

The person who I am nominating for the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award is Sandy Fanara. Sandy has been a successful beekeeper on both the east side of the state and the west side of the state. Being an active participant with any club near her, she has excelled at instructing people of all ages and abilities in the science and art of beekeeping. She has proven to be adept at offering children's programs with appropriate crafts and activities as well as instructing adults with a combination of classroom and hands on instruction using her skills as a trained instructor to their full advantage. She knows when to change her approach based on her audience and tailors the information to be the most accessible to her students while still achieving the goal of the education program.

Perhaps nowhere could her skills be used better than in her willingness to work with the Sustainability in Prisons Program.

As our SPP liaison, Emily Passarelli expresses so well, "Sandy has been such a pillar of support to the incarcerated beekeeping community serving as a mentor beekeeper at The Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW), where she visits at least monthly to support the incarcerated beekeepers. She supports hive care, offers classes, and provides guidance and support to ensure program longevity and success. Volunteering at a prison is not easy. Becoming a badged prison volunteer requires jumping through several confusing hoops, keeping up with required training, and A LOT of patience and flexibility. Sandy has experienced some of the most frustrating parts of working in prisons and yet she continues to remain positive and dedicated to supporting the incarcerated beekeepers. Her resiliency and dedication to the incarcerated beekeeping community are truly unparalleled.

For example, in addition to the regular volunteering she does at WCCW, Sandy also has offered beekeeping classes to several other facilities—including a facility that is 200 miles (one-way!) away from her. She also certified journeyman beekeepers so that prisons can become self-sustaining. Students have always expressed a deep appreciation for sharing her skills, time, and experiences with them.

It truly can't be overstated how amazing Sandy is. We're so lucky to get to work with someone as experienced, flexible, kind, and generous as Sandy. Our deepest gratitude and appreciation to Sandy for all she's done for the beekeepers within the Washington State prisons!"

Lara Kempton, the staff person with whom Sandy works at the WCCW, seconded Emily's comments and elaborated on them. "The criteria for recognizing an individual for WASBA's Lifetime Achievement Award includes the dedication of time to the advancement of the organization, significant promotion and demonstration of good beekeeping, current membership with WASBA for 5+ years, and service benefitting Beekeepers in every region of the state of Washington. Sandy Fanara has been an instrumental and essential resource for the SPP Beekeepers at Washington Correctional Center for Women in Gig Harbor for a number of years and has dedicated a tremendous amount of time to our facility in 2025 alone. Sandy is a truly master class individual who shares her wealth of knowledge and expertise in a professional and courteous fashion, while maintaining a diligent eye on our beekeepers in their handling of the bees, hives, treatment chemicals, and stewardship. Ms. Fanara answers every question with her full intent set on the safety of the beekeepers as well as the health and wellness of the colony.

Ms. Fanara's expertise and knowledge has informed the understanding of our beekeepers and staff guests, and her ability to explain the mechanics of a working colony while we are within the hives allows us to better understand these creatures, their habits (albeit sometimes very unorthodox and wonky), and their behavior patterns that may indicate a change on the horizon. As Sandy has shared her knowledge through hands-on compassionate care for the bees and the beekeepers themselves, we have grown to appreciate her presence and her approach to maintaining the health of this valuable natural resource to the planet. Sandy is gracious, patient, firm, and good-humored about sharing her experiences and guidance to those who wish to pursue beekeeping, and her leadership skills and genuine love for the bees is evident in her every interaction with our beekeepers.

We here at WCCW's SPP Beekeeper program fully support and endorse the nomination of Sandy Fanara as the 2025 recipient of the WASBA Lifetime Achievement Award. Sandy has consistently demonstrated her mastery of beekeeping through education, dedication, and compassionate stewardship for these creatures. Ms. Fanara is available to answer any and every question we have, even while she is away from our facility, and she welcomes communication in a way that demonstrates true dedication to the sustainability of beekeeping in this state and beyond. We appreciate learning all we can from Sandy, and this recognition would be an amazing way to show Sandy that her efforts, care and dedication are truly appreciated."

It is with pleasure and respect that I nominate Sandy Fanara for the WASBA Lifetime Achievement Award.

Ellen Miller