

A BUSINESS of Character

Walter Roofing and Solar honored by Center for Character Counts.

Character Counts. In every aspect of life, the six pillars of character — trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship — are important for a positive community.

One business, Walter Roofing and Solar, was recently awarded the Business of Character award from the Robert D. and Billie Ray Center for Character Counts. Walter Roofing is owned by West Des Moines residents Jesse and Shelease Rittenhouse.

The award recognizes 11 honorees in Iowa for various aspects of the pillars of character. Individuals and organizations are nominated for ethical leadership and humanitarian efforts.

Since 2005, approximately 200 awards have been given to Iowans. Jesse says they were nominated by two separate Realtors, Brooke Doheny and Dave Stock.

“They nominated unbeknownst to us,” says Jesse.

The Rittenhouses established their business six years ago and named the company after their rescue dog, Walter. They specialize in roofing, siding, solar and outdoor structures. After the derecho, they repaired 300 roofs in one year.

The Rittenhouses are active in their church. One of their fellow church members reached out to the couple, asking for help remodeling a home.

The home was occupied by a Ukrainian refugee family of 14. The interior was in bad shape, and there was a hole in the roof. After Jesse looked at it, they decided to repair the roof free of charge. After that, they noticed the rotted siding and replaced it with vinyl siding.

“We paid our crews but didn’t charge them. It was our way of saying welcome to Iowa,” says Jesse.

In addition to providing roofing, the couple is involved in other charitable organizations, such as Rescue Rehab Rehome, Hope Family Services and Meals for the Heartland.

In addition to their charitable involvement, their team members and subcontractors also began volunteering.

“It’s cool to introduce them to these service organizations. It’s fun to see that compounding effect,” Jesse says.

He says it’s important to give back as he’s been given help in the past.

“I’m a recovering alcoholic. People have given me grace and help,” he explains. “It’s my responsibility to turn around and give back any chance



Walter Roofing and Solar was awarded the Business of Character award from the Robert D. and Billie Ray Center for Character Counts. Owners Jesse and Shelease Rittenhouse accepted the award.

that we can get.”

When they found out about the award, the couple was surprised.

“It was awesome. It’s not something we expected. It was a cool honor,” Jesse says.

The company continues to give back to the community.

“Part of our core value is to have a positive impact on our colleagues and families,” says Jesse. “We feel so blessed and want to help out as many others as we can.” ■