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Explore Fairbanks Holds Annual Golden Heart Gala

Fairbanks, Alaska (AK) - On Wednesday night, Explore Fairbanks held their Annual Golden Heart Gala, an event to honor Golden Heart Greeter Volunteers & Golden Heart Meeting Ambassadors of 2014. Dustin Adams, this year's Chair of the Explore Fairbanks Board of Directors welcomed the honorees and special guests which included: Fairbanks Mayor John Eberhart, Fairbanks North Star Borough Chief of Staff Jeff Jacobson, North Pole Deputy Mayor pro-tem Sharon Hunter, and members of the Explore Fairbanks Board of Directors.

A Golden Heart Greeter Volunteer is someone who volunteers his or her time, energy and knowledge of Fairbanks and Alaska to help make a visitor's experience more memorable. According to Director of Visitor Services & Membership Charity Gadapee, in 2014 Explore Fairbanks had 32 active Golden Heart Greeter Volunteers, who collectively donated 274 hours of volunteer service at various community events. The 2014 Golden Heart Greeter Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Hilda MacDonald, who has been a volunteer greeter since 2007.

Director of Meeting and Conventions for Explore Fairbanks, Helen Renfrew also recognized the Golden Heart Meeting Ambassadors, community members who invite their organization or association to meet or have an event in Fairbanks and then work hard to ensure the success of that meeting. Renfrew estimates that 214 meetings were brought to our community by Explore Fairbanks and their partners in 2014 with a combined estimated direct attendee spending of more than \$8.3 million. In 2014, the meetings that came to Fairbanks because of the efforts of Golden Heart Meeting Ambassadors contributed more than \$4.6 million in estimated direct attendee spending to our community.

The 2014 Golden Heart Meeting Ambassadors of the Year was awarded to The Alaska Miners Association Annual Meeting. Mark Huffington accepted the award for the organization that contributed to the occupancy of 265 room nights at Sophie Station Suites and an estimated economic impact of \$339,840 into our community. The 2014 Golden Heart Sports Ambassadors of the Year award was presented to the International Arctic Winter Games. Jeff Jacobson, Karen Lane and Cherie Solie accepted the award for the organization that contributed to the occupancy of 1,655 room nights and an estimated economic impact of \$3.5 million in our community.

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About Explore Fairbanks

Explore Fairbanks is a non-profit marketing organization whose mission is to be an economic driver in the Fairbanks region by marketing to potential visitors and optimizing the visitor experience. Explore Fairbanks markets Fairbanks as a year-round destination by promoting local events, attractions and activities to independent travelers, group tour operators, travel agents, meeting planners and the media. Find out more at explorefairbanks.com.