



**SAGINAW COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
SPIRIT OF SAGINAW AWARD
Nomination Form**

Award Nominee:

Name: Joe Stricker
Company: Nosotros los latinos Magazine
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____
Phone: () _____ Email: _____

Award Nominator:

Name: _____
Company: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____
Phone: () _____ Email: _____

Supporting Documents:

Please contact 1-2 individuals to supply supporting documentation to accompany your nomination form. Support documents can take the form of letters, emails, news articles, etc.

Return completed form by April 30th
By email: nancy@saginawchamber.org
By mail: 515 N. Washington Ave., 3rd Fl., Saginaw, MI 48607

Spirit of Saginaw Award

Nominee: Joe Stricker



1. Describe the events or activities the nominee was involved in during the past 18 months that led to this nomination.

- Joe Stricker has been the publisher of ***Nosotros Los Latinos***, Michigan's #1 Latino magazine, since 2015. The free publication has 400 subscribers. See the [January/February 2019 edition](#). The magazine has had positive impacts in Mid-Michigan. For example, Joe invites local college and high school students to write for the magazine to express their opinions and inspire their peers.
- The magazine hosted a **Hispanic Heritage Month Awards Gala** in November 2017 and in October 2018 at Horizons Conference Center. With the help of the Great Lakes Bay Hispanic Leadership Class of 2018, the gala honors Hispanics who are leaders and who contribute and make an impact in the Great Lakes Bay Region. Award categories are for faith, business, education, culture, leadership, first responders and veterans. Speakers such as activist Cindy Garcia bring awareness to current immigration activities and issues.
- Joe is the lead organizer of Cinco K, a **Cinco de Mayo 5k Saginaw Run/Walk**, for the past nine years. With the help of corporate sponsors, profits from the race are used to provide scholarships for students. The race showcases health and fitness in the Hispanic community while providing a cultural experience. All profits are given to the Rotary Club of Saginaw Sunrise and the GI Forum for their local college scholarships, as well as to veterans groups, juvenile diabetes research, and the Community Prescription Drug Program. Since the inception of this race and the earlier Dia de Muertos (Day of the Dead) race, a total of \$10,000 has been given to these local organizations.
- The **CAN Council's Superhero Night** at the Saginaw Spirit (December 2017 and December 2018) has benefitted from Joe's generosity. He supplied the event photo booth (Yeo & Yeo covered the cost of the photo paper). He donated his time to take pictures of the kids with their superheroes. Donations received were given to the CAN Council.
- Joe puts together the program book for the **American GI Forum Cesar Chavez Scholarship Luncheon**, which includes laying out the graphics, editing advertisements, writing text, and designing covers. He does all of this free of charge, saving the organization more than \$1,000. The American GI Forum is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of veterans that encourages youth to pursue college. Proceeds go toward scholarships for local Hispanic youth.
- The **Great Lakes Bay Hispanic Leadership Institute** is a year-long program focused on learning leadership skills, cultural learning and networking. Not only is Joe a graduate of the Institute, but he continues to support the organization. In 2018, he gave \$2,000 from the Cinco K race to the graduate program. He highlights the organization and its graduates in the *Nosotros Los Latinos* magazine, including story captions to draw the attention of youth and encourage them to enroll in this program. He takes class photos at no charge and

features the leadership classes on the magazine cover. He allows the classes to use his martial arts facility on Bay Road for team building activities.

- Joe supports the **CAN Council Ducky Derby & Family Fun Fest** in Bay City as deejay and emcee, and gives annual support. He also supported the **CAN Council's 2019 Dine & Unwind** fundraiser in Bay City as emcee, and provided music.
- Joe supports **#SPOTitSNAGit**, an effort to clean up trash in old town and downtown Saginaw (I-675 and Michigan) on two dates in March 2019. He offered free lunches at his Sombreros restaurant to all volunteers. Involvement in this initiative increased from 25 volunteers to 80 volunteers.
- The businesses that Joe owns have an **economic impact** on our community. In 2018, Joe opened Sombreros Mexican Restaurant on Pierce Road in Saginaw. The restaurant will relocate soon to accommodate its growth. Menu items are expanding to include dishes from Brazil, El Salvador, South America and Bolivia, to provide a cultural experience here in Saginaw that is not available elsewhere.

