

Award: Henrietta De Boer Volunteer of the Year
Recipient: Simone Gewirth
Presenter: Jen Tayabji

Good evening! As Paulette mentioned, the Henrietta De Boer Volunteer of the Year Award is a special recognition awarded to a CCHCC volunteer who has been selected by staff on the basis of their continued outstanding work and commitment to the struggles and efforts of the organization. This evening I am proud to present the second Henrietta De Boer Volunteer of the Year Award to Simone Gewirth.

Simone is a senior graduating this May, from University Laboratory High School. She reached out to CCHCC a year ago to do a volunteer summer internship. She has helped us with everything from answering phones to data entry. But most notable is her research, work and dedication to the PDC/AREA Disposal boycott as part of the campaign to protect the Mahomet Aquifer from toxic contamination.

Simone jumped right in to help us develop the boycott. She researched the approved trash haulers in Champaign-Urbana, and surrounding towns. She contacted each hauler to see which landfill they took their waste to and looked into their ownership. Due to her research, we did a soft launch of the boycott last summer, and we are prepared to do a full-out Boycott later this Spring. Simone also helped us establish a Facebook page for the AREA Boycott and Protect the Aquifer Campaign.

In addition to that, she showed tremendous interest and dedication to grassroots non-profit organizations. We would have been honored to have Simone on the Board of Directors as she is wise and mature beyond her age, but since she was not yet 18, the Board asked her to serve as an intern to the Board.

I don't know where to begin. It has been an honor to work with Simone and I am glad to have her continue volunteering this summer before she leaves for college. She is a very thoughtful, caring independent go-getter who always lends a hand wherever she is needed and brings so much creativity to what she does. As a matter of fact, she has been the lovely lady taking your photographs tonight.

Wherever Simone goes, whatever path she chooses, she will be fighting for justice and changing the world she lives in.

On behalf of the Board and staff at CCHCC, I am honored to present the Henrietta DeBoer Volunteer of the Year Award to Simone Gewirth!