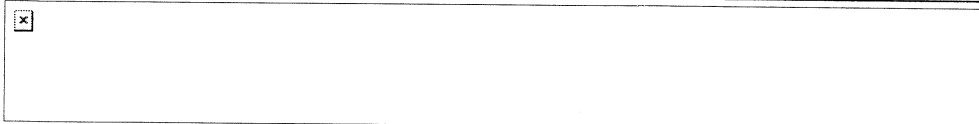


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> [News](#) > [Local News](#)

### YMCA honors years of work from volunteer

By ZACH SUBAR/The Leader-Herald

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JOHNSTOWN - The Fulton County YMCA honored a Gloversville resident Friday night who Chief Executive Officer Steven Serge said is the "standard by which all community volunteers are measured."

Robert Thaisz, a certified public accountant by trade, received the organization's 2009 Leader of Leaders award at its Mardi Gras-themed fundraising dinner.

Thaisz first got involved with the Gloversville YMCA about 30 years ago, when he was recruited to join the Board of Directors. Shortly after he joined the board, he became its treasurer.

He consistently served on various committees, and YMCA Senior Vice President of Operations Ginny Turner called him "instrumental" in helping orchestrate the merger between the Johnstown and Gloversville YMCAs in the mid-1990s. Thaisz chaired the steering committee that dealt with the merger.

He was involved in raising money for the facility's capital campaign, which culminated in its new building opening last August.

"He's very much a true leader, but never wants the recognition or never did it for the prestige. He's always believed in the YMCA mission," Turner said. "[He's] just one of those people who is a wonderful volunteer."

The award's significance was not lost on Thaisz.

"I'm very pleased to be honored. The Y means a lot to me," he said. "I think it's a very important part of our community and the services we provide are vital in strengthening the community structure."

The event helped raise money for the organization's annual Strong Kids campaign, which collects funds for the financial assistance program. A spring telethon and a golf tournament later in the year also help raise money.

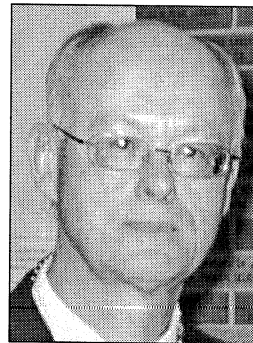
Every YMCA throughout the country, Turner said, has a similar program.

"Just with the economic times being what they are, we're getting a lot of requests, so we want to be able to raise as much as we can so we don't have to turn anybody away," she said.

It was the first major fundraising event in the new building since it has been open, and Serge said the facility now can boast more than 6,000 members. About 180 people attended the dinner.

"It's great to see the fruits of many people's years of effort and work," Thaisz said as he glanced around the room.

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Thaisz

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