Joe's other business entities include Martial Arts Connection (locations in Saginaw and Rochester Hills), Looks Just Right (wedding and event decorating), and Sounds Just Right (deejay entertainment). All of his businesses together provide 28 jobs in the Saginaw area.

- Joe has a caring, compassionate heart. Very recently he asked a 22-year-old autistic man, who has been a student at a martial arts class for two years, to bus tables at his restaurant, allowing him to improve his self-esteem and life skills.

2. Leadership positions, awards, or recognition received by the nominee during the past 18 months that you deem relevant to their nomination.

- Graduate of **Great Lakes Bay Regional Leadership** program.
- Served as **president of the Rotary Club of Saginaw Sunrise** for two years, until June 2018.
- Leader of **cleanup effort at Krossroads Park** in Kochville Township each spring. He closes his martial arts studio for two hours and asks his students to help. This effort is in partnership with the Rotary Club of Saginaw Sunrise, which adopted the park.
- The **Rotary Club of Saginaw Sunrise** adopts needy families each holiday. In 2018, Joe personally arranged for one additional family to be adopted. Along with the items collected for the family, he offered them a free year of membership at his martial arts facility.
- Joe puts energy into all he does. During the holidays, Joe rings the bell for the **Salvation Army**, representing the Rotary Club. In December 2017, a video of Joe very enthusiastically dancing to music while ringing the bell at Sam's Club went viral, garnering millions of views. The video was showcased on the CBS Morning News.

About Joe Stricker

Master Joseph J. Stricker travels extensively for training in numerous forms of martial arts. In 2018, Joe received another certification in Boston, where his instructor flew in from Japan. Joe has achieved a ninth-degree black belt – one of only eight awarded in the United States and is licensed through Tokyo, Japan. He has been invited to train in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Joe says, “This experience is important because most people have heard of Detroit, but not many have heard about Saginaw.” Joe is a veteran of the U.S. Marines, where he was an instructor in martial arts and combat knives.



What motivates Joe to do so much for our community? He says a lot of the credit has to go to his mom, who was a migrant worker for 18 years. “Mom always took me to migrant camps, and we would barbecue for them. She shared stories of her experiences. When she was young, people told her that she did not need to be educated, yet today she has a master’s degree. I just want to make a difference. I want my grandkids to follow in my footsteps.”

Following are several letters of recommendation from community leaders who share Yeo & Yeo’s appreciate for Joe’s extraordinary volunteer efforts that improve the quality of life and cultural and economic climate of the Saginaw Valley.



April 22, 2019

Spirit of Saginaw Award Committee
Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce
515 N. Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor
Saginaw, MI 48607

Dear Awards Committee:

I am writing today to recommend Joe Stricker for the 2019 Spirit of Saginaw Award. I have had the opportunity to get to know Joe over the course of the past 5 years and I have been absolutely astonished at his ability to give back to the Saginaw County community where he lives and works.

First of all, Joe is a staple of the Saginaw community. He is a true entrepreneur working in several different small businesses across Saginaw County. He has been a longtime martial arts instructor at Martial Arts Connection, he has been a DJ with Rusch Entertainment, as a publisher with Nosotros Los Latinos Magazine, and now as a restaurateur with Sombreros Mexican Restaurant.

Second, Joe is always working to learn more about the community and to better himself both personally and professionally. Joe is a graduate of the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance Institute for Leaders and the Great Lakes Bay Hispanic Leadership Institute. Further, Joe travels to Japan with regularity to continue to advance his own personal martial arts training.

I think Joe is most deserving of the Spirit of Saginaw Award because of his incredible passion and dedication to giving back to the Saginaw Community. We all know Joe gained national acclaim as the dancing Bell Ringer for the Salvation Army. That's Joe! He brings the utmost passion and love when he is volunteering his time for the community. He started the innovative Cinco K Run/Walk with proceeds going to scholarships and to support juvenile diabetes research. Joe is a proud Rotarian and he has served as the President of the Saginaw Sunrise Rotary Club. This is just a small sample of Joe's community service activities.

