

Tenacious - Elan R. Kaney, Daytona Beach

Nominated by Susan Caplan

When someone nominates you for an award and you see your contributions on paper, and hear people's comments it is much more than a temporary spotlight. For me, as recipient of this award last year, it was a force of rejuvenation and confirmation that I was doing all the right things, and that I was an inspiration to others.

When thinking of the Spirit Awards this year, and the incredible challenges facing our community's social service programs, I thought of Elan Kaney. Many young people are faced with caring for their families and a need to make a living they don't have time for service. Elan is committed to serving her community, and I know she will never let us down.

I first met Elan when she was the President of the Executive Women's Council, I could instantly see a confident, determined, enduring, persevering, reliable, and secure individual. I recruited her to serve on the Board of Directors of the United Way and since that time she has co-chaired and chaired the Leadership Giving Committee, she has become the Co-Chair of the United Way Women's Initiative, and recently has become the Assistant Campaign Chairman for this year's United Way of Volusia Flagler Counties Campaign. In addition, a two-year term on the Homeless Assistance Corporation Board of Directors expanded her knowledge of the struggles of homeless families.

Elan is passionate about women and children's issues and she represents a young, vibrant working mother who is determined to support her community. Elan has the admiration of many people because of her organizational skills, ability to run effective meetings, and obvious passion for her community. Most importantly, she has the very rare ability to connect with a donor in regards to what is important to them personally to achieve their financial commitment to social causes, and updates them constantly with the results of their support.

I would estimate that her time with the United Way and the Florida Festival must add up to 20 hours a week of fund raising and project management. On top of this she has a successful law career, marriage, and is raising an adorable son. Elan is the perfect example of the service driven youth our community needs. She is truly a tenacious role model for others to follow.