



PRESS RELEASE

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State Department on Aging Recognizes Caseworkers & Ombudsmen at *Adult Protection & Advocacy Conference* *Award ceremony concludes the annual conference*

SPRINGFIELD - August 27, 2014. The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) wrapped up the *Adult Protection & Advocacy Conference*, held August 20 through 22, in Oak Brook. The annual conference (formerly the Elder Rights Conference) marked the 28th year IDoA has hosted the event where service providers, advocates and other professionals gathered to learn the latest information on the topic of elder rights. At Friday's conclusion of the annual conference, IDoA presented an awards ceremony to recognize the *2014 Outstanding Adult Protective Services Caseworker & Community Long Term Care Ombudsman Awardees*.

"The awardees are an example of the providers and advocates who assist older adults," said IDoA Director John K. Holton. "We are pleased to recognize the 2014 awardees and thank them for their dedication to service."

The *2014 Outstanding Adult Protective Services Abuse Caseworker Nominees* are:

Amanda Briick of Senior Services of Central Illinois, in Springfield, makes exceptional strides to protect clients, such as the case of a woman being abused by her son. This caseworker worked with law enforcement, medical personnel, social workers and the woman's daughter to get her into a safe care facility. Amanda Briick will do her best to find a solution.

Mallory Patera is a caseworker for Catholic Charities, in Chicago, and previously worked as a Care Coordinator. Due to her personal experience with a family member who has disabilities, she understands the needs and service requirements which can stress caregivers and frustrate clients. Mallory Patera is currently developing a disabilities resource book.

Karen Rose with the Center for Prevention of Abuse, in Peoria, is a seasoned investigator and relentless advocate. In the case of an 80-year-old domestic violence victim struggling to care for her 27-year-old daughter, Karen Rose helped the mother get help at a domestic violence shelter and found appropriate placement in an environment where the daughter now thrives.

The *2014 Adult Protective Services Caseworker of the Year* is **Jill Markussen** of DuPage County Community Services, in Wheaton. Known for handling difficult cases often involving threatening abusers, she has successfully obtained five orders of protection and handled five guardianship cases, including one where the abuser was charged with felony criminal financial exploitation. Congratulations to Jill Markussen *APS Caseworker of the Year*.

The *2014 Outstanding Community Long Term Care Ombudsman* are:

Jean Bohnhoff is Executive Director of the Effingham County Committee on Aging. Her focus is to make the lives of older adults the best they can be. She does not accept "no" or "it can't be done" as answers. She continues searching for solutions. Jean Bohnhoff celebrates ombudsmen and truly believes in the mission of the program which is exemplified in how she treats those she advocates for and with.

(2014 Outstanding Community Long Term Care Ombudsman continued):

Julie Carrig began her volunteer ombudsman career at the age of 73. For the past ten years she has been a zealous advocate for residents at several facilities and most recently at in two nursing homes and a supportive living facility. It is with mixed emotions staff of Catholic Charities in Rockford wish a happy retirement to this extraordinary advocate Julie Carrig.

Darla Gray, of SWAN (Stopping Women Abuse Now) in Olney, has been with the Long Term Care Ombudsmen Program for less than two years but has accomplished much for the residents she serves. During facility visits, she takes time to get to know residents and forms relationships of trust and respect. Residents need not worry because Darla Gray works to better the quality of life for these individuals.

Desiree Mathews-Plonowski is with the Legal Assistance Foundation, in Chicago. She is always willing to research new issues that help in the handling of complicated cases such as one that involved a resident with complicated family dynamics. Desiree Mathews-Plonowski was able to convince the resident's guardian to allow his family members to resume visits after they'd been restricted for months.

Jill Moore with DuPage County Senior Services, in Wheaton, has a passion for this work on a personal level after the wrongful death of a loved one. She has actively sought continuing education opportunities which focus on the concerns of older adults. Jill Moore is said to focus her energy in a positive manner which has helped her handle many successful interventions over the years.

For more information about Adult Protective Services for older adults and people with disabilities ages 18 to 59 who live in a domestic setting, and the Ombudsman Program, log on to the IDoA website at www.illinois.gov/aging or call the Senior HelpLine at 800-252-8966 (or TTY for the hearing impaired at 888-206-1327.)

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