Finally, I believe that Joe has a positive impact on people across Saginaw and the Great Lakes Bay Region. Joe literally changes lives every single day. He provides jobs for people in Saginaw. He teaches children and adults self-defense, discipline, and self-confidence. He helps raise money for scholarships and community efforts. Joe is truly a selfless man who loves our Saginaw community.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to discuss Joe's background and qualifications further by phone at 804-347-6840 or I can answer any questions via email at mfelan@greatlakesbay.org.

Best Regards,

Matthew Felan
President & CEO, Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance

Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance - 117 South Main Street, Freeland, MI 48623
www.greatlakesbay.com



To whom it may concern,

I have known Joseph Stricker for approximately 10 years. I met Joseph when he joined the Rotary Club of Saginaw Sunrise as a member. Joseph quickly became a valuable and much liked member of our club by donating his time and fundraising skills.

Joseph has served as President for two years. He has been the coordinator of our yearly Salvation Army bell ringing committee for the past five years. He has also established a separate charity race and made the Rotary club a recipient of some of the proceeds to help fund our Scholarship program.

Joseph seems to have limitless energy and a driving desire to help others. I highly recommend Joseph for the Saginaw County Chamber Spirit of Saginaw award.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Lechner
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth Lechner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "L".



April 22, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of recommendation for the Spirit of Saginaw Award on behalf of Joe Stricker. I have known Joe for over 10 years, as he provided outstanding martial arts instruction to my two children.

Joe exemplifies the spirit of Saginaw in so many ways, every single day. From ringing the Salvation Army bell at Christmastime, while providing entertainment through his expressive dancing, to opening a wonderful restaurant boasting authentic Mexican cuisine in the Saginaw Valley, Joe is always striving to help make Saginaw a better place to live, work, and play.

Joe has been a mentor to many over the years and is an active member of his community. It is difficult to account for all of the contributions he has made. For example, he organized a Cinco de Mayo 5K Race for several years, with proceeds benefiting different non-profits/causes. The mission was in promoting health and wellness around a fun, family friendly event, fostering the spirit of a healthy, caring, and a united community. Joe is involved with his community, both as a businessman and as a volunteer. He owns/operates Martial Arts Connection in Saginaw and currently serves as the Immediate Past President of the Sunrise Rotary. These are just a few examples of how Joe Stricker embodies the Spirit of Saginaw.

It is without reservation that I recommend Joe Stricker for the Spirit of Saginaw Award. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jenny Geno, Ed.S.
Director of Career and Technical Education
Saginaw Intermediate School District



AMERICAN GI FORUM OF SAGINAW
NATIONAL VETERANS FAMILY ORGANIZATION
604 Oak Street, Saginaw, Michigan 48602 • agifsaginaw@att.net
Phone: (989) 754-2131 • Fax: (989) 754-3960

It is my honor to write a letter on behalf of Mr. Joseph Stricker,

Mr. Stricker has been a lifelong friend and brother. I served on his Board for his Cinco K Run /Walk in the past, his runs were a wakeup call for our community he had a vision of getting as many as he could out and moving, run or walk if you have to.

With the rise of illness like diabetes and obesity, Joe made his available all, they were family friendly events. His runs got to be so popular that he started a Día de Los Muertos Run/Walk in the fall, for this event, you were invited to participate in makeup and costume if desired. Joe made them very family friendly, his runs generated money for various nonprofit organizations like the American G.I. Forum, CRxP and Veteran groups.

As the Commander of the American G.I. Forum, Saginaw Michigan Chapter, we had to go out and raise funds for our Cesar Chavez Scholarship Luncheons. Money raised from our luncheons went our Local Hispanic youth, to help offset the cost of their college expenses. Part of the monies raised by Joe's runs helped fund part of our scholarships, not too many were behind us and Joe took it upon himself to give back to our youth and we are forever grateful.

If there is anything else you would like to discuss, please feel free to call or email me,

(989)980-7886 Bigadamg@hotmail.com

Respectfully submitted;

Adam Banda Gonzalez

Commander

American G.I. Forum

Saginaw Michigan Chapter