



By Crishana L. Loritsch, CMCA, AMS, PCAM

Crishana is the general manager of Town Square Towers Condominium located in the SW Waterfront, Washington D.C. She has been an active member of the chapter since 2002, where she has volunteered on the *Quorum* Editorial, Membership, and Public Outreach committees and has served as Public Outreach Committee chair, Secretary on the Board of Directors, and Communication Council Chair. Additionally, Ms. Loritsch has received numerous awards including Rising Star, Committee Chair of the Year, Chapter Appreciation Award, and was most recently recognized as the 2017 WMCCAI Volunteer of the Year.



By Kara Permisohn

Kara has worked in business development for Minkoff Company, Inc. since 2004. She is a past president of the Chesapeake Region Chapter of CAI (CRCCAI), has served on both WMCCAI and CRC-CAI Boards of Directors, and is active on committees in both chapters.



business partners. Additionally, a WMCCAI staffer is part of the panel of judges. Each application is required to be judged by four judges and must include a staff member and at least one management professional. Judging the CAY's is hard work! This process takes many, many hours of time but it's also educational and fun as we to see how various communities operate. It is not unusual for those of us who are community managers to note something another community does well and think to ourselves; we need to implement that at our properties.

This year there were twenty-five applications submitted across the six categories. The application process is not easy, and while it has many components, it is not arduous with the proper planning and execution. Having been judges for the past decade or longer, we'd like to share some tips that will help those who are entering the contest to have the best application possible. After all, why enter if you don't plan on being the best?

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION of the Year Awards from the JUDGE'S POINT OF VIEW

It's the most wonderful time of the year, but it's not what you think. For many, it's the holiday season but for those of us in the Washington D.C. metropolitan chapter, it's awards season, the Community Association of the Year awards season to be exact. Winners are announced yearly at Jump Start January for each of the categories (Small, Medium, Large, Very Large, Communicator of the Year, and Charitable Community of the Year) but what's not known is the behind the scenes activity that goes into judging these communities. This article will provide a peek behind the curtain and give readers a judge's perspective on the process. We trust that by sharing our observations, we will encourage other communities to throw their hats into the ring in hopes of winning this coveted recognition. We will also offer some tips that will set a community's application above the rest. After all, why apply if you're not in it to win and be recognized for your excellence?

Who are the judges? While we are not the types you'd find on a celebrity judge panel for your favorite singing or dance competition

show, we bring enthusiasm and years of experience to the panel. To be honest, we have been known to break out in song or dance a jig over an excellent application. The judges for the CAY Award volunteers are made up of community association managers and



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It's been said that it's the little things that make all the difference and with the CAY application, this is true. Too many little mistakes can add up to big points being deducted from your overall score. It's like that exercise in high school that many of our teachers did at one time or another, where you're given a test with several questions and the object of the test is not to test your knowledge of a subject but rather, to see if you can follow instructions. Often, we see applications where it's clear the applicant did not read the instructions carefully, and it's a shame because in some cases, a deserving applicant lost valuable points or in the worst case, was disqualified altogether.

Did you know that a homeowner member is required to fill out the application, answer all questions, including writing the essay? Your community manager may proofread for typos and errors but should keep their input at a minimum. After all, we want to hear from the homeowners in the community! You, the homeowner, are the heart-beat of your communities and who better to tell your story as to why your community is the best at what it does. Believe it or not, it can be obvious that a management professional wrote the material or it was copied and pasted from a website. Essays must be 500 words or less. If there are more than 500 words, then points are deducted. Double spacing is also more vital than most people realize. It makes it easier to read, and judges will deduct points for formatting issues. Again, these things may seem minor, but in the grand scheme of things, they add up.

Creativity and thinking outside the box are typically what make a community shine above the rest.

For example, when asked about methods of making the community environmentally "green," most immediately think of their recycling efforts and will state they use the blue bins for metal, glass, and paper. While this is commendable, it's not especially noteworthy, as many jurisdictions in our area require recycling.

An award-winning community considers things such as landscape irrigation to recycle water, and dog waste pick up methods that reduce soil and groundwater pollution. They provide information on document shredding and how to recycle hazardous materials. Buildings make use of composite or recycled material for repairs, even in parking lots to fix potholes. Some communities offer conservation areas, bins for ink cartridges and batteries in their clubhouses, paperless accounts, switching to LED lighting, and more. We've even heard of communities using goats to provide weed control in common areas. Talk about out of the box thinking!

Most importantly, we want to encourage communities to apply! Over the years we've heard folks say, "My community won't win, or we don't do anything special," and you'd be surprised at the many things you do well once you sit down and put pen to paper. To borrow a phrase, "You gotta play to win!" 🐐

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