



OPRA 2007 FALL CONFERENCE AWARDS



~Outstanding Volunteerism Award~

This award recognizes the generosity of those who unselfishly donate their time and energy to support individuals with developmental disabilities.

DR. & MR. HAUPT

SIFFRIN, INC.

Siffrin, Inc. is a private, nonprofit organization that provides services to people with developmental disabilities in northern Ohio. As a nonprofit, Siffrin is blessed to have many devoted supporters, volunteers, and advocates for people with disabilities. For almost 10 years, one family, in particular, has shown extreme generosity to the people Siffrin serves. The Haupt family has done wonderful things for all of the individuals served by Siffrin, Inc., and has given them the single, most precious commodity, their time and attention.

Jeff Haupt, a local lawyer in Stark County, and his wife, Kathy, a local MD, have been giving boat rides on Lake Cable to the people Siffrin serves for many years. Several of the people served by Siffrin are patients of Dr. Haupt. Jeff and Kathy contacted Siffrin several years ago to begin these boat rides for any individual in Siffrin's programs. It has become a tradition to those Siffrin serves, and over 80 individuals look forward to it year after year.

Jeff and Kathy have donated their time and money to take groups of about eight individuals out on their pontoon boat. People sign up for the boat rides that are offered once a week throughout the summer months. After their hour ride, everyone, including the staff that accompanies the individuals, enjoy a delicious picnic dinner prepared by the Haupt's. Jeff and Kathy personally prepare each meal according to each person's dietary needs including diabetic, liquid, and soft food diets. In addition, if the boat ride happens to be rained out, and they cannot go out on the boat or have a picnic, the Haupt's treat everyone to a meal at a local restaurant.

Volunteers are critical to nonprofit organizations. Jeff and Kathy Haupt have been continuously generous to Siffrin and to those Siffrin serves. Their charitable spirit is very much appreciated at Siffrin, Inc., and they deserve to be recognized by OPRA for their character and commitment to people with disabilities.

~Outstanding Team Awards~

This award recognizes groups of individuals who have created exceptional work teams. These Teams are characterized by their high standards, genuine caring for their teammates, as well as their hard work and dedication. These teams believe that together they can do so much more for the individuals they serve than they could ever do alone.

OTTAWA HOMES TEAM

RESCARE

These individuals, the staff and managers, at our group homes in Ottawa, deserve recognition for their dedication and caring to the residents during a recent flood affecting the group homes. On August 23rd, flood waters were rising around the homes, and the residents had to be evacuated. The town of Ottawa was undergoing what later turned out to be a federal disaster, due to the flooding of the Blanchard River in northwestern Ohio.



It was apparent that with the evacuation, we all needed to work together to get everyone out safely and prepare for life in a shelter. Everyone took action. Telephone calls were systematically placed to families and guardians to let them know what was occurring. Arrangements were made to get some residents to their families' homes once we got to a shelter. Clothing, emergency food, medications, and medical supplies were quickly packaged. Finally, the fire men arrived with their boat. Fears were calmed as those in wheelchairs were lifted inside with water sometimes falling into the raft around our feet. What we thought might be the hardest part; getting out, turned out to be the easiest. Living in a Red Cross shelter for four days soon would be the bigger challenge. The organization that went into getting everything prepared for the shelter helped make the transition easier on everyone.

The staff that were able to work that day did so without hesitation. While the town of Ottawa was impassable because of the water, some staff were able to find their way to the homes. But of course this wasn't easy. Staff waded through the water earlier the previous day, and of course, became stranded as the waters rose. While some came in when it was low enough to walk through, a few others, made it in by paddle boat or in one staff member's case swam in.

