

Oskaloosa woman receives award for promoting peace  
By Duane Nollen. The Oskaloosa Herald: October 13, 2008.

As an educator and goodwill ambassador, Margaret Stoltzfus has reached out to people of foreign cultures and in foreign lands, and Saturday evening, the OSKIOWA Chapter of People to People International honored her for her work.

Stoltzfus received The Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award from People to People International at the celebration of the OSKIOWA Chapter's 40th anniversary held at the First Christian Church. People to People International Board Chairman Troy Nash presented the award to Stoltzfus.

"She has done a tremendous job as an educator" ... and she "exemplifies what People to People International stands for," he said.

The award is the second highest honor the organization, founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, presents to individuals worldwide. People to People International promotes peace through understanding. The organization promotes the establishment of long-lasting friendships through citizen diplomacy.

Stoltzfus has been a member of People to People International for about 20 years. During her time with the organization, she has traveled to Kenya four times as part of the United Society of Friends Women International, a Quaker organization. Also, she has traveled to Israel and Palestine twice, including a trip to Ramallah, in the West Bank.

"Travel has broadened my horizons," she said.

Here at home, she has hosted international guests countries such as Denmark and Russia.

The people she has met have "added colorful pieces in my life," Stoltzfus said.

Stoltzfus was a fifth-grade teacher at Grant Elementary School and she later taught for a year at William Penn University. She retired in 1994, but she is active with the Quakers and she serves on the Board of Trustees of William Penn University.

Stoltzfus said the award came as a surprise.

"It was a complete surprise," she said. "I had no idea that I won until I got a letter from PTPI."

OSKIOWA Chapter President Linda Wolf said a committee worked from the fall of 2007 to early 2008 on Stoltzfus' application. The nomination was submitted in April of this year, and Stoltzfus was notified of her award in June, Wolf said.

Stoltzfus could not travel to Cairo, Egypt, to accept the award, so the organization presented it to her in Oskaloosa, Wolf said.

Many local and state dignitaries honored Stoltzfus for her award. She was recognized by Gov. Chet Culver; state Rep. Eric Palmer; State Sen. Tom Rielly, who had Stoltzfus as a fifth-grade teacher; City Manager Brian James; and William Penn University President Richard Sours.