

editor's message



The Bloom Magazine Community Awards

When I launched *Bloom Magazine* in 2006, it had four missions: to support local businesses, to support local charities, to support the arts, and to support diversity. These are still the missions today, and I believe they are more important than ever. This is why we are launching the Bloom Magazine Community Awards—to recognize worthy individuals' contributions to these four missions.

Why do I think these missions are so important today'?

Local retail businesses: They are under siege like never before in my lifetime (73 years). They were hit by the great recession, battle huge national chains, and compete against Amazon and all of the internet. Local businesses keep money in the community that supports our charities and nonprofits. And local owners sustain Bloomington in many ways—by serving on boards and in local government, by volunteering at charitable organizations, and by tutoring and coaching our kids. Local retail businesses also add considerably to the character of our town.

Diversity: At a time when our president and his backers are trying to make America white again by vilifying people of color, denying Dreamers permanency in our country, cutting back on immigration, separating families, locking up children, and making life ever more difficult for refugees and asylum seekers, we in Bloomington need to be even more inclusive and more welcoming and helpful to immigrants.

Charities: Any community that does not lend a helping hand to those less fortunate is not a community in the true sense of the word. We are fortunate in Bloomington to have wonderful charitable organizations—Volunteers in Medicine, Shalom Community Center, PALS, Community Kitchen of Monroe County, CASA, the Bloomington Refugee Support Network, Middle Way House, the list goes on and on. With an opioid epidemic and an ever-widening gap between the haves and the have nots, these organizations need and deserve our support more than ever.

The arts: We are fortunate to have an arts community that probably exceeds that of any city of similar size in the country. In addition to all that Indiana University has to offer, we have four excellent theater companies and scores of first-rate musicians, as well as plenty of talented artists and writers. The arts are the soul of a community. The performing arts bring us together; the visual arts inspire us. We need to support the arts because the arts support us—especially in trying times.

At *Bloom* and *magbloom.com*, we do our best to fulfill our missions. We write stories about locally owned businesses, local charities, nonprofit organizations, and the arts. We have written numerous stories in support of our minority populations, including cover stories on our Muslim, gay, and African American communities. Since 2008, we have won more than 130 awards for our efforts from the Society of Professional Journalists.

We offer every charity one free ad per year in the magazine to promote their causes and we sponsor many more charitable events. And we annually hold at least two fundraisers for local charities.

We are a major sponsor of the arts, including Cardinal Stage, Buskirk-Chumley Theater, Bloomington Playwrights Project, WFHB, Lotus, Bloomington Pridefest, Krista Detor's annual holiday show, and Limestone Comedy Festival.

Now, we are pleased to present the Bloom Magazine Community Awards—one for each of our missions. The award itself, made of crystal, features four pillars representing each of the four missions.

These awards will be presented annually to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the local business community, the arts, local charities, and diversity. The first awards ceremony will take place at *Bloom's* holiday gala in December.

To nominate a worthy person, detail her/his contribution to one of the four missions and email editor@magbloom.com with "nominate" in the subject line. Please include your name and contact information.

Malcolm Abrams
editor@magbloom.com