Once rescued, finding your belongings, your bed, and even your food strangely unfamiliar, might be upsetting to residents who were being housed in the shelter. Instead, we had staff who brought in items to help pass the time better and make life a little more comfortable. The local Red Cross volunteers who were with us, were unbelievably supportive. It was their comments that made me realize what an amazing group of staff we have at the Ottawa/Putnam homes. They watched how the staff interacted with the residents and told me later, how little they knew about persons with disabilities. "Your staff know them best." "They should be commended for what they do." There's a lot of hands-on work, and they do this day in and day out". Certainly, during a time of an emergency, you see people rise to the occasion. However, the Ottawa and Putnam staff's

performance was only highlighted by the event at hand. I don't want to forget too soon afterward, that it is every day, there is a demonstration of dedication and caring that goes on. Teamwork and bringing people's strengths together make the tasks easier of course. But teamwork to pull together and make it through a tough time binds us together. Our ties to our residents are stronger more so than ever!

TREMONT HOUSE TEAM

KOINONIA



I have been the Tremont House Supervisor for over 5 years. Together Tremont House staff have continued to grow and develop as a Team. Tremont house staff have an outstanding longevity record with 4 years of service or more. Together Tremont House has 54 years of accumulated experience at Koinonia Homes. Because of Tremont House's longevity and dedication, our client's lives have greatly improved. Our clients are comfortable and receive quality care. They have not had to worry about the revolving door of staff, which helps them to feel safe and secure. Tremont House Team continues to learn and grow as a team. The Tremont house Team has had 4 staff members go through the PATHS Program. Three of these staff members have graduated from PATHS CIP. Three of the CIP Candidates have also been accepted into the CAP program of PATHS. Their dedication and continued learning has enriched the lives of all of our clients. Tremont Team works together to achieve healthy, fulfilling and enriched lives for all of our clients.

In our years of working together, Tremont's clients have been more involved in the community; have seen increased family visitation, and services and supports that are consistent and therapeutic. Our clients look forward to seeing their staff and enjoy their company and vice versa.

~Behind The Scenes Awards~

This is a special award category dedicated to those whose job duties are not specifically related to direct support. These individuals go above and beyond what is expected of them by building personal relationships, teaching new skills, or coming up with creative ideas that help people live more fulfilling lives.

TOUCH KHEM

HEINZERLING FOUNDATION



“She walks like a lady and she talks like a lady...” Touch Khem is a class act all the way around. She is barely 5’ tall and comes to the US from Cambodia. She has terrific stories of courage and perseverance from earlier times in her life. Her character is as solid as the “Rock of Gibraltar.” Touch speaks English with great care to be sure she is understood and when she speaks it is well worth your while to listen.

So what does all this have to do with a nomination for an OPRA “Behind the Scenes” Award? Well, what does it about a person who excels in every aspect of who they are and what they do? It is more than securing a job or coming to work or even following the rules. It is internal character - that which cannot be taught or wished for. It is what comes from life’s experiences and a drive to meet even the basic of needs. It comes from having to fight everything to survive and ultimately reach your goal. Touch did that to get out of Cambodia and she brings that same determination and character to her position as a cook for the youngest residents of Heinzerling Memorial Foundation.

When Touch arrives in the morning she always smiles and greets everyone. Her positive attitude about her job at Heinzerling is contagious. She understands how important it is that she be at work when scheduled, and as such, rarely misses work. Touch cares about other associates with whom she works and understands that her attitude, appearance and behavior can make a positive impact on them. She is always impeccably dressed, clean and a model of neatness. She stands out as someone who cares and knows she can make a difference.

After her arrival at work, Touch begins preparing the dinner meal - no small feat since at Heinzerling there are five different textures, unlimited combinations of those textures, and several “special diets” that include dislikes, preferences, requests, weight management, allergies, etc. Touch enjoys those specific challenges. When she makes a recipe, it is delicious and enticing! Everyone in the dietary department wants to taste it. She takes care to follow recipes and puts that little extra “love” into what she does. When she prepares a dish that calls for items some residents can’t have, she will modify the recipe, even if only for one person, so they can have the “same thing.” Her confidence and pride in the outcome of each creation is

reflected in the fact that she encourages her coworkers to sample the food. Her greatest reward comes from checking the plates of the residents to be sure they ate what she prepared.

