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America in Bloom Judges to Visit Woodhaven, MI

Judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Woodhaven on July 16 and 17. This is Woodhaven's first entry in the America in Bloom national awards program. The town is one of 42 towns across America working on local revitalization programs with the hopes of receiving a prestigious America in Bloom national award.

Woodhaven is competing against Marietta, OH; Warrenville, IL; and Holliston, MA in the 12,500 to 16,000 population category.

All participants are evaluated in the following areas: overall impression, heritage preservation, environmental efforts, urban forestry, landscapes, floral displays, and community involvement. The judges evaluate these criteria in the residential, commercial, and municipal sectors.

Judges are Diana Weiner and Kristin Pategas.



Diana Weiner



Kristin Pategas

Diana K. Weiner is the Horticulture Coordinator for Sullivan Renaissance, a beautification and community development program principally funded by the Gerry Foundation. The program provides communities in Sullivan County, NY with seed money for beautification projects.

For 16+ years she served as the Community Horticulture Educator and Master Gardener Coordinator for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Orange County NY. She then served as the Superintendent of Parks and Grounds for the Historic Hotel of America, Mohonk Mountain House. Her career brought her to Meadowbrook Farm, an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society where she created a volunteer program and managed their retail plant sales. She also spent 3 years restoring an 11 acre native plant sanctuary in Elkins Park, PA. Diana is a lecturer and consultant. In addition to her love of gardening she enjoys hiking, cooking, antiques and music.

Diana is a member of the Garden Writers Association, The International Plant Propagators Society, the Perennial Plant Association and the American Horticultural Society. She currently serves on the program committee of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Sullivan County.

She has served as a judge for Sullivan Renaissance, county fairs and has judged for America in Bloom for 11 years, nationally and internationally. She has recently joined the AIB board of directors.

Kristin Pategas of Winter Park, FL is a certified Landscape Designer and horticulturist. Kristin and her husband, Stephen, are co-owners of Hortus Oasis, a boutique landscape architecture company and co-authors of the book Southern Coastal Home Landscaping. Together they write regular gardening columns for Winter Park Home Magazine and The Park Press.

Kristin's career began in 1982 when she joined the Walt Disney World Company as a plant pathologist at The Land, EPCOT. During her 18 years with Disney she also managed the Walt Disney World Nursery, developed educational programming for the Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival, and was a Program Manager for The Disney Institute. In 2001 she joined her husband to form Hortus Oasis; where they design residential, commercial and specialty gardens, trial new plants, practice sustainable gardening and donate their time and talents to the community.

Kristin currently serves on the educational committee for the Florida Nurserymen, Growers and Landscape Association (FNGLA), is the 2014 Local Committee Chair for the Association of Professional Landscape Designers (APLD) and helps organize the Autumn Mead Botanical Garden Plant Sale. Kristin can often be found with her husband tending the gardens at their 1925 home or teaching about landscape design at Harry P. Leu Gardens, the Winter Park Public Library, garden clubs and other groups in Central Florida. Kristin enjoys giving people the tools they need to create and maintain beautiful garden sanctuaries.

Participants have opportunities to receive recognition in the following areas:

- Bloom rating
- Population category winner
- Outstanding achievement award – the “best of the best” over all participants in each of the six evaluated criteria
- Special mention – for what the judges deem to be an extraordinary project or program.
- Special awards
- Population category winners are invited to participate in international competition via the Communities in Bloom program in Canada.
- Community Champion
- YouTube Video Award

To date, more than 240 towns and cities from 41 states have participated in the program and more than 20 million people have been touched by it. Awards will be announced on September 26 at AIB's National Symposium and Awards, held this year in Holland, MI.

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America in Bloom is an independent non-profit 501c3 corporation. America in Bloom envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work, and play – benefiting from colorful plants and trees; enjoying clean environments; celebrating heritage; and planting pride through volunteerism.

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