

# ***2006 GSSCC Business & Community Awards***

## **GSSCC Business Beautification Award**

*Presented to the Chamber member company or organization that, through new construction, renovation, landscaping, public art, etc., has contributed to the beautification of Silver Spring.*

### **GranDesign Studio, Inc.**

*Accepting -- Tad Grodzki and Ali Sorab, principals*

Fourteen years ago, two individuals launched an architectural firm in a 200-square-foot office space in what was then called the Thayer Building. The firm grew and flourished over the years, and found it necessary to expand its space. The owners decided to commit their own resources and talents to create the company's new space. They purchased and renovated the 19,000 square-foot, three-story office building in which they had begun.

In June of last year, the Chamber helped celebrate the grand opening of GranDesign Headquarters Building and Architectural Studio. The newly renovated structure has helped transform the old neighborhood and turned an old landmark into a vibrant new building that brings new life to the surrounding community.

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## **GSSCC Business Service Award**

*Presented to the Chamber member company or organization that has distinguished itself through exemplary philanthropic support, service to the Silver Spring community, investment in Silver Spring, or outstanding contribution to the area.*

### ***City Place Mall***

*Accepting – Aurelia Martin, Manager and Marketing Director*

For the past several years, City Place Mall has, has undertaken numerous initiatives to out in service and support for Silver Spring's diverse community. One special individual – Aurelia Martin, Manager and Marketing Director for the mall -- has been the force behind these positive efforts.

Martin has opened City Place Mall's doors to serve this community by hosting exhibits to showcase the art of second and third graders from East Silver Spring Elementary School; sponsoring a high school essay contest for Blair High School students, and providing the venue for students to do a community service project and raise money for their school's programs; hosting a special night for Montgomery College students and faculty and making a donation to the College.

She also worked with the Montgomery County Police Department to provide a safe and fun Halloween Night for Kids, sponsored a health expo for the community, has hosted regular programs for the Senior Classics Club, worked with Create Arts to sponsor a monthly Kids' Art Program, helped raise funds for IMPACT Silver Spring.

She recently provided Gap-Busters Learning Center students who had traveled to South Africa as part of their Black History program a venue for exhibiting their artwork and reading the poetry they had written about the experience.

## **GSSCC's Small Business of the Year**

*Awarded to the Chamber member company, having 50 or fewer employees, that has distinguished itself as an outstanding Silver Spring corporate citizen through a combination of quality entrepreneurship and exemplary service to the Silver Spring community.*

### ***Kefa Café***

Accepting -- *Abeba and Lene Tsegaye, proprietors*

In the south part of Silver Spring on Bonifant Street, just east of Georgia Avenue, is a little spot that has become a real gathering place for the Silver Spring community. The little coffee shop is unique in this day of chain coffeehouses and restaurants. When you stop in, you almost always see the same two smiling faces behind the counter, and you often see the same patrons.

Where else could you find children discovering toys on the floor in one corner, lively political discussions, tasteful music, smiling-baby pictures on the wall, local residents planning civic activities, business people discussing the next deal, friends meeting friends, and lively literary conversations. And last year, this little coffee shop launched Space 7:10 called the "hip-happingest" new alternative ArtSpace to hit the Silver Spring scene. It has brought art and cultural programming that pushes the boundaries of what has been seen here in recent years.

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## **GSSCC Arts Enterprise Award**

*Awarded to the Chamber member artist or arts organization that has contributed to Silver Spring's economic and community development by creating opportunities for the arts or humanities to positively impact the growth and commercial vitality of Silver Spring.*

### ***AFI Silver Theatre & Cultural Center***

Accepting – *Ray Barry, Deputy Director and Chief Administrative Officer*

The AFI Silver Theatre & Cultural Center brings Hollywood and the world to Silver Spring. Showcasing the best film has to offer, it has become **a mecca** for entertainment in the Washington metropolitan region. With its state-of-the-art facilities, the AFI Silver is considered *the best* theatre in the United States.

SilverDocs, the AFI-Discovery Channel Documentary Festival is widely recognized as the preeminent U.S. documentary film fest, attracting more than 15,000 film and television professionals from 90 countries to downtown Silver Spring.

In addition, the AFI Silver:

- Screens nearly 500 films each year, including first runs, for an audience of almost 200,000 people;
- Routinely brings guest filmmakers, educators, and industry professionals to Silver Spring. Recognized names include -- Jane Fonda, Richard Dreyfuss, Oscar-Award winning director and CRASH ensemble Paul Haggis and stars Brendan Fraser and Michael Peña;
- Attracts international filmmakers and diplomats to downtown Silver Spring with its annual European Union Showcase and Latin American Film Festival;
- Sponsors an Educational Screening Program that reaches more than 12,000 Montgomery County middle and high school students.