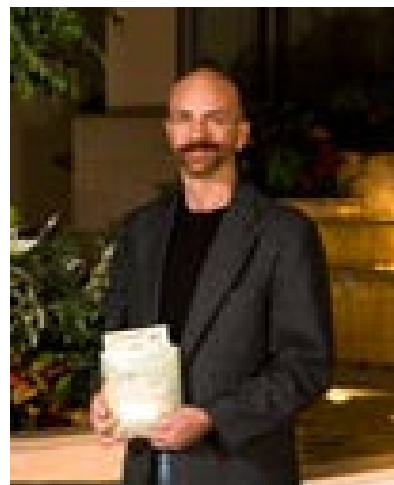
Touch is a role model for all staff but a real inspiration for new staff. Follow her around for a day and you will wonder how she possibly has time to keep her work area so neat and clean while managing to finish everything on time and still help others if they need it.

Touch is a model employee because she cares so much about the residents and how she makes a difference in their lives. What better way to show her love and care than through preparing yummy foods for their tummies?

DOUG GEISZ
RMS OF OHIO, INC.

Being a business coordinator for a supported living company is about as "behind the scene" as you could get. Every month, Doug takes care of making sure all consumer and business related bills get paid, he makes sure all of the regional staff get paid and he takes care of processing billing. He does this month after month and has done so for 17 years. Doug has "survived" the many changes our field has gone through, most recently the waiver transition process. Doug spent many hours learning the rules and the tools and since he already knows the consumers well he was part of many successful transitions resulting in maintaining necessary supports.

He advocated for the consumers because he cares. He, like many of us, has dedicated his career to improving the lives of the individuals we support and was previously in a directors role at an ICF, so his understanding goes beyond his typical duties. He provides positive support to the individuals and to those that provide support. He is an exceptional mentor to new (and not so new) staff, front line supervisors and pretty much anyone that's lucky enough to spend time with him. Although he is behind the scene, his impact is felt by many.



ANDREA FROST
SIFFRIN, INC.



Andrea Frost is the manager of the Siffrin, Inc. fiscal services department; that is to say, she is the fiscal services department. The fiscal services program has nearly 70 people enrolled. Each month, each person's bills and income are mailed to Andrea, and she makes ensure all bills are paid on time. Paying bills is just the tip of the iceberg of what Andrea has done for the many people in her department. She has done much more, and is never one to boast about accomplishments or complain about her workload. Andrea

is, quite literally, behind the scenes, and is very deserving of the 2007 OPRA Behind the Scenes Award.

When Andrea met Doug for the first time, he was homeless, in debt, and in trouble constantly. He entered the fiscal services program in an effort to gain control of his financial problems. Doug's income was mailed to Andrea, which stopped Doug and several "friends" from cashing and spending his money frivolously. Andrea started paying off Doug's debts. Weeks after Doug entered the program, Andrea was able to find him an apartment, and helped him begin receiving services from the Siffrin community support program. Now, a community support specialist visits Doug at home as needed, making sure that he has everything he needs. Doug is doing much better; Andrea honestly changed his life forever.

Last Christmas, Andrea signed 17 people up for her program right before the holiday. People were sent a letter on November 30 informing them that their current fiscal provider would no longer be supporting them. Within weeks, Andrea had everyone's information and applied to be the new payee. This couldn't have happened at a worse time. People didn't have money for the necessities, not to mention for Christmas. Andrea asked people from the Siffrin office to donate food to help until everything was resolved. She was able to take several bags of groceries to those in the most need. Without her help, some would have lost everything.

Her thoughtfulness and quick response to the people she serves makes Andrea great at what she does. For the majority, she works behind the scenes, but is always happy and willing to go to the front line and help someone in need.

LISA BARNES

RESIDENT HOME ASSOCIATION

Her experiences make Lisa Barnes exceptional in her current role as Staff Trainer for The Resident Home Association. She knows firsthand what it means to be a direct service professional. She began her service as the very first Home Coordinator when her agency opened one of its 'new' homes in 1979. Following service with RHA, she worked for five years for the Montgomery County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. She has been staff trainer for The Resident Home Association since 1997.



