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2022 IWSH Awards Recognize Exceptional Volunteers

Charlotte, N.C. (Sept. 14, 2022) — The International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH) on Monday honored two volunteers for their participation and exceptional contributions to IWSH programs seeking to bring clean water and safe, reliable sanitation to those most in need. The winners were announced during the opening session of the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials' (IAPMO) 93rd annual Education and Business Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The 2022 IWSH Award recipients are Sherry Bradley, director of the Bureau of Environmental Services for the Alabama Department of Public Health and director of the Black Belt Unincorporated Wastewater Program (BBUWP), and Michael Lavoie, a.k.a. "The Drain Whisperer," a third-generation licensed plumber and plumbing inspector from Los Angeles with more than 20 years of experience in the field, including a volunteering background with IWSH that began with the Community Plumbing Challenge™ (CPC) Navajo Mountain in 2019.

Bradley and Lavoie were key participants in the IWSH CPC program launched in Lowndes County, Alabama, in March 2022. The CPC was a collaboration with the BBUWP and LIXIL to perform plumbing repairs and upgrades for a series of homes and develop a framework for ongoing plumbing industry support to the BBUWP. Bradley provided local leadership that helped IWSH understand the challenges the community faces and how best to target its services, and Lavoie obtained an Alabama Master plumber license to help oversee the project.

IWSH board member Tom Gugino presented the awards.

"I am so proud to see IWSH working to improve sanitation and demonstrating how important it is that these systems be installed thoughtfully by plumbing professionals," he said. "Sherry Bradley and Michael Lavoie were two 'rockstar' IWSH partners who were integral to the success of the Community Plumbing Challenge in Alabama earlier this year. Given their outstanding efforts and commitment to improving the lives of others, it is with great pleasure that I announce Sherry and Michael as the recipients of the 2022 IWSH Award."

Speaking during a follow-up IWSH panel presentation, Bradley said she was surprised and speechless to receive the award.

She estimated that 80% of the homes in the rural Lowndes County area used straight pipes for plumbing that resulted in sewage on the ground, and for 25 years wondered why something hasn't been done about a generational issue that has led to numerous health problems for the community.

"There's a lot of work to be done, but with IWSH a dream has come true," she said, adding, "Things have turned around big time. There's trust and there's cooperation."

Lavoie said it was an honor and a privilege to be part of the team.

"What better way to apply my skills to something like this to help people get clean water and sanitation, which should be two human rights?" he said. "We can try to get that school of thought going on for the world and make a little bit of change here and there, so I just wanted to add my hands and my time to it."



**The International Water, Sanitation
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“It is an honor for our IWSH team to have connected and worked with both Sherry and Michael over the last couple of years, and this IWSH Award recognition is thoroughly deserved in both cases,” IWSH Managing Director Seán Kearney said. “This is a two-way street; our very best collaborations are always built on shared learning and gaining experience together, as partners, always working toward the same aim: providing improved access to clean water and safe sanitation where people need it most. Thanks to the collaboration of exceptional and inspirational people like Sherry and Michael, IWSH can go on increasing its abilities and effectiveness as a unique public charity operating in the plumbing industry and WASH sector.”

Visit www.iwsh.org/ to learn more about the International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation.

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The International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH) is the philanthropic arm of the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO®). For more information, visit www.iwsh.org.