

Mexican Consulate honors local sister

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CHICAGO — Sr. Melanie Maczka, executive director of Casa Alba Melanie in Green Bay, was honored by the Mexican government for her work with Mexican immigrants. On Sept. 15 she was presented with the Ohtli Award by Mexican officials at the National Hispanic Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago.

Carlos Jimenez Macias, consular general of Mexico, presents the Ohtli Award to Sr. Melanie Maczka during a ceremony Sept. 15 at the National Hispanic Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago. (Submitted Photo | For The Compass)

A member of the Society of Sisters for the Church, Sr. Melanie was selected to receive the Ohtli Award by the Mexican Consulate for her 30-year ministry, along with Norbertine Fr. Ken DeGroot, to Hispanic residents in the greater Green Bay area. Sr. Melanie and Fr. DeGroot served first at St. Willebrord Parish in Green Bay and, since 2011, at Casa Alba Melanie.

In presenting the award to Sr. Melanie, Carlos Jimenez Macias, consular general of Mexico in Chicago, explained that nominations for the honor, both domestic and foreign, are submitted by the Consulate General of Mexico in Chicago to the Institute for Mexicans Abroad, part of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

“The word ‘Ohtli’ is in the Náhuatl language and means ‘way,’” he said. “The Ohtli is the highest recognition awarded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to people, regardless of their country of origin, who have distinguished themselves in work on behalf of the Mexican community residing abroad.”

The award, presented annually, consists of a medal, a silver rosette and a diploma.

In his letter to Sr. Melanie, Jimenez Macias said, “It is a great honor for me to inform you that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after a thorough examination of the candidates, selected you to receive this high distinction. ... This acknowledgment honors people who have dedicated most of their lives and career to blazing a trail abroad for younger generations of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans as they strive to achieve their dreams.”

Sr. Melanie said she was honored to receive the award.

“It is very humbling to be selected for such a prestigious recognition from so many admirable candidates,” she said. “The recognition is really a tribute to all the exceptional staff and volunteers at Casa Alba Melanie. They are truly making a difference in the lives of the Hispanic people in northeast Wisconsin as well as the broader community.”

Casa Alba Melanie is the Hispanic Resource Center of the greater Green Bay area. Its mission is to “nurture the well-being and wholesome development of all members of the Hispanic community living in the region.” Its services are provided through the work of our volunteers and are funded through donors. For more information visit CasaAlba.org.

Among the past recipients of the Ohtli Award are actress Eva Longoria, 2015; California educator Alma Flor Ada, 2014; and Manuel Rios, founding partner of Rios and Cruz Legal Services in Seattle, 2013.

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