Lisa sets the standard for what it means to be a team player. In addition to her own job responsibilities, Lisa has served and serves on numerous committees for her agency and its partnership, Partners for Community Living, including many fundraising and special events. Although not in her job description for staff trainer, Lisa has stepped up to be one of the "go to" people in her agency when it comes to all things computers and technology, always ready and willing to step in and keep people moving forward. She has played a crucial role in her agency's transitioning from paper to computer documentation, including initial and ongoing training for direct care staff in individual homes and programs. It is her hand behind the scenes that has

made it possible for staff who have never used a computer to learn to use the computer, knowing it means better service to their residents. She never lets them forget that sense of mission.

Her strong belief in training and in the importance of direct service has led her to a prominent role in the statewide development of the PATHS training program in support of Direct Service Professionals.

She serves as Regional Coordinator for PATHS. She is an active member of the Ohio Alliance of Direct Service Professionals. She authored two of the advanced classes in the PATHS curriculum that has recently been published for licensed sale. She has taught PATHS classes and serves as a Skill Mentor.

She believes wholeheartedly in the PATHS mission of enhancing the quality and longevity of staff and in the rights of staff to be recognized as the professionals they are. "I really enjoy teaching," she says. "It's so rewarding to see people gain confidence in themselves and in their skills. Best of all, it's so nice to know that we are strengthening the quality of services for our residents."

It's very easy to know who Lisa is during every PATHS graduation in our region. She is the one standing behind the scenes, after doing all the planning for the ceremonies, right down to ordering food. She is the one with the broadest smile and the beaming face that almost shouts out just how proud she is of the graduates, how much she respects them and how much she values her role as one of their mentors and teachers.

She believes in their professionalism as much as she believes in the mission of her agency. She is the spark that ignites the fire in them!

~Outstanding Front-Line Supervisor Awards~

This award recognizes the outstanding service, dedication, and leadership shown by those who work on the frontlines each day alongside direct support professionals. These special individuals demonstrate a high standard of care and promote a genuine spirit of teamwork with those they supervise.

JENNIFER SUMMERS

ANNE GRADY



Jennifer Summers was recently recognized as the Anne Grady Community Programs Employee of the Quarter. Jen has moved her team to a beautiful new home in Sylvania, and had TWO new fellas move in with the existing roommate. They have planted a huge garden and at the request of the men who live there...found a wonderful dog to join their family. She also has another man on her team that lives alone, and he, too, got to move into a nicer apartment in a nicer neighborhood which she found for him and he loves! In

addition to the multiple changes on her own Charlesgate team, Jen also stepped up and has assisted with multiple other teams-a team that has been without a coordinator for a couple of months, in addition to assisting new Coordinators. She has assisted with the scheduling, shopping, money management, and running appointments for a very challenging individual who isn't even on her team! PLUS, she has been utilized on another team in picking up shifts and helping transport folks when their TARPS rides have fallen thru at the last minute. Jen also attended the multi-day behavior supports seminar-all the while never missing a beat with her day to day obligations of her two teams! She juggles all of this and maintains a fantastic sense of humor! Her compassion and true caring for the folks that she serves should be a role model for us all. She is the person I know I can ask anything of and while she may give me "the look", (with a smile of course!) she never complains, never whines, and always comes thru. I don't know what we would do without her. Jen leads by example and it shows with the unity and the dedication of her staff. They have very few call offs and each member of the team pitches in whenever the folks we serve need them-with Jen leading the charge! Jen is a fierce advocate for not only the folks we provide services too, but her staff as well, and she empowers the staff to advocate too. Jen and her team all think "outside the box" when developing community integration activities...if the individual wants to try something Jen finds the way to make it happen, from going to the Stage Coach Stop in Brooklyn Michigan or fishing in southern Ohio, (and usually at discounted rates!)

She learned how to drive our mini-bus so that she can drive the individuals as well as some of their friends to the places they want to see. Jen is on top of all aspects of her team and makes sure that she keeps all of us who need to know in the know! Even if it means she is emailing at 2am in the morning!

Jen is the kind of supervisor that most upper management dreams of-dedicated, honest, and wears the heart she has for the individuals she serves on her sleeve.

