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2023 IWSH Awards Recognize Exceptional Volunteers

San Antonio, Texas (Sept. 27, 2023) — The International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH®) on Monday honored two partners for their commitment to IWSH programs that provide water and sanitation services to underserved communities. The winners were announced during the opening session of the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials' (IAPMO) 94th annual Education and Business Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

Gary Hile, chair of the IWSH Board of Trustees, presented the 2023 IWSH Awards to Cindy Howe, director of the Navajo Water Project for DIGDEEP, and Susan Snow, one of the founders and an early supporter of the IWSH Foundation.

Cindy Howe, leading DIGDEEP's Navajo Water Project, is a well-respected member of the water and sanitation sector who has helped IWSH advance service projects in Navajo Nation since 2018. In her role, she has raised awareness of the lack of water and sanitation access for indigenous communities, and has grown a native-led staff to implement solutions that serve households throughout the reservation.

"I get very emotional about things like this because it's really important for me to help my Navajo people or any indigenous people who are in need," Howe said. "I'm so thankful for the people I work with — IAPMO, IWSH and then George McGraw, who has been one of the people I look up to, because together we make a really good team."

Susan Snow helped set up what is now the IWSH Foundation. As one of the earliest supporters of the charity, Susan helped raise funds for IWSH programs and this year connected IWSH with Bacone College, Oklahoma's oldest operating institution of higher learning, which has served American Indian students for 140 years. When Susan learned that the students who live on campus did not have adequate access to laundry facilities, she recognized the opportunity for IWSH to upgrade the plumbing within a classroom and convert it to a usable laundry facility.

"From the earliest time I was involved with (husband) Bill (Erickson) and the IAPMO board, I heard stories about people who were involved in humanitarian concerns and brought a skill level — all they had learned in the trades — together with their passion for service. And I remember there was one moment when I thought I wish we could institutionalize this, make it a structure so that people could give what they already had and make it accessible to people who really need skill and service."

Hile, a former IAPMO president, has chaired the IWSH Board of Trustees since 2021.

"Cindy Howe is an exceptional community and nonprofit leader, shepherding projects and developing programs that provide invaluable services to Navajo people," he said. "And Susan Snow was integral to the formation of IWSH and has been an outstanding supporter of the charity, from raising funds to helping identify projects for the IWSH team. We are deeply grateful for Cindy and Susan's contributions over the years, and we were thrilled to present them with the 2023 IWSH Award."

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