

# 2016 John Winthrop Wright *Ethics in Action* Award



## Marna Borgstrom Awardee

The School for Ethical Education's (SEE) Ethics in Action Award honors a Connecticut leader who has authentically demonstrated ethical business or leadership practices. [John Winthrop Wright](#) founded SEE in 1995 and left a major donation from his estate to perpetuate SEE's mission. Mr. Wright desired to promote internationally respected values such as-- fairness, respect, responsibility, caring, justice, honesty, courtesy, citizenship, and the principles of the Golden Rule. The Ethics in Action award is given in his name to recognize a business or community leader that demonstrates a commitment to ethics and character.



Marna Borgstrom, CEO of Yale-New Haven Health System receives the 2016 John Winthrop Wright *Ethics in Action* award from David Wangaard (SEE) and Oz Griebel President and CEO of the Metro Hartford Alliance and 2015 awardee on May 4th during SEE's 10th Annual Character Celebration at Amarantes Sea Cliff in New Haven. Ms. Borgstrom is widely respected for her commitment to ethics in her personal and professional life.

Several colleagues of Mrs. Borgstrom made the following observations regarding her recognition with the *Ethics in Action* Award. Just recently (spring 2016) a dying patient who was a talented artist had one last request. She wanted a final art show to showcase her work. While the hospital is not set up as a gallery, the care team immediately went into action. They secured a conference room, the hospital's dietary team volunteered to provide finger sandwiches and cider in champagne flutes, our materials management team hung the patient's artwork throughout the room and the patient was brought from her room. The event was attended by a multitude of doctors, nurses and support staff. Marna was there as well and said that no art show is complete without the purchase of a piece of art. Marna did so and the painting now hangs in the area where the patient received her care. Staff reported that the patient was filled with joy and expressed a smile for the first time in days.

Marna also frequently makes rounds throughout the hospital. During the last holiday season, she met with a young patient from the Children's Hospital who wanted an Xbox for Christmas. Unfortunately, his family lacked the resources to buy him the gift. Quietly and without fanfare, Marna told the young patient's nurse that she would take care of it and on Christmas Day the young boy received his favored gift from Santa Claus.

When it comes to making tough decisions, Marna is all about collective leadership.

During the deliberations about the integration with the Hospital of Saint Raphael three years ago, she sought out every senior leaders' thoughts, concerns and perspective on this major decision. There were many challenges and multiple perspectives on the matter and she wanted to ensure all viewpoints were represented in the discussions. On the final day, she called the leadership team together and went around the table asking for their final thoughts. All but one, said they were in favor and said they were ready to move it forward. Rather than browbeat and make the one person who raised a final concern uncomfortable, she explored the reasons behind the hesitation and elicited open dialogue about the concern which was addressed collectively. Afterward, the person who raised the objection reported feeling respected and deeply appreciated the opportunity to talk through the concerns. The integration moved forward and to date has achieved more than \$200 million in savings while preserving more than 3,000 local jobs.

It is also important to note that during the economic downturn, we learned about many employees who struggled to make ends meet due to unique personal or health related issues that had impacted their families. After discussing the issue with many of the organization's leaders, Marna took it upon herself to personally fund an employee hardship fund that continues to exist today and has supported countless employees who face temporary financial concerns. The fund has paid rent, utility bills, car payments and the like, until the employee was able to get back on their feet. It is another example of Marna's ability to walk the talk.



To introduce the award, Peter Donovan, Chairman of SEE's Trustee Board and an Executive Director of Wright Investors' service spoke about the purpose of the John Winthrop Wright *Ethics in Action Award* and the connection to SEE's founder Mr. John Wright.

Mr. Oz Griebel, the *Ethics in Action* award recipient in 2015 then proceeded to introduce Mrs. Borgstrom and the leadership qualities he has recognized that merited her receipt of the award this year.

In accepting the award, Mrs. Borgstrom spoke directly to the students in the audience and encouraged them to recognize the value of the character they wrote about in their Laws of Life essays and how their character can guide them in their future. She also graciously acknowledged her own work as a part of the Yale-New Haven Health System team.



Marna Borgstrom began her career at Yale-New Haven Hospital more than 30 years ago. Her varied roles have taken her from a post-graduate fellowship, to various staff and management roles, to her 1994 promotion to the position of Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. In 2005, she



was appointed President and CEO of both Yale-New Haven Hospital and Yale New Haven Health System. The Yale-New Haven Health System, which has \$3.6 billion in revenues and employs 21,000 people in Connecticut, includes Bridgeport and Greenwich Hospitals as well.

She serves on several national boards, including Vizient, Inc. in Dallas, and the Coalition to Protect America's Healthcare in Washington, D.C. She also serves on the boards of the Healthcare Institute, and the Connecticut Hospital Association.

Ms. Borgstrom has been the recipient of several awards recognizing her advocacy and community involvement including the AHA Grassroots Champion Award, the Anti-Defamation League Torch of Liberty Award, The Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce Community Leadership Award and Business New Haven Business Person of the Year. She was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters by Quinnipiac University and a Doctor of Business Administration by the University of New Haven. She and her husband have raised two sons in Connecticut and in her free time she enjoys cooking, reading and time with her Swiss Mountain dog, Ripley.