

# Finalists announced for prestigious MANDI awards

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Sharon McGowan

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The event took place at Mr. J's Lounge at 4610 W. Fond Du Lac Ave. (All photos by Adam Carr)



From left, Peng Her, Johnsons Park Revitalization; Ryan Shone, Michele Bria, John Miceli and Maria Acevedo, Journey House Community Garden; Barbara Thompson and Jessica Noth, Green Tree Community Garden.



Jamie Reeve, Northern Trust Bank, Diane De La Santos, City on a Hill; Gretchen Mead, Victory Gardens Initiative; and Darryl Johnson, Riverworks Development Corp.



From left: Karen Higgins and John Kaye, Milwaukee Christian Center (MCC); Devin Hudson, Silver Spring Neighborhood Center; Angie Mason (MCC), Tom Ellis (Silver Spring), Stephanie Sherman (MCC), Darryl Seay (City on a Hill), Paul Fehrenbach, BMO Harris Bank; Nicole Gorski and Diane De La Santos (City on a Hill).



From left: Teri Sullivan and Deb Jolitz, Arts@Large Fill in the Gaps Initiative in partnership with MPS; Brianna Sas-Perez, Layton Boulevard Home Improvement Matching Grants Program); Eugene Manzanet, PNC Bank; Cinthia Hernandez, (Layton Boulevard; LaShawndra Vernon, representing the Historic Wally Schmidt Tavern Redevelopment.



Stephanie Harling, representing Asian Public Markets Phongsavan; Herb Hayden and Warren Jones, Milwaukee TechForce Training Center; Ryan Sturm, State Farm; LaShawndra Vernon, Innovations and Wellness Commons; Willie Hines, Kei Madison and Ann Willson, Milwaukee TechForce Training Center;



LISC Milwaukee Executive Director Donsia Strong Hill delivered remarks to close the event.



Longtime LISC Milwaukee staff member Christopher Boston, who will be leaving the organization, is applauded by the audience.





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A 40-member volunteer committee of community leaders named 15 finalists for the Milwaukee Awards for Neighborhood Development Innovation (MANDIs). Finalists in five categories were announced at a festive event held at Mr. J's Lounge, 4610 W. Fond Du Lac Ave., attended by more than 100 people.

“The MANDIs celebrate Milwaukee’s diverse neighborhoods, and the many talented, committed people working together to create a better future for our communities,” said Donsia Strong Hill, executive director of LISC Milwaukee.

The MANDIs, sponsored by U.S. Bank in partnership with LISC Milwaukee, recognize individuals, organizations and projects that are improving conditions in central city neighborhoods.

The Wells Fargo People's Choice Award will be given to the finalist that receives the most votes from the public. Voting will take place from March 27 to April 5 at the [Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service](#) website.

Winners will be announced at a gala dinner on Thursday, April 6, at the Potawatomi Hotel and Casino. The event typically draws a diverse audience of more than 800 leaders from the private, philanthropic and nonprofit communities.

Below are the MANDI 2017 finalists in each category:

The Brewers Community Foundation Public Space Award recognizes a public space that helps build the community.

- Johnsons Park Revitalization in Lindsay Heights
- Journey House Community Garden in Clarke Square
- Green Tree Community Garden in Havenwoods

The BMO Harris Cornerstone Award recognizes an organization for their commitment and effectiveness over time.

- City on a Hill
- Milwaukee Christian Center
- Silver Spring Neighborhood Center

The Northern Trust Navigator Award recognizes an individual for leadership and collaboration.

- Diane De La Santos, City on a Hill
- Darryl Johnson, Riverworks Development Corp.
- Gretchen Mead, Victory Gardens Initiative

The PNC Bank Trail Blazer Award recognizes an innovative approach to a community problem.

- Arts@Large Fill in the Gaps Initiative in partnership with Milwaukee Public Schools
- Layton Boulevard Home Improvement Matching Grants Program
- Historic Wally Schmidt Tavern Redevelopment

The State Farm Building Blocks Award recognizes a real estate project that advances the community.

- Innovations and Wellness Commons
- Asian Public Markets Phongsavan
- Milwaukee TechForce Training Center

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