

Young professionals shine at awards gala



Barbara Maria Moro
Southern Scholarship Foundation
Charity: Oasis Center for Women & Girls

PHOTOS BY MIKE EWEN/DEMOCRAT

Barbara Maria Moro, second from right, of the Southern Scholarship Foundation can't hide her joy at winning the top Golden A.C.E. Award on Saturday. Some of the best and brightest of Tallahassee attended the first annual Golden A.C.E. Awards in the grand ballroom at Hotel Duval to recognize the top 20 young professionals under 40 in Tallahassee. The gala celebrated the work done by 150 applicants in 20 different categories.

The Tallahassee Network of Young Professionals (NYP) announced the winners of the first annual Golden A.C.E. awards at a ceremony Saturday at Hotel Duval. The ceremony was held to recognize the top 20 young professionals who exemplify authentic community engagement, or A.C.E.

"The 20 bright young professionals who were recognized today are truly engaged in our community,

and serve as examples of how to be leaders in their fields," said Rachel Gustafson, president of the Tallahassee NYP.

The Top A.C.E. was awarded to Barbara Maria Moro of the Southern Scholarship Foundation. Barbara selected Oasis Center for Women & Girls as her charity of choice to receive a \$1,000 donation from NYP that is given to the Top A.C.E. award winner.

GOLDEN A.C.E. WINNERS

1. Beauty: Katie Wright, Founder and Owner, Green Peridot Salon
2. Communications: Nikita Graham, Proposal Coordinator, Atkins
3. Higher Education: Rachel Sutz Pienta, Professor, Valdosta State University
4. Education: Christopher Small, Assistant Principal for Curriculum, Nims Middle School
5. Entrepreneurship: Casie Reinhold, Owner, Social Design Group
6. Sales: Melanie Lee, Vice President and General Manager, KIA Autosport
7. Public Servant: L. Bradford Johnson, Community Relations & External Affairs Aide to the Mayor, City of Tallahassee
8. Journalism: Elizabeth Mack, TLH Topics/Multimedia Reporter, Columnist and Host of Limelight Live, Tallahassee Democrat.
9. Hospitality: Pam Bauer, Director of Sales, Hotel Duval
10. Arts & Culture: Staci Mellman, Director, Tallahassee Film Festival
11. Finance: Adam Watson, Vice President, Watson & Associates, PA, CPA
12. Government Relations & Law: Jack "Jake" E. Kiker, III, Attorney & Shareholder, WilliamsGautier
13. Health Care: Dr. Heather Burch, Owner & Orthodontist, Heather K. Burch Orthodontics
14. Health & Fitness: Nick Mack, Owner & Trainer, Renegade Kettlebells and Training
15. Insurance: Miriam Watkins, Agent, AFLAC
16. IT & Computers: Brian Rode, Owner, Premiere Computers Solutions
17. Public Safety: Brandon Mark Cutcliffe, Detective, Financial Crimes Unit, Leon County Sheriff's Office
18. Real Estate: Christie Orros, Realtor, Coldwell Banker Hartung and Noblin
19. Science & Engineering - Eunice Cofie, President and Chief Cosmetic Chemist, Nuekie
20. Non-Profit: Barbara Maria Moro, Director of Student



Pam Bauer reacts after winning the Golden A.C.E. Award in the Hospitality category.



Christie Orros, left, and Elizabeth Mack come forward to join other Golden A.C.E. Award winners Saturday night at Hotel Duval.

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- See a photo gallery from the awards at www.tallahassee.com/ACEawards
- Watch video of the festivities at