JENNIFER SUMMERS 2ND NOMINATION

ANNE GRADY

Jen always does her utmost to see that any individual served by Anne Grady receives the services they need, whether they are "her" individuals or not. She will provide services when nobody else will. No matter what time of the day or night, if somebody needs help, she will be there. She has a new resident who is just thriving under her care. The board is very pleased with services at her "house." Her staff is stable. She runs her house well. These are just two of the reasons I nominated Jen.

ANGIE GARRETT

GRACEWORKS ENHANCED LIVING



Angie Garrett knows how the job needs to be done because she has worked them all from Direct Care to ICF/MR Director over 8 homes. Her current scope of activities includes investigating MUI's, teaching new employees in orientation classes, and utilizing audits and surveys to makes changes for improvements. She always exhibits a positive approach and is well-liked and respected by everyone. With her wide

knowledge base, she is steering our homes to a higher level of care which will affect the lives of many individuals.

JENNIFER O'MALIA

L'ARCHE CLEVELAND



This year we are celebrating Jen's 15th anniversary with L'Arche. In her time with us she has worked as a live-in and live-out assistant and since 2000 she has been a head of house (house manager). Since she has been with L'Arche Cleveland for almost half of its existence she has proven to be an important advocate for every core members because of her knowledge of each of their histories (in L'Arche we call these their sacred stories). She is also an invaluable resource for the executive directors, including Becky Brady. Her relationship to the core members is much more than just a working relationship. This is evidenced by the way she includes them in her own family's life--her three children are now growing up in and around our L'Arche community. She has never backed down from the challenges of leading a team and has even stepped up to take on the challenge of one of our higher needs homes--knowing that her work and time commitment would greatly increase. She has also shown her commitment to L'Arche USA by volunteering to be a part of leadership trainings on a national level as well as numerous core member retreats and gatherings (also on a national level). I would also like to nominate her for the fact that she introduced me and my family to L'Arche, I have been a program director for L'Arche for 4 years now and also Jen's brother (hope this won't disqualify her as a nominee). Please feel free to ask me for more information--I think I have only scratched the surface.

MARY WRIGHT

MERCER RESIDENTIAL SERVICES INC.



During her twenty years as a Community Support Coordinator, Mary has demonstrated a high standard of care, and a willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty. Mary was hired as a Home Manager in 1987. She was responsible for the day to operations of one of MRSI's group home facilities. Since that time, her job responsibilities and title evolved as MRSI grew and evolved. Early-on, the job was more of a hands-on type of supervising, doing cooking, cleaning, laundry, purchasing supplies, assisting residents with finances, seeing to the day to day operation of the home.

As the years went by, her responsibilities grew to include interviewing prospective employees, hiring, scheduling, training and evaluating employees. The last several years when the community support services started to take and then flourish, she also began overseeing the growing number of staff who worked with folks in Mercer and Auglaize Counties who live in

their own homes and need a few hours of services a week. As Community Support Coordinator she was responsible for all operations and yet still could and did fill in at any position, at any duty and at any time she was needed. Mary was directly responsible for the home receiving deficiency free surveys from the Ohio Department of Health eleven out of the past thirteen years. Mary truly does exemplify the qualities of reliability, commitment, initiative, and creativity in getting her job done. She is respected by her staff and dedicated to the mission of the agency and outstanding service.

PATTI METZGER
SUNSHINE, INC.



