



BLOOMIE AWARDS MAY 22, 2025

Welcome to the second annual BLOOMIES AWARDS! As you may remember, we designed the Bloomies to recognize and encourage individuals who helped make this year amazing for the Garden Club of Montclair. There are no silver trophies, but thanks to Karen DeLuca's artistic talents, we are introducing our mascot, Bloomie, who will appear on the award certificates. So, with great fondness and a little humor, here are this year's Bloomie winners...

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD – VALERIE SLAMKA

We know that joining the Garden Club of Montclair is a commitment and some members "try us out" for a while before joining. We want to recognize someone who has attended many of our events, famously played "Alice" at our Mad Hatter Party in Avis Campbell Gardens and still finds time to be a professional IT recruiter and rescuer of abandoned cats. It is the club's privilege to have finally recruited **Valerie Slamka** who is now a Novice member and so deserving of our Rookie of the Year Award.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRUSADER AWARD – JACOBA COES

A wise person said: "Finding peace in being outside is an essential part of life." To that end, this member has made it a mission to preserve Brookdale Park, provide detailed updates on the Greenway initiative, and clean up abandoned areas around town. As a Master Gardener, she educates others on sustainable practices in her own garden and introduced aromatherapy to our friends at Oasis in Paterson, NJ. As the upcoming chair of the Youth Committee, we can't wait to see the environmental initiatives continue into the next generation. We

enthusiastically recognize **Jacoba Coes** with the Environmental Crusader Award — someone who walks the walk and talks the talk!

TRAILBLAZER AWARD – BARBARA BALETTI

Our next Bloomie winner was a former Girl Scout! To win a certain patch and sash, a Girl Scout must practice “environmental stewardship by coming to understand how her behavior impacts the environment and what she can do to protect the natural world. She must plan and lead an environmental, high-adventure event.” By challenging our floral designers to give up floral foam and developing an **adventurous** flower design schedule, while giving judges a reason to study up on rarely seen design types, I’d say **Barbara Baletti** has deservedly earned her Trailblazer patch and sash!

CHEER CAPTAIN - ANA ZALLES MOORE

Think back to 1981. The song Mickey became a major hit and popular cheerleading music video on MTV. Take a listen...as we honor our next winner.

Oh Ana
You're so fine
You're so fine
You blow our minds
Hey Ana
Hey Ana

Stronger than the weeds
Hotter than the sun
Avis Campbell's crew won't stop
until the job is done!
Go Ana
Go Ana.

For accepting one of the most challenging jobs in the club and instilling new energy into Avis Campbell Gardens, we honor **Ana Zalles Moore** as the 2025 Cheer Captain. Keep up the good work!

THE COMBACK KID AWARD – KAREN KADUS

From a terrible car accident, months in therapy, and weeks of rehab while confined to home, this member's determination never faltered. She jumped right back into co-chairing Garden Therapy and took on being the club's Trip Planner as soon as she was mobile. For her plucky attitude and courage in trying circumstances we are thrilled to honor **Karen Kadus** with The Comeback Kid Award. As she isn't at our luncheon today, we'll accept it on her behalf. Please share your congratulations with her.

MVP/PINCH HITTER AWARD – TOVA NARRETT

To be named an MVP, you have to "consider a player's overall impact on the game, their ability to create opportunities for others, and their general playmaking ability." No one fulfilled this role more thoroughly than Tova Narrett. She led AAthe Nominating Committee to find new talent for our board, including a new President, which is no small task. She also continued as Vice Chair of Workshops, while on the Flower Design Committee she came up with monthly themes and organized the Holiday Tea designs. Best of all, she is unsurpassed in encouraging others in their talents, despite being an artist herself. With delight, we award **Tova Narrett**, the 2025 MVP/Pinch Hitter Award.

VISIONEER AWARD – BETTY MURPHY/CYNTHIA CORHAN-AITKEN

A "Visioneer" is defined as "one who makes a vision or a dream a reality." From a thoughtful, inspired, landscaping plan, to meetings with the BID and town officials, to funding the implementation through grants, donations, and volunteer time, the Triangle Gardens on Church Street have transformed the center of Montclair. We are thrilled to recognize the dynamic duo of **Cynthia Corhan-Aitken** and **Betty Murphy** for reimagining and modernizing our community center with the 2025 Visioneer Award.

SHORTY AWARD FOR SOCIAL MEDIA – TRACY REILLY AND AMY SOUTH

Similar to the Webby Awards (which honor excellence on the Internet), "The Shorty's" are awards for outstanding and innovative work in digital and social media content seeking to make the world a better place.

For years we have wanted to establish a Garden Club of Montclair presence on various social media platforms. It is now a reality thanks to **Amy South** and Provisional **Tracy Reilly** who have used their creativity and social media know-

how to engage GCM's followers! You may remember the Ice Bucket Challenge on Instagram which went viral raising money for a cure for ALS. We have our own challenge to issue: Download the Instagram app on your phones (or get your kids/grandkids to show you on theirs) and view the beautifully produced Instagram reels highlighting all the wonderful things going on in the club. For us old schoolers, Facebook content is updated and worth a look as well. Congratulations to Amy and Tracy for their innovative work and our 2025 Shorty Winners! Amy isn't present today, so please convey your congratulations when you see her.

SUSAN LUCCI AWARD – MARILYN ZARET

Every year from 1978-1999 Susan Lucci was nominated for an Emmy for her role as Erica Kane on the soap, All My Children, and finally won after 19 years!

This member has spent eight years sharing her artistic endeavors and showcasing her special brand of creativity to support the club. Calling herself the "Queen of the Honorable Mentions" Marilyn Zaret has finally won her 1st blue ribbon in our Photography Competition!

In Susan Lucci's speech she stated, "I'm going back to that studio on Monday and I'm going to play Erica Kane for all she's worth" and we hope Marilyn does the same. Better late than never, we award Marilyn Zaret the Susan Lucci Award.