

## **Robert Babut - Awardee, CFF 2011 Good Neighbors = Strong Community Awards**

I am so pleased tonight to introduce Robert Babut, a volunteer with over 25 years of community involvement. Robert is one of those community volunteers on whom so much depends but whose work is largely invisible and behind the scenes. The essential work I am speaking of is that of a volunteer treasurer and accountant for many of our community's non-profits.

I am happy to be the one speaking of Bob's important contributions in our community because I too am a volunteer treasurer for a few organizations, so Bob - I know the thrill and relief of a completed Federal 990 form and the joy of a balanced monthly report, yet I also know that many of these vital tasks are completed alone and in front of a computer, so I know that many here who are thrilled to see you receive a much deserved public recognition of your work.

We see a lot of other people from the area's non profits but we rarely see their accountants or treasurers. This is ironic because poor accounting can shut down any organization! In the words of one of your nominators - "There is truly no financial issue, problem, or law that Bob can't repair or smooth out or just plain "handle". Any non profit that Bob is working with has no fear their records are going to be absolutely correct."

Bob has been an active neighbor to the city of Ferndale for many years with community involvement going back to the mid 80's. He was one of the founding members of FANS of Ferndale; has served on the Arts and Cultural Commission; he has done accounting work for the Midwest AIDS Prevention Project, the Good Neighbors Garden, Open Arms, the Pub Crawl, and the Blues Festival, to name a few. Robert has done much work as an advocate for the GLBT and AIDS community. He donates time to Hazel Park, has served as treasurer for many campaigns including the successful 2006 Human Rights campaign, and is a volunteer election official, serving on the Hazel Park Election Commission. He also handles IT for a number of other organizations and individuals.

For the past few years, Robert has been FernCare's accountant since its inception and he has done everything from shepherding FernCare through the process of acquiring their 501(c)(3) Federal status, to doing all of the paperwork for a Federal appropriation grant. Again, in the words of one of your nominators - "His considerable skills are donated. He charges nothing." They also added that Bob is an Elk in good standing.

Bob, you may live in Hazel Park, but Ferndale has a piece of your heart. Thank you for your fiduciary dedication to so many non-profits. The donation of your time, energy and skills is invaluable to so many in our community and I so happy to recognize you as one this year's Good Neighbor Awardees.