## **Silver Spring Public Safety Award**

*Goes to the safety professional (police, fire, or other) who has distinguished himself or herself in dedication to the safety and security of the Silver Spring community through either a commendable act or through ongoing service and dedication.*

### ***Silver Spring Regional Services Center Clean & Safe Staff -- “Red Shirts”***

#### ***Montgomery County Department of Public Works & Transportation’s “Yellow Shirts”***

*Accepting – Jerry Sanford, QC/Operations Manage, Silver Spring Urban District (Red Shirts) and Jeffrey Riese, Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (Yellow Shirts).*

Making sure Silver Spring is a safe place to do business, to work, to shop, to enjoy the growing arts and entertainment venues available, is an important job shared by dedicated public servants. Two organizations don’t often get the recognition they deserve for their role in the success of the community. This year’s GSSCC Silver Spring Public Safety Award is presented jointly to the Silver Spring “Red Shirts” and the Silver Spring “Yellow Shirts.”

“The Red Shirts,” part of the Silver Spring Regional Services Center Clean & Safe staff not only help patrol the parking garages, they also provide safety escorts to metro or individual cars, and generally serve as extra eyes and ears keeping watch over the community.

“The Yellow Shirts” -- actually a private contractor under the Department of Public Works & Transportation -- provide security in the parking lots within the Urban District. They patrol the garages and lots on foot and bicycle, watching for and reporting to the police anything amiss. They too are a presence in the Silver Spring community that makes a difference.

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## **Business/Education Partnership Award**

*Given jointly to the GSSCC member company and an educational institution in recognition of a partnership that has exhibited innovative techniques and has significantly contributed to education that instills students’ interest in a business or an industry.*

### ***Round House Theatre***

#### ***Chelsea School***

*Accepting – Rachel Grossman, Director of Education and Outreach, Round House Theatre and Anthony Messina, head of school, Chelsea School*

In early July of last year, two chamber members, both brand new on the job, made a connection that became the genesis for unique partnership. Rachel Grossman, Round House Theatre’s new Director of Education and Outreach, decided to call Tony Messina, the new head of Chelsea School, to introduce herself and describe some of the theatre’s educational programs. The conversation took an interesting twist when Tony asked, “Hey, do you have an air conditioned theater that we could use for graduation?” Not to be outdone, Rachel replied, “Do you have some classrooms we can use for our summer programs?”

That phone call was the genesis of a partnership that has deepened and strengthened. The two organizations’ shared vision for young people has become the common ground for sharing resources and creating a win-win for both the theatre and the school.

Under a new pilot project focusing on literacy, Chelsea students are attending productions in both theatre spaces and helping Round House's Education & Outreach Department shape a new theatre residency program for English classrooms.

This June, Round House Theatre in Bethesda will host Chelsea's senior class graduation. And, Chelsea will host Round House Theatre's middle school programming this summer.

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### **Business Volunteer of the Year**

*Awarded to the GSSCC member who, through his or her generous contribution of time, energy or resources, has made Silver Spring a better community or improved the lives of people in the Silver Spring community.*

#### ***Jim Polk, Technology Service Corporation***

Jim Polk, Vice President for Strategic Development, Technology Service Corporation is probably best-known for his involvement with Friends of the Silver Spring Library, for whom he is currently treasurer. An active supporter of construction of the new library in the central business district, he has also led efforts to clean, paint and repair the existing library and grounds.

He is an active supporter and leader in the Boy Scouts of America, National Capital Area Council, providing leadership and guidance to four Districts with 2,200 adult volunteers and serving 5,000 youth in 220 units.

Polk is also an accomplished fundraiser – having spearheaded a capital campaign that raised close to \$1 million for St. John the Evangelist Church.

And finally, he serves the business community through his involvement with the Chamber. One of three GSSCC representatives to– and the current chairman of the Silver Spring Transportation Management Advisory Committee, he makes sure the interests of the business community are heard in matters of transportation in Silver Spring.

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### **Excellent Place to Work**

*Presented to the GSSCC member company who, in the opinion of its employees, provides the benefits, opportunities, challenges, and environment that create an ideal place of work.*

#### ***Discovery Communications, Inc.***

*Accepting – Barbara Henry, Director of State & Local Public Policy and Government Relations*

The stated mission of the winner of GSSCC's 2006 Excellent Place to Work is:

“To design and implement programs and initiatives which acknowledge the professional, personal and family commitments of our diverse employees, supports them in fulfilling these commitments, and as a result, improves work and personal effectiveness.”

In other words, this company is “committed to building a great place to work AND to being the most family friendly company in its industry.”

That mission is being achieved. Results of a recent global employee survey showed that the majority of employees consider it to be a “great place to work.” In 2006, its industry association rated it Number 1 as “Best Place to Work for Women.” Last year Fortune Magazine named this company one of the Top 100 Best Places to Work.

In addition to the usual array of benefits, the company has a full service wellness center on-site, staffed with medical professionals offering a full range of services free of charge.

Through the company’s Global Employee Body Challenge, employees were motivated to lose **5 tons** of weight over the past two years.

The company also provides a flexible work schedule and offers an array of employee and family services including adoption assistance, emergency child and elder care, a family learning institute, and unique time-saving services like on-site dry cleaning pick-up, massage therapy and a car wash.