



PRESS RELEASE

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State Wraps up 30th Annual Governor's Conference on Aging Dept on Aging Hosted Conference & Awarded Advocates Who Serve Older Adults

CHICAGO - December 9, 2011. The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) today hosted the final activities for the *Governor's Conference on Aging*. The three day event was December 7, 8, and 9, in downtown Chicago. This year marked the 30th annual conference which is considered the largest statewide meeting and comprehensive training for people who work in the network of serving older adults.

"This year we celebrate three decades of presenting the *Governor's Conference on Aging*," said IDoA Director John K. Holton, Ph.D. "I am pleased to welcome everyone and know we will all benefit for attending. We have always strived to make this a premiere event by bringing together all of us in this network who are committed to serving older adults."

There were more than two million older adults in Illinois for the year 2010, according to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. That number is expected to grow almost ten percent by 2030. To address the growing number of older adults facing issues such as retirement, enrolling in Medicare, economic changes, and long term care choices, the conference offered intensive workshops to promote the latest research, trends and developments in supportive technology. Presenters included noteworthy professionals and representatives from state agencies including the Department of Insurance, co-sponsor the conference, Emergency Management Agency, Healthcare and Family Services, Housing Development Authority, and Public Health.

Earlier today, IDoA hosted an awards program to honor individuals from around the state, who have shown outstanding dedication and compassion about aging issues. The annual awards program served to officially close this year's *Governor's Conference on Aging*. The names of the 2011 awardees follow.

Illinois Department on Aging Director Holton and Deputy Mary Killough presented agency awards to:

- **Charles D. Johnson**, who recently retired as director of the Illinois Department on Aging, received the **Leader of Excellence Award*. Johnson is the first African American and longest serving agency director (from 2003 to 2011.) Some of his major accomplishments include strengthening community-based services that promote independent living, significantly bolstering the agency's budget, rebalancing the state's long term care system, and improving wages for direct care staff. ** In honor of his legacy, the award will hereafter be named the Charles D. Johnson Leader of Excellence Award.*
- **Dorothy McKinley**, certified nursing assistant at St. Joseph Village (SJV), in Chicago, received the premiere *Direct Care Worker Award*. This year recognized an outstanding worker over the age of 55 who has provided the most years of service to older adults who reside in a nursing facility. McKinley has been with SJV since 1978, longer than any other associate.
- **Mary Bice**, of Grand Prairie Assisted Living, in Macomb, received the *Outstanding Caregiver Award*. Bice, works in both the dietary department and customer service division and exemplifies what it means to be significant in seniors' lives. Whether sharing her famous hot chocolate or a hug, she helps make people happy.

Rance Carpenter, of University of Illinois, in Springfield, received the *Joyce Sill Memorial Award*. Carpenter worked at the Illinois Department on Aging for 26 years and was responsible for the administration of all Older American Act Title III-C nutrition funds. He also helped create a new home delivered meal fund. After serving the aging network, he was recently selected as director of the university's Graduate Public Service Internship Program in the Center for State Policy and Leadership.

Dana Crews, of Senior Services of Central Illinois, was named *2011 Care Coordinator of the Year*. Crews is a strong team member and never hesitates to rearrange her own schedule to accommodate, when needed. Her supportive demeanor establishes an easy rapport with clients. She is an ardent advocate, making sure they receive all the services needed to stay independent. While she respects their right to self-determination, she doesn't give up when they are reluctant to accept services.

Leslee Ferguson, of Community Home Environmental Learning Project (CHELP), in Decatur, was named *2011 Supervisor of the Year* by the Illinois Association of Community Care Program Homecare Providers. Ferguson first worked for CHELP in 2000, then returned in 2007 as a supervisor. She has a marvelous relationship with homecare aides, clients, the care coordination units and caseworkers. She delivers baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas to clients and helps get them other items that make their lives more comfortable. She is strongly committed to homecare service.

Angel Kindo, of the Urhai Community Service Center, in Chicago, received the *Pillar of Service Award* from the Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly (CLESE.) Kindo emigrated from Iraq in 1992. She is a member of the North Task Force Committee of the Commission on Human Relations, a board member for the CEDA of Cook County and President of the Assyrian American Welfare Council of Chicago. She founded the Urhai Community Service Center which provides social service programs for Iraqi refugees.

Melody Shuck, of Help at Home, in Moline, is the winner of the *2011 D. Jeanne Tippett Scholarship*. Shuck has worked at Help at Home for 11 years as both a homecare aide and supervisor. She has returned to school to enhance her skills to further help her goals to work and support the aging population. Despite her class load, the mother of four and grandmother of two remains a dedicated employee. She is described as always willing to roll up her sleeves and help.

The Honorable Heather Steans, state senator of Chicago, was named *2011 Legislator of the Year* by AARP. A tireless advocate for seniors, Steans was the chief sponsor behind sweeping nursing home reforms in 2010, and has been instrumental in preserving funds to keep people in their homes. She is chair of an appropriation committee and co-chair of the Medicaid Reform Commission. In both roles, she made rebalancing long term care system a priority. She is currently sponsoring legislation to remove the social security offset for unemployment, which discriminates against older adults.

Janice M. Stille, retired director of the Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging, received the *Sid Granet Aging Network Achievement Award for Individual Excellence*. Stille worked in the field of aging for 21 years, before retiring in November. Her career at the agency includes working as program coordinator, program manager, then assistant director before being named executive director in 2005. She was instrumental in large scale projects including getting a county public transportation system for Rock Island and Mercer counties and providing a fall prevention program to older adults in five counties.

Shari Stoudt, of Ottawa Community Health Services, received the *Helen Heyrman Award* from the Illinois Home Care and Hospice Council. Stoudt has served as administrator of Ottawa Community Health Services at Ottawa Regional Health since 1985. Since then she has been an active member of the Illinois Home Care and Hospice Council. Her latest board position as Secretary is an office she helped to develop and expand to better meet the needs of the membership. She has seen many transitions in homecare over the last 26 years and has always been a trusted voice.

The Illinois Adult Day Service Association presented three awards:

- *Sunlight Award* went to **Tex Halfacre** of Addus Evergreen Club, Mt. Vernon. The 61-year-old veteran has been a primary caregiver for five years to an individual with traumatic brain injury. As a volunteer, he is also personal assistant for several other individuals. When Halfacre arrives at Addus, he greets and socializes with all the participants. He donates and assists with events to raise funds and clients look forward to his "Fun with Tex" activities, each month. Staff says he lives his life for people in need.
- **Outstanding Advocate for Illinois Seniors Award* went to **Dave Vinkler**, of AARP. Vinkler isn't someone who seeks the spotlight, but instead uses his quiet perseverance in maintaining and improving access to home and community based services for older adults. With thoughtful analysis, he tenaciously watches legislative bills and considers their impact on older adults and fights battles on their behalf with facts and figures. **The first award the association has presented outside the field of adult day service.*
- *Everything Under the Sun Award* went to **Ecumenical Support Services for the Elderly (ESSE)**, of Glen Ellyn, Naperville and Wheaton. The mission of ESSE is to provide adult care options that promote the physical, emotional and spiritual well being for older adults and their families. In addition to an active daily schedule, ESSE offers solutions to the critical needs of families and friends with impaired loved ones which delay their placement in long term care facilities.

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