“Patient, sincere, helpful, good listener, playful, fun, an encourager, team player and loving” are words that the staff used to describe Patti Metzger, Direct Service Supervisor at Sunshine Inc of Northwest Ohio. These are all characteristics of a supervisor well respected by her staff. If you would ask Patti what her favorite part of her job is, she would state working with the residents at Kit Family Care Home and seeing our residents smiling and having a great day. Patti started working with Sunshine five years ago as a Residential Specialist at the Brenneman home in Lima, Ohio. In February 2007, Patti transferred to the Kit Family Care Home to apply her outstanding supervisor skills to a challenging house. Her outgoing personality as well as her endless positive attitude is exactly what Kit residents and staff needed. On a typical day, Patti could be found in the ball pit with a resident, listening to a staff person when they have a question or organizing Kit’s daily activities. Patti truly enjoys coming to work ready to roll up her sleeves and have fun with both residents and staff. Patti is not only respected among her staff and peers but also among the management team. She provides Sunshine residents and staff with the highest amount of commitment and reliability a staff person can offer. Patti drives an hour and half one way to work, and during a crisis when without seeing her family of five for three days. Patti shows a true commitment not only to Sunshine but to people with developmental disabilities by finding each resident’s skills and then sharing them with staff, so that the both staff and residents are successful. Patti does not find it necessary for awards or recognitions, she does it for true love for our residents and staff, however we believe that she deserves recognition and thanks for her creativity, love, positive attitude and true dedication to our field.

RAE HANCOCK
CHOICES IN COMMUNITY LIVING



The past three years have been the happiest and most productive of their lives for six men in Dayton, Ohio. They can mark the date on the calendar when their lives began to so significantly turnaround. That date corresponds directly to the date that Rae Hancock entered their lives.

The men have a range of needs, from autism to challenging behavioral needs that has put restraints on their ability to participate actively and fully in their own lives and in the life of

their community.... until Rae. Because of their needs, they were often isolated in their own home. That was then - BR - before Rae! After Rae, they enjoy the benefits of having a massage therapist come to their home every week. What sounds like a luxury on the surface is the result of Rae's determination to never let a need go unmet. One of her clients had a very serious issue about being touched in any way physically, which often impeded him receiving medical care when he needed it. Before Rae it had been nearly impossible to get him from his home to a doctor's appointment in the community. Instead of addressing the problem in any conventional way of thinking, Rae in her ingenuity brought a massage therapist to the home and slowly but surely introduced massage to her client. He now has overcome his issues related to physical touch and has a better outlook on his medical future because he can go to the doctor without fear. A side benefit is that not only has he benefited, his housemates benefit on a regular basis as well from the massage therapy.

Because of Rae, one man has been able to fulfill his desire to be needed by getting him a "job" as a volunteer at a nursing home, where he has become a friend to one resident. Four of the men take music therapy classes.

Rae is whatever her clients and staff need her to be. She is the strongest advocate staff or clients could ever hope for. She is the voice for clients with other agencies, service providers and the community. She is the team facilitator. The turnover rate in her program has decreased dramatically in a program that requires much of its staff. She follows up on ideas put forth by her staff, as well as initiates ideas, like those involving her clients in community activities. With dogged determination she lead and supported her staff in learning the new software technology that will now free staff to spend more direct time with their clients and away from paperwork and documentation. She made them realize how essential and critical that process is to the quality of life for their clients.

There are no gaps in their lives when Rae is around. She is always up and always positive, thriving on challenge. She has found the perfect match now between her own personality and her professional dedication.

Those who know her best say this of her, "Rae wants to see things work!" Translated for the people she serves and her team that means that where there is a will, there is a Rae!



CHET FLOWERS

EVANT, INC.

Chet Flowers has been the manager of a home, supported by Evant, for more than five years. Many of the people who live in the home were (and I use the past tense intentionally) known to be quite challenging. Several managers had tried attempted to fill this position effectively, but, under Chet's leadership, this home really began to come together.

Those who work and live at this home have remained constant.

What has changed, however, is the attitude and energy level of the home. Challenging behaviors have significantly decreased - and the people who live in the home are doing better too...

Like a marriage, "residential support/service" can be a challenge. Staff are there through thick and thin, illnesses, sleepless nights, weekends and holidays - not to mention good and bad times. Many seek less demanding jobs or simply "burnout." Rare are the ones who not only flourish, but impact and inspire others to succeed; Chet is such a person.

