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Published on Saturday, September 13, 2008.
Last modified on 9/13/2008 at 1:02 am

Disabilities center to honor 3 at dinner

By MSUB News Services

The Montana Center on Disabilities at Montana State University Billings will honor three people for leadership at a Sept. 30 dinner.

The honorees include Bob Liston of Missoula for lifetime achievement, Sam Herbert from Billings as leader of the year and Kira Foote of Wolf Point as emerging leader.

The Montana Center on Disabilities' annual dinner celebration and induction ceremonies for the Hall of Fame for Leaders with Disabilities will be in the MSU Billings Student Union Building ballroom on the main campus. The event begins at 5 p.m. with a reception followed by dinner and recognition. The free event is open to the public, but seating is limited, and RSVPs are taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

Keynote address for the evening will be provided by Lois McElravy, a Missoula woman who sustained a brain injury in an automobile accident in 1990. McElravy now has her own business, Lessons From Lois, teaching how to effectively use humor to adapt to change, manage stress and overcome the seriousness of life challenges.

The Hall of Fame for Leaders with Disabilities was founded in 2002 to recognize contributions made by individuals with disabilities who make Montana's communities better places to live.

The Lifetime Achievement award recognizes a person with a disability who has devoted efforts to leadership activities. Liston served on the Disability Rights Montana board for eight years, four as president. He is the Montana organizer for ADAPT, the grass-roots advocacy group known for its civil-disobedience actions on Capitol Hill, and has been repeatedly arrested for protesting against failed policies that keep people with disabilities in institutions.

The Leader of the Year award recognizes a person with a disability who has made significant leadership contributions during the preceding calendar year. Herbert, who graduated from MSU Billings in May, also received the Outstanding Service Award from the university's Communications and Theatre Department.

He was awarded the Buckley Scholarship at the American Council of the Blind's 2008 Annual Convention and has begun graduate studies this fall. He is also one of two MSU Billings students chosen to intern in Washington, D.C., through the federal Work Force Recruitment Program.

The Emerging Leader honor recognizes a person age 18-24 with a disability who has been involved in activities that reflect an interest in a life of leadership.

Footo started working with a mentor through Equity Outreach during her junior year of high school at Wolf Point. Equity Outreach is a project created by the Montana Center on Disabilities and now run by North Central Independent Living Services in Poplar. Footo continues to serve on the advisory council for that project, and, after graduating from high school, she began to mentor students with disabilities, moving full circle.

Also at the annual event, the Montana Center on Disabilities will honor two MSU Billings faculty members with the Faculty Award for Exceptional Support of Students with Disabilities. The winners are nominated by students. This year's honorees are Randall Pugh, a lecturer in the Department of Communication and Theatre, and Ann Halubka, a part-time instructor in the College of Education.

Six MSU Billings students with disabilities and registered with Disability Support Services who will receive scholarships from MCD will also be recognized at the dinner.

For information or to RSVP for the event, call Tina Hoagland at 657-2039 or Marilyn Hurless at 657-2092 by Sept. 20. The toll-free number is 888-866-3822