Stewart C. Wang, M.D., Ph.D., is the official recipient of the Medical School’s Local Community Service Award for 2016. Those who nominated him for the award, as well as Wang himself, acknowledge that it is a true team effort that incorporates the entire University of Michigan Burn Center. For more than two decades, the Burn Center has worked extensively on injury prevention and education in pediatric, as well as adult, populations.

Wang and his team have established more than 15 separate programs to support the unit’s education and outreach efforts. These include Straight Talk, a youth fire prevention and intervention program; Sean’s Story, a national youth fire-setting prevention and intervention toolkit; and Kids Burn Camp, a weeklong camp for burn-injured youth that focuses on recovery and self-acceptance.

Many of the burn and injury prevention programs developed by Wang and his team are used nationally and internationally. Straight Talk and Sean’s Story have reached every county in Michigan, every state in the United States, and more than 40 countries. Additional programs include: Survivors Offering Assistance in Recovery (SOAR), a support group for burn patients and families; Returning to Education and Continued Healing (REACH), a school reintegration program; the Trauma-Burn Pre-hospital Conference, a statewide educational teleconference; and the Leland Gayheart Prevention Award, given to fire departments for their efforts in fire safety/prevention. The success of these programs, say supporters, demonstrates an unwavering commitment to burn and trauma education and injury prevention.

“Dr. Wang and his team have quietly done this tremendous public service for 20 years without much acknowledgement,” says Justin B. Dimick, M.D., MPH, the George D. Zuidema Professor of Surgery. “This team adds tremendous value as a representative of the University at local, regional, national and international levels.”

Wang also leads the State of Michigan’s plan for burn disasters and has trained more than 3,000 health professionals throughout Michigan to work together for the care of burn victims should a mass casualty incident occur. The American College of Surgeons (ACS) has verified the U-M multiple times as a Burn Center. During these re-verifications, the ACS highlighted that the “Burn Center’s world-class injury prevention and disaster preparedness programs are ideal models for other hospitals nationwide.”

“Dr. Wang and the Injury Prevention and Education team are incessantly devoted to providing community service in the specific area of burn and trauma patient/family education and injury prevention.”

— Lena M. Napolitano, M.D., professor of surgery, division chief, Acute Care Surgery, director, Trauma and Surgical Critical Care