

From an Iowa Character Award selection committee member

We'll be announcing our Iowa Character Award recipients later this week. A volunteer selection committee of more than 50 Iowans meet each summer to determine the recipients. Today's guest blog is from Iowa Character Award selection committee member, Michael Kaduce of Urbandale.

Every year just as we are filled with negative stories from newspaper and television, my spirits are lifted as numerous individuals, groups and schools are honored for their dedication to good character and the impact they have made on those around them. I would highly encourage everyone to take a look at this year's recipients as they can all be commended on changing lives!

It is very rewarding to serve on the selection committee for the Iowa Character Awards, and the sense of pride that comes with reading applications filled of good. I know when we hear the word "committee" sometimes it can be nails on a chalk board, however not this one. Every summer I look forward to receiving my packet of applications in the mail so I can scourer over them in hopes of finding one or two that shine brighter than the already glowing stack. In scattering the heartfelt, sincere words and photos on my desk, I am always filled with admiration for the many acts of kindness that are shaping communities.

Over several weeks each committee members reads, re-reads, and scores each nominee based on their overall character and service. Then the tough part starts as the committee meets to hash out the award recipients. The selection committee is made up of former winners, community leaders, and volunteers – all if whom comment that the hardest part is trying to figure out how to compare so many great people.

In a world full of blame and negativity, there is not a more humbling experience then reading about so many passionate individuals who have dedicated their lives to improving those around them and the privilege to simply read about them reassures me that character still counts.