

The 2010 *MY BROTHER'S KEEPER AWARDS*

Business: FG AYERS, Inc.

FG Ayers Inc. is that happy and rare combination of old fashioned family-run business and progressive innovator. Fred and Barb Ayers started the company about 40 years ago, when Fred was laid off from Goodyear. He and a friend began by painting houses, then he bought a fixer-upper, then a vacant lot and the next thing you know, he was building houses throughout Summit County. There was a second stint at Goodyear; sometimes the business operated out of their home instead of an office building. It was always a family affair, done with the Ayers flair. Barb kept the books and the Ayers children helped on the job sites. This meant sorting and sorting and sorting scrap materials to identify usable matter and responsibly and affordably dispense with what was no longer usable. Mr. Ayers did not use a dumpster on his job sites. He did use an inordinate amount of insulation, to help the home stay weather-tight.

He did all that between incorporating in 1972 and 1992, when daughter Cheryl and son-in-law Lance Schmidt came on full time. Nowadays, FG Ayers Inc. designs and builds new homes with advanced 'green' techniques. It is also a sustainable home remodeler and a specialist in handicapped-accessible and "not so big house" construction.

On all their home construction projects, they do everything they can to minimize waste, increase energy efficiency and conserve building materials. They do not use dumpsters and are able to recycle an average of 85% of all waste materials from the job site.

FG Ayers was the first builder for Urban Neighborhood Development Corporation (UNDC). Partnering with UNDC, the local HBA, Akron Public Schools and Rembrandt Homes they built a new construction, demonstration home in Kenmore that is ecologically sound, affordable and energy efficient: Mythbusters 2009.

Lance is the current president of the Homebuilders Association of Summit & Portage Counties (HBA), where he uses his office to continue educating fellow builders on green techniques. He was named a 2009 "Champion" of NEO-based Entrepreneurs for Sustainability (E4S) for being a homebuilder who "reduces environmental impact while building comfortable, affordable homes."

Cheryl and Lance have been life and business partners for over 25 years, and like Fred and Barb, they are able to meld their work and home lives. Their sustainability practices at home range from growing and preserving most of their own food to heating their home with bio mass. And they also operate a recycling warehouse – like good apples not far from the tree.

Nominated by Bob Warner