

2010 PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Ohio's long-term care facilities employ more than 80,000 professionals caring for 90,000 patients and residents. These employees are the backbone of the long-term care community, with facilities relying on dedicated teamwork and skills to provide quality caregiving and compassion to their patients and families. The Association's Professional Achievement Awards are designed to honor those individuals who have excelled in providing outstanding care in a cooperative spirit of teamwork.

Long-Term Care Administrator of the Year

Sean Cleary, LNHA
Lanfair Center, Lancaster

Sean Cleary, LNHA, administrator at Lanfair Center, has been chosen as the Ohio Health Care Association (OHCA) Long-Term Care Administrator of the Year. This statewide award is part of the OHCA annual Professional Achievement Awards program, designed to honor those individuals who have excelled in providing outstanding care in a cooperative spirit of teamwork.

Sean has 29 years of experience in long-term care, including serving as the administrator at Lanfair Center for the past nine years. A graduate of Ohio University with a dual degree in Gerontology and Therapeutic Recreation, Sean began his career as a recreational therapist. This experience, combined with his strong people skills, give him an ability to connect with the residents, families and employees at Lanfair Center.

A prime example of his dedication to residents and families is the case of a resident's daughter who was concerned that her mother had attended the county fair every year as far back as she could remember, but would not be going because she was not on the list and the group had already left. He told the resident's daughter "let's go!" and took them to the fair. The daughter later stated that it was one of the best days of her life.

Resident satisfaction forms also tell the story of Sean's impact on the residents and families. The surveys include statements such as, "Administrator is the best possible person for the job"; "Excellent source of information and assistance"; "Administrator is always visible, approachable, helpful and kind to all residents and their family"; and "Excellent administrator, always listens and tries to help in any way."

Sean makes sure that he knows the history of the residents in the facility so he is able to engage them in conversation, making them feel comfortable and safe. He also takes the same care with family members and staff, making them feel valued and appreciated. His top priority is to continually improve the quality of care Lanfair Center provides. He is quick to act as needed, responding to call lights, cleaning spills, painting, helping with snow removal, and performing special actions for residents, such as taking them to baseball games to improve their quality of life.

Department Manager of the Year

Kathy Loy, RN, Director of Nursing

Kathy Loy, RN, has spent more than 10 years as a Director of Nursing, and more than 20 years in long-term care. A consummate professional with a unique set of skills found in one individual, she has led her facility to a perfect survey and a Five-Star rating in 2009. Kathy is constantly looking for a way to enhance the resident's quality of care, whether it is a simple operational change or a better procedure that increases the likelihood of better outcomes. She is a member of the Ohio and National Association Directors of Nursing Administration in Long Term Care, with certification as CDONA/LTC.

According to Jane Chedid, NHA, who nominated Kathy for the Award, Kathy's ability to show compassion to residents, families and staff is unparalleled. Kathy loves nursing. Superior resident care is her passion and guiding light, and dedication to her facility and her co-workers is her mantra. She is on call 24/7, and will work the floor when necessary, never asking someone to do something that she is not willing to do herself.

Operating with an "open door policy" to staff, residents and family, to Kathy this is not just a phrase; it is truly her way of working. It also promotes a positive working environment for staff and a comfort for the residents and families, knowing that she is here to help.

With a military background, Kathy established an efficient program to enable the Laundry Service to run more smoothly for floor staff and residents. She developed the "BOOGIE Facility" concept (Be Outstanding Or Get Involved Elsewhere), and is an inspiration educating, teaching nurses, nursing assistants and other departments.

Often a supervisor finds resistance to change and apathy in staff members. Kathy is able to motivate employees with firm decisive action, yet allowing appropriate input for stakeholders – the hallmark of a good leader. Her approach to management continues to be a system that seeks input from not only other supervisor personnel, but subordinates as well to insure input and buy-in from all parties.

The nomination form indicates "We believe her to be an inspiration and most deserving of the Award!" in bold lettering. The Selection Committee agrees!

Independent Practitioner of the Year

Robert J. Cluxton, Pharmacy Consultant
Alois Alzheimer Center, Cincinnati

Robert J. Cluxton, RPh, is the Pharmacy/Research Consultant at Alois Alzheimer Center, Cincinnati. For 19 years Robert has made weekly rounds with the medical director and other physicians. He is an unpaid consultant, but is deeply devoted to the residents and the care they receive. He does so only because of his commitment and exceptional dedication to caring for others.

As a professor and consultant in long-term care, Robert provides staff with information on various medications and their side effects, conducting drug research studies that allow residents to reap benefits much earlier than if they had to wait for FDA approval, and sharing his knowledge with physicians and others to ensure residents receive appropriate medication regimes. He has great respect and compassion for residents and families, and serves as a role model for the students he teaches, wanting them to understand not just the medications and the science behind them, but to see first-hand how they may affect older adults, and the alternatives that may work better.

Following an early stint at the facility for a grant, he asked, “Do you mind if I keep bringing my students here after the grant has ended? I think that the clinical experience prepares them much better for when they move on to practice on their own.” 10 years later he is still doing just that, bringing students to the facility, and engaging them in multidisciplinary discussions about residents, medications, protocols and treatments.

“Robert has made contributions to the standard of care for residents within our facility,” the application states, “and for countless others who benefit from their student experience. We have no doubt former students have moved onto careers with a better understanding that puts respect, caring and resident dignity first.”

Nurse of the Year

Susan Jensen, LPN
Majora Lane Center, Millersburg

Susan Jensen, LPN at Majora Lane Center, was awarded the Long-Term Care Nurse of the Year Professional Achievement Award by the Ohio Health Care Association (OHCA). This statewide award is designed to honor those individuals who have excelled in providing outstanding care in the long-term care profession.

Susan has been with Majora Lane Center for 20 years, starting as a volunteer when she was 12. In 1993 she became a nursing assistant, and in 1999 was promoted to restorative nursing assistant while attending technical college to earn her LPN degree, which she received in 2003.

Susan now serves as the skin and wound nurse for the entire facility, and as the daytime charge nurse on the skilled unit. Continuing her dedication and tradition of service, she now brings her own daughters to volunteer, bringing smiles to the residents. Her name is one of the