis, is just one reason why Katz is a Difference Maker. She has also made it a point to give back to the community — through work with groups ranging from the Holyoke Chamber of Commerce to Westfield State College to her synagogue — and also to promote this philosophy within the many Loomis Communities. Residents of these facilities have done everything from staging blood drives to selling daffodils for the American Cancer Society. In short, Katz is changing lives on many levels.



UMASS AMHERST AND CHANCELLOR ROBERT HOLUB

It's called the "Springfield Initiative." That's the name given to an ongoing program to involve UMass Amherst in projects to benefit Springfield in areas ranging from economic development to the arts. And the Initiative is just one of the many ways the university is making a difference across Western Mass. Others include involvement with a planned high-performance computing center that is expected to change the face of downtown Holyoke; the Pioneer Valley Life Science Initiative; the Precision Manufacturing Regional Alliance Project; and work with the Springfield School System to attract talented students to UMass with the hope that they will stay in the region and contribute to its growth and prosperity.