Beyond his management and organizations skills, Chet is a leader. One of Evant's practices is to begin each agency management meeting with a Mission Moment - a reflection of the past month that stood out and exemplified what we all are trying to achieve. These stories vary from touching moments of achievement and accomplishment (a forty-five year old person talking, for the first time) to humorous happenings (a woman, upon discovering it was her doctor's birthday at the annual physical, who insisted on singing the entire happy birthday song - for all to here). Some staff struggle to remember the Mission Moment. It can be easy to sometimes forget the good things when so many challenges exist, but not with Chet. He can always be counted on to share a Mission Moment. Chet cherishes the big and little accomplishments in life. Chet never seems to lose his focus on the people we serve. I have seen him bring laughter at the most challenging times or walk into the house after working an unexpected overnight awake shift and greet each person with such care, that each person believes and understands that, at that moment, they are important and valued and have his undivided attention.



Not surprisingly, Chet is also an exceptional trainer. New managers at Evant often benefit from Chet's expertise. He is one who truly lifts others up - whether they are employed at or live in a home supported by Evant. He is the example we all strive to follow.

~Direct Support Professional Awards~

This award category recognizes outstanding performance and dedication of those who are on the frontlines every day helping to make a real difference in the lives of real people.

TONI MAYS

ANNE GRADY



Toni Mays...if there was one employee that I could clone it would be Toni! Our industry would be providing perfect, loving service to all the folks that we serve 365 days of the year! Toni works with very active and challenging individuals but always has a smile and is gentle and positive! She has developed positive and trusting relationships with these individuals and it is apparent that they truly adore her. She never calls off, and is the first one to volunteer

when someone else calls off (regardless of what team or home!) She rearranges her personal life to make sure the needs of the team are met-always! She is truly a team player-her co-workers, supervisor, and the rest of the chain of command knows that Toni is the "go to" staff for anything and everything. AND she makes sure that things are done and done right. Toni never turns down a challenge, but meets the challenge head on and with a "can do" attitude. She never gives up and advocates for the individuals she serves each and every day. She is an excellent communicator-keeping all informed on what is going on with the individuals and ensuring that all appointments are taken care of as well as all the needs that may surface. Toni is consistent with how she interacts with the individuals and they know that she is there for them. She is diligent in following the ISP and making sure all the services are provided and is instrumental in supporting the individuals in making progress towards their goals. Toni's gentle, caring, and loving lead by example is the perfect role model for old and new staff alike!

JUANITA FENDENHEIM
ECHOING RIDGE RESIDENTIAL CENTER

Juanita Fendenheim has provided quality care and friendship to individuals with special needs for over 25 years. I would love to share her age because it would make her achievements even more amazing, but Juanita has only permitted me to say she is "well over 65 years old". She is sensitive to the needs of our residents and treats everyone with kindness and respect. Juanita is an exceptional worker who knows and understands her job and does it well. Juanita can drive a wheelchair accessible van and often provides transportation to clients for appointments and family visits. When traveling, Juanita is not intimidated by high traffic areas or new destinations. Juanita is a joy to have on staff and a blessing to those she serves.



MARINA GARLAND
GRACEWORKS ENHANCED LIVING

Marina is such a wonderful staff person! She finds a special way to interact with each individual living at Springdale Home. She gives thoughtful care to the men and completes all of her duties with a smile on her face and often with a song. She is always on time and frequently makes suggestions which help to improve the quality of life for the Springdale men. She truly is one who shows faithful caring.



ROBIN MORRIS

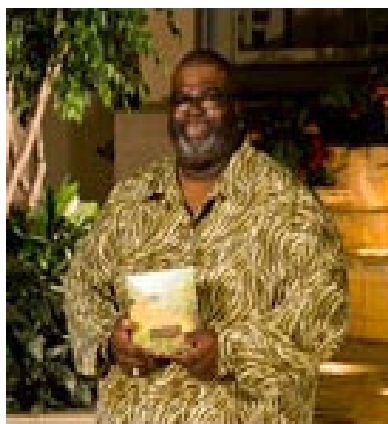
RESCARE, INC.

