

That's How It's "Dun" – Andi Sharp Recognized for Her Service to Dunlap

Benjamin Schauer is this quarter's recipient of DCDC's "That's How It's Dun" Award. This award is part of a community service recognition program created to honor those who go above and beyond in their volunteer service contributions to the Dunlap community.

Born in Oklahoma, Schauer moved to North English, Iowa, a small town southwest of Iowa City, when he was 14. Eight years ago, he moved to Dunlap when he was hired by Boyer Valley Schools. He has held many roles in the district, primarily holding the positions of band instructor, choir instructor, drama director and curriculum coordinator.

"I love being involved in the district, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to work for a system that allows me to move into leadership roles and use my additional education for the benefit of our students!" he explained.

Similar to how he operates within the school system, Schauer is very involved in the Dunlap community. He serves on the Dunlap City Council and on the DCDC Board as the City Liaison.

"I tease Ben about being the 'trifecta' in Dunlap service," shared Jill Schaben, DCDC Executive Director. "He is the only person that is serving the school, City Council and DCDC all simultaneously, and he does a great job in all respects!"

The crossover in Schauer's duties means that he is often responsible for events that impact multiple interests at once. In the summer, he organizes the 4th of July food booth as a fundraiser for the school's performing arts department. He oversees Dunlap's community band and assists with the setup of functions like Baccalaureate.

With the future of Dunlap in mind, in 2022 Schauer nominated Dunlap as a contender for the "Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning" program, and Dunlap was chosen. This grant funding allowed Dunlap free access to technical experts to create an enhancement plan for community spaces. Schauer served on the steering committee throughout the "visioning process," to help guide community improvements.

Schauer's talents and skillsets allow him to benefit a far greater reach than the Dunlap community alone. He is actively involved in his church, a leader on the Harlan Community Theatre Board, and is involved in the local Democratic Party of Harrison County.

“Even though some of these events are not specific to Dunlap,” Schauer explained, “they all involve local ‘Dunlapians’ in some capacity and ultimately serve to strengthen southwest Iowa which, in the long term, is still a win for Dunlap!”

Schauer always knew he wanted to teach in a rural district.

“From the moment I moved to town, this community has been welcoming and open to me and my crazy antics,” he said. “I love the support for my students and our programs – we’ve really grown together as the fine arts have stabilized and flourished these past eight years!”

“You’d have to be living under a rock to not notice how Mr. Schauer has impacted our school and community,” chimed in Schaben. “The school’s outstanding theater program is just one example. He takes the time to support and encourage so many individual students, and it is obvious how he has positively impacted the kids.”

Schauer’s passion extends beyond the school and is apparent in his dedication to the Dunlap community.

“What I love the most [about Dunlap] is the town’s willingness to look forward and make decisions that ensure we will not only survive but grow,” Schauer continued.

“Volunteering is a thankless job, but that will never deter me from giving back to the community that has given so much to me. It is easy to sit back and complain or comment on social media about the issues I see in town, but that doesn’t solve anything. In fact, it makes it worse and demoralizes the hard-working people that are striving to create a better tomorrow for our citizens.

Rather than complaining, I opt to put my money where my mouth is and do something about it, all while trying to drag other unsuspecting future volunteers along with me,” he admitted with a grin.

When prompted to share what he would say to someone to encourage them to volunteer, Schauer stated: “Just do it – the benefits are endless! The relationships I have formed through my volunteering are ones that will stay with me for the rest of my life. In fact, they are a large reason why I have stayed, and plan on staying, in this community.

Volunteerism is about community, and, if you give it an honest attempt, I guarantee you will find a deeper connection with your town and its people.”

Know someone who deserves recognition for their service to Dunlap? Visit dunlapia.com and click the Resources tab to access the "That's How It's Dun" nomination form. Four Dunlap area residents will be recognized annually. Contact Jill Schaben with questions at dunlapdcdc@gmail.com

