



## Foundation Announces 2016 Prize Finalists

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*Farash Foundation News Release*

October 6th, 2016

Four finalists have been selected for the 2016 Farash Prize for Social Entrepreneurship, sponsored by the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation. The prize carries a \$100,000 award to the winner's affiliated nonprofit organization.

The winner will be announced Tuesday, Nov. 1 in ceremonies at the Dryden Theatre, George Eastman Museum.

The Farash Prize rewards the efforts of an outstanding social entrepreneur in the community, in order to encourage others to emulate those efforts and to honor the entrepreneurial spirit of Max Farash, the Foundation's founder. In 2012 the prize was awarded to Thomas C. Ferraro, founder and executive director of Foodlink and in 2014 went to Sister Christine Wagner, SSJ, co-founder and executive director of St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center.

The 2016 finalists are:

- **William J. Daubney**, president & CEO, Hope Initiatives CDC Inc.
- **Sister Diana Dolce, SSJ**, founder and executive director, Hope Hall
- **Phyllis Korn**, past executive director, Alternatives for Battered Women, and founder of ABW's first shelter
- **Robert Pieters**, co-founder and past president, Heritage Christian Services

"Our community has a wealth of innovative social entrepreneurs, and each time we've solicited nominations we have been truly amazed at the depth of local efforts," said Isobel Goldman, Farash Foundation director of grants and programs. "In Rochester, creativity and entrepreneurship go hand-in-hand."

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Residents of Rochester for virtually all of their lives, Max and Marian Farash cared deeply about their community. In 1988, they established the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation ([www.farashfoundation.org](http://www.farashfoundation.org)), which makes grants to nonprofit organizations in Monroe and Ontario Counties, half of them for Jewish projects and programs.

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## **FINALISTS FOR THE FARASH PRIZE**

### **William J. Daubney**

Once a professional project manager for FedEx Corporation, William Daubney found his own life rich with opportunity. But through his weekly church outreach to the poorer neighborhoods of Rochester, he saw those “who were truly beaten down”—lacking jobs, transportation, adequate housing . . . and hope.

Hope Initiatives, a church ministry, had offered traditional services: a food bank, and mentoring for children with parents in prison. In 2003, Daubney became Program Director and five years later took over as President and CEO, using his business experience to create an organization focused on the underlying needs—for jobs and job training—of Rochester’s ex-offender population.

Today, Hope Initiatives works on a sustainable model to employ ex-offenders who build furniture—some 32,000 pieces each year—for the Monroe County Department of Social Services. Additionally, the organization undertakes 450-500 household moves each year for social services clients. In 2005, Hope Initiatives began to purchase rental properties to give employees and trainees safe and affordable housing.

The workforce includes 17 employees as well as 45-50 trainees in the Monroe County Work Experience Program (WEP).

“For an ex-felon, getting a job is a miserable mountain to climb,” Daubney says. “If you can give someone a skill, you’ve done something.”

### **Sister Diana Dolce, SSJ**

When Sister Diana Dolce realized that the typical classroom didn’t work for children with learning disabilities, she invented a curriculum and environment that would. And then she started her own school, Hope Hall, which now enrolls 170 students in grades 2-12. The school receives no federal or state funding, or reimbursement from school districts. But it works. “When you give the kids the right environment, they can learn,” she says.

Sr. Diana joined the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1966 and had known from a young age that she wanted to teach. As she began her career in education, she quickly discovered that “the fast learners needed just a little of me, but the slower learners needed a lot of me.” She found herself creating not one, but two, lesson plans, and her understanding of her students’ needs ultimately resulted in her writing the Mastery in Learning Program, which lays out for others how to help students to succeed.

In 1993, circumstances moved her to convene a group of twelve women to discuss opening a separate alternative school for at-risk children based on her instructional model. There was resounding enthusiasm, and Hope Hall—named by its first students—was born. Sr. Diana is Executive Director of the school.

“When the parents first come, they carry a lot of bruises,” she says. “The first thing I say is, ‘There is nothing wrong with your children. They just learn differently. And at Hope Hall, different is good!’ ”

## **Phyllis Korn**

Not so long ago, the resources for victims of domestic abuse were appallingly scarce. In a first step for Rochester, a part-time hotline began operating in 1977 out of a church basement. But the phone-answering volunteers were horrified by the stories they were hearing and by how little they could actually help. Phyllis Korn, as a counselor and social worker, was asked to provide them support.

She did much, much more. By 1979 she had become Executive Director of the fledgling Alternatives for Battered Women (ABW), which in that year opened a domestic violence shelter, only the third in the state. With even more profound effect, Korn began to change public attitudes about domestic violence—“we would talk to anybody who would listen,” she says—and, as a critical step, began to transform the practices and responses of local police agencies and courts. Under her leadership, ABW also started the Children’s Program to support children of survivors. In 1995, in collaboration with the Legal Aid Society, she oversaw the creation of the Court Advocacy Program at Family Court.

Korn’s impact on support for domestic violence survivors has resounded far beyond Rochester. A founding member of the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence and a highly visible champion of survivors’ rights, she was a leader in enacting state legislation to benefit survivors and to mandate the existence of shelters and hotlines in every county.

ABW continues today, with expanded capacity and programs, as Willow Domestic Violence Center.

## **Robert Pieters**

Robert Pieters and his wife had no choice but to imagine what the future would hold for their family. Their son, Robert, had disabilities and would soon “age out” of available residential facilities. A younger child with disabilities, Karen, would face the same dilemma. What would come next for them?

“Our children were given to us for a reason,” Pieters says. “If we couldn’t find any suitable place, we knew we had to start our own.” He and several friends in similar circumstances began brainstorming, and Pieters found his model at a home in California. The first Heritage Christian home opened in Webster in 1984. That was only the beginning.

Heritage Christian Services, of which Pieters served as President from 1986 to 2012, now encompasses a breathtaking range of services and programs with more than 100 sites in the Greater Rochester and Greater Buffalo areas: residential support, service coordination, day services, respite, community habilitation, employment supports, child care, home health care services, a riding stable, and the Pieters Family Life Center.

Pieters is known for persistently pushing, over and over, through the inevitable red tape and obstacles for certification and reimbursement for homes, not just buildings. Why would the state view a skylight as a “luxury item,” he had to argue, when it brought in the sun for those who couldn’t get outdoors? Why shouldn’t a day treatment site teach truly meaningful skills, like cooking? In most cases, Pieters would win the argument. “You have to break the mold,” he says.