Robin looks at the ladies that live in the London group home as part of her own family. She treats them with dignity and respect at all times and always has their best interest at heart. Her dedication to each one of them extends nearly 20 years. Robin takes it upon herself to ensure each one of the ladies is not forgotten for their birthdays, Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving or any other holiday. She not only plans the parties and the activities but will work a double on those days to spend it with the ladies but also so other staff can spend the holidays with their own families. Robin goes beyond our expectations by caring for the 9 ladies that live in the London group home as she would someone in her immediate family, even after she suffered a heart attack she worried about when she was going to get back to work.



ALFONZSO JOHNSON, SR.

KOINONIA HOMES, INC.



I have been associated with Mr. Alfonzso C. Johnson Sr. since June, 1997, when he was hired as a DSP, assigned to Wallings House. From the very onset Alfonzso displayed the skills necessary to gain the respect of the consumers, staff and family members. He has demonstrated a truly remarkable level of professionalism and over the years has received numerous compliments from families, community, peers and visitors that have come in contact with him. Alfonzso has always performed requests without hesitation. He would go anywhere that he was needed at any time. Needless to say, he immediately became a trusted, valued member of the Wallings Team.

Anyone familiar with Wallings knows that this is a very difficult house behavior wise. Especially during the ninety's, staff turnover was very high given the fact that Wallings received the last eight clients from the Broadview Center. These individuals had the most severe aggression to our staff/peers and severe behaviors. Alfonzso would always ensure the safety and security of the individuals came first, especially when new staff felt uncomfortable around individuals when they would become behavioral or uncooperative during redirection. Alfonzso would ease the fears of new staff by providing the appropriate presence/interventions that were needed. He has always provided support that has made quite an impression when his assistance was required as well as requested. I have received numerous verbalizations on his professionalism that helps carry out our mission and gains support when interacting with the individuals, families, peers, visitors, community as well as management.

Alfonzso has a positive rapport with each of the individuals at Wallings. He is commonly referred to as "New Man" by one of our individuals.

It is obvious from his continued distinguished performance why Alfonzo won the Koinonia Homes Founders Award. He truly leads by example. His longevity is a reflection of his dynamic commitment to assisting the individuals we serve achieve "healthy, fulfilling, enriched lives."

I am expressing my appreciation to Alfonzo for his dynamic leadership abilities and commitment to helping others here at Koinonia. I commend him for his exceptional effort.



PAT METZGER

CHOICES IN COMMUNITY LIVING, INC.

Everyone has a place and everyone can flourish. If Pat Metzger were a woman with a motto, this would be hers. Instead of a motto, with her it who she is and what she does. Pat has been a residential specialist with Choices In Community Living, Inc. since 1996, setting an example for all who know her of what a Direct Support Professional should be.

Pat provides direct support and service in one of the most challenging programs in her agencies, serving clients who have challenging behaviors that often impedes their participation and integration in the community. The success of the program and, most importantly, the success of the men she serves, relates directly to Pat's strength, dedication, innovation, and caring.

Her team members know this about her. She gives everything she has to give. She gives everything she has to give every shift. She has been known to fill in on short notice when needed. In one recent eight hour shift, she took her clients on a walk, to get haircuts, on a trip to the library, along with meeting their 'routine' direct care needs, leading her supervisor to note, "Pat will accomplish more in four hours than most staff can accomplish in a few shifts."

She is very concerned with programming and with the medical needs of her clients. She takes the initiative to call the office with ideas and suggestions related to programming, based on her experiences and the needs and wishes she sees from her clients.

The men respect Pat, which is the most important factor in her success in working with them. She has been with them for years. Through consistency, fairness and strength she has earned their trust.

Pat is the essence of a team player. She makes the effort to call and check in with new staff to see how they are and how things are going, to offer ideas and general support. She is known for her patience and her willingness to answer the many questions of new staff. She enjoys training new staff so that they will be able to support the clients in the same way that she does. She is as helpful to staff as she is caring to clients.

Not every agency is able or willing to open their doors to make sure that everyone has a place, a home. Choices In Community Living, Inc. has made that commitment to these clients with challenging behaviors. They have been able to meet that commitment because there are those rare individuals like Pat Metzger whose professional and personal dedication bring value, dignity, and respect to the people they serve.