

One Community at a Time

July 20, 2012

In the northwest corner of Michigan's Lower Peninsula there is a group of volunteers who are focusing on the character-building potential of youth and high school sports. They are teaching the principles and recognizing the people that make character education happen frequently and by design, rather than only rarely and by accident.

The group is known as [Beyond The Scoreboard](#). It draws on resources from Character Counts, Positive Coaching Alliance and others; and it delivers character education through inexpensive workshops for athletes, coaches, officials, sports leaders and spectators.

Beyond The Scoreboard also conducts a Champions of Character Awards Dinner, the 8th Annual held June 11, 2012 in Petoskey. I've attended most and was the speaker in 2011. This year's speaker was my counterpart with the Arizona Interscholastic Association, Commissioner Harold Slemmer.

At an event like this there are many moments that uplift the best of youth and school sports. Here are two from this year's banquet:

- When East Jordan High School runner Luke Hawley was thanking those who helped him be the kind of person who would be honored as the high school male athlete, he thanked many people, including the maintenance person who prepared the high school track. I had never before heard a high school student-athlete include a groundskeeper in his support group. And it told me a lot about this young man. He's likely to be a good employee, spouse and parent someday.
- When a member of the Petoskey High School football team was introducing his coach, Kerry VanOrman, who was being honored as the high school coach, he said the first thing Coach VanOrman would say to every player he greeted was a question about something other than sports; and he would be the same way to every player, no matter how skilled. He's coaching more than a sport; he's coaching kids. Helping them become better people.

After a single banquet, an attentive person could develop a game plan for character building for an entire season. Imagine all that's been shared to improve youth and school sports after eight years! Congratulations to founder Jack Taylor, Executive Director Ron Goodman and all board members and volunteers.

About the Author



Jack Roberts has been at the helm of the MHSAA as its Executive Director since 1986, implementing programs and overseeing tournament administration and regulations for the Association which boasts 1,600 member schools, 13,000 registered officials and 13,000 head coaches.

During the last 38 years, Roberts has spoken to educator and athletic groups, business leaders and civic groups in more than 40 states and five Canadian provinces as one of the nation's most articulate advocates for school sports.

Roberts has served on several national association boards and is board president for the [Refugee Development Center](#), and chairs the board of directors of the [Michigan Society of Association Executives](#).

He is a 1970 graduate of Dartmouth College, where he was a three-year starter for the Ivy League's winningest football team during that span.

His wife, Peggy, recently retired from her post as coordinator of the Power of We Consortium. They are passionate world travelers and have two grown sons: John, who has a Ph.D. in education policy from Harvard; and Luke, who - with his wife, Alison - are teaching in China