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### **Individual Submitting Nomination Information**

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### **Nomination Information**

Laura Sanchez  
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### **Media Contact**

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## Nomination Questions

### 1. Explain your volunteer's significant depth of involvement. (20 points)

Laura Sanchez, has been a member of DFVII's Event Management Team ("EMT") for eight years, and has won the organization's Volunteer of the Year award for two of those years. Her winning this award in our organization is itself an incredible achievement as over sixty-five members belong to this team.

The EMT is made up of a core group of year-round volunteers who attend monthly planning meetings held for the large events Downtown Fort Worth Initiatives, Inc. produces for Downtown Fort Worth, which include the MAIN ST. Fort Worth Arts Festival and the XTO Energy Parade of Lights. Each member is responsible for managing specific areas for these award-winning, major events.

### 2. Show specific examples of your volunteer's roles and responsibilities. (10 points)

Laura is our Logistics Manager for both of our events and is an architect by trade, working full time with CMA Architects. She is the, "go-to," person for both of our projects as her training allows her to seamlessly and seemingly effortlessly design our sites and produce our CAD drawings. We say around here, "A great event starts with a great site plan," and Laura creates each in the kind of detail necessary to produce an event for 400,000 people on narrow, city streets, and her designs bring our events to life. These designs are then transferred to our operations and ordering lists, so we are able to, "build a city in two days, and tear it down in 12 hours." She enjoys being able to construct our events from the ground up, and works carefully and collaboratively with all team members to make sure each area has everything they need.

We have another saying: "There are no do-overs!" We have one opportunity to get it right each year, and we need to hit it with all cylinders. She is, without a doubt, one of the best at delivering a clear path for all to see to the finish line, including clear directions to all contractors and vendors participating in the logistics area. She then enjoys directing the, "deconstruction," of the "city," since most architects are unable to be a part of the entire process. They see it built, but rarely are they able to see it come down. Her site plans are coveted by the City of Fort Worth Special Events department as they allow them envision our events in magnificent detail – no surprises.

### 3. Describe how your volunteer has provided significant enthusiasm, organizational assistance and specific expertise. (10 points)

Laura and her team show dedication by working from daybreak to well after midnight each day of the festival, getting a head start on the others by hitting the ground running as soon as we're able to close the streets, and not leaving until the last tent pin has been removed from the site. She is a powerful team leader who is not afraid to engage others in the process, and then allow them to glow in the success of their efforts, refusing to take credit herself. Her team's success is her success.

She clearly outlines responsibilities in advance in order to prepare her team for their long days ahead, and isn't afraid to delegate. Her organization skills and pre-planning ensures a smooth load-in and teardown in hectic times, and in all kinds of weather. Even though Laura stays busy she is always willing to lend a helping hand, is incredibly nice to everyone even when completely stressed and keeps a "punchlist" of items needing attention – and then she follows up. She's not afraid to help in areas of need, either. For example, if a beverage booth is low on volunteers she is the first to jump in and help out.

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4. Explain how your volunteer has shown initiative and leadership in his or her efforts. (20 points)

Our organization is privileged to have such a dedicated volunteer with seemingly endless enthusiasm, energy and passion for Fort Worth. New ideas do not faze her in the least – and she’s often the first to bring them to the table. Her leadership in making our events the Grand Pinnacle award winners they are can be directly attributed to Laura’s efforts throughout the year. She spends over 400+ hours volunteering for us, and we rely on her for her insight on how to improve and grow.

She’ll take even the most serious curveball and hit a home run, and she never fails to rise to the challenge. She works hard behind the scenes and does not expect recognition or thanks for any of her contributions, even though she deserves it.

5. Tell how your volunteer has exemplified his or her dependability. (10 points)

Dependability is Laura’s middle nickname. She always (always) answers her phone, especially when you need her. While she eschews the radio (we have an incredible command center who sends messages over the radio for her in an instant), she doesn’t eschew hard work and knows that the buck stops with her.

She’s there when you need her, often in less time than a contractor or a team member, and can figure out solutions to dilemmas and problems in an instant. She has complete authority to make decisions about logistics concerns, and is the lynchpin to our operational success.

6. Describe your volunteer’s positive attitude. (10 points)

Laura’s favorite saying is, “I can do that!” And, she does..., “*That!*” She figures out a way to make things happen, and looks at challenges with an eye towards solutions. Problems are internalized with the single goal of finding the best way to overcome them...while keeping an eye towards the future: “How will this affect us next year? Or the next?” Sometimes, a solution means adopting a program or a process that might be a bit more complicated, but solves the problem for future years. What’s good for today’s situation may change over time, and it’s her role to make sure our solutions aren’t simply one and done – she looks ahead.

Laura is positive about everything she does, whether she’s at work, at home or at her volunteer “career.”

7. Describe how your volunteer has made a difference to the festival or event. What impact has your volunteer had on your festival/event? What void would there be without him or her as a volunteer? (20 points)

Over time, both MAIN ST. and the Parade of Lights have become more complicated and intense, especially given our location in the heart of our Downtown Business District. As the primary Downtown champion, it is incumbent upon us to manage our, “macro” events with an eye towards maintaining the daily business operations of all of our stakeholders. Downtown doesn’t just grind to a standstill while either of the events are happening – they continue to percolate and conduct business. Over 4,000 residents live within blocks of our operations...which wasn’t the case just ten years ago. Our environment is changing – for the better, and our events have had a serious hand in the success of our Downtown.

Laura has made layering these events onto the matrix of a vibrant, exciting Downtown district possible. She has developed a system of design that meets the challenges of an urban setting, and allows these large events to function and avoid the complaints and concerns that can affect other events on city streets without such careful attention to detail. We are able to publish her drawings in a format that gives complete assurance to those who are also trying to plan their days during the events, and helps us all manage expectations. Best of all, when you see the completed project...it works.

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Laura's architectural skills and leadership acumen, together, provide us with a one-two punch. Imagine attempting to build a new building without an architect's drawings showing where everything is to be placed, down to the hot water pipes: *Impossible*. Imagine trying to navigate one of the Metroplex' notorious "Mixmasters," constructed without an engineer's stamp of approval: *Suicidal*. Imagine trying to build a miniature city *within* a thriving Downtown, not knowing where conflicts lay with buildings, streets and alleys. *Possible once, perhaps...but never again*. Laura avoids the pitfalls that come with bad planning *by being an excellent planner*.

Without her, we would be in freefall.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the Festivals and Events Advisory Committee and the Event Management Team, we are pleased to nominate Laura Sanchez for the, "IFEA/ Zambelli Fireworks Volunteer of the Year" Award.

Jay Downie, CFEE



Brandi Huckabee, Production Manager

### **Entry format**

E-mail nomination in a Word document along with photo and media list to Nia Hovde, Director of Marketing & Communications at [nia@ifea.com](mailto:nia@ifea.com).

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