

Robert Kraft and New England Patriots foundation donate \$10,000 to Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford

Robert Kraft and New England Patriots foundation donate \$275,000 in names of 2020 Myra Kraft MVP award. Twenty-six New Englanders were honored by the Kraft family during a virtual ceremony on Oct. 30.

Every year since 1998, the Kraft family and the New England Patriots have been celebrating those who give their time to help others. The program was originally known as the Community Quarterback Awards and were presented to those who exemplify leadership, dedication and a commitment to improving their communities through volunteerism.

In 2011, the awards were renamed in honor of the late Myra Kraft who committed her life to volunteering. As part of the New England Patriots Foundation's ongoing Celebrate Volunteerism initiative, the Kraft family traditionally hosts a special ceremony at Gillette Stadium to celebrate the honorees.

On Friday, Oct. 30, the Kraft family and the New England Patriots hosted a virtual ceremony to celebrate 26 volunteers from all across New England. Twenty-five organizations received grants of \$10,000 in honor of their outstanding volunteers and one grand prize winner received a surprise \$25,000 donation.

Patriots Chairman and CEO Robert Kraft, New England Patriots Foundation President Joshua Kraft and Patriots and Pro Football Hall of Famer and Patriots Executive Director of Community Affairs Andre Tippett all participated in the

virtual ceremony.

“This year has been incredibly challenging for so many families, but it has also been difficult for nonprofits,” said Robert Kraft. “They have been called upon to support more families than ever before, but have been unable to host their traditional fundraising events. Volunteers are the lifeblood of these charitable organizations and they have stepped up in a big way during this unprecedented time. We were honored to be able to meet 26 of these local heroes – albeit virtually – and to be able to shine a spotlight on their volunteer efforts.”

Dr. Michael Rocha of Dartmouth, Mass. was recognized as a 2020 Myra Kraft Community MVP Award winner. In honor of his dedication to volunteering, the Kraft family and the New England Patriots Foundation will make a \$10,000 donation to the Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford.

Seven years ago, Dr. Rocha created a wellness initiative for the city of New Bedford and partnered it with the local Boys and Girls Club. The initiative provides free weekly health classes, designed to help combat the opioid crisis. The program offers more holistic approaches to pain, including aerobics, nutrition and yoga.

“Growing up, the city not only gifted me with an excellent public school education, it also taught me what it means to be part of a community,” said Dr. Rocha. “I learned how to play basketball at the Boys and Girls Club, how to play trombone in the Portuguese-American band, and most importantly, how to support my neighbors in good times and bad, making lifelong friends along the way.”

As a cardiologist, he also recruited several physicians to participate in a weekly Walk with a Doc program, helping to engage in conversations with local residents. He also remains active on the nonprofit’s board of directors.

“It is an honor to accept this award on behalf of all the committed people I work alongside in New Bedford, my hometown,” said Dr. Rocha. “This community has always shown me love and I simply want to love it back. More than anything, my service to New Bedford is about gratitude.”

The 2020 Myra Kraft Community MVP winners range from 14 to 97 years old and represent every New England state. The selected nonprofits provide support for many causes, including education, foster care, homelessness, mental health, mentoring, military support and youth development.

The Kraft family and the New England Patriots Foundation received more than 250 applications this year from nonprofit organizations looking to recognize their outstanding volunteers. Nominations open each spring and the awards are open to all nonprofit organizations in the New England region. For more information on the Myra Kraft Community MVP Awards, please visit www.patriots.com/community.

\$10,000 were rewarded to Michael Rocha of Dartmouth, Mass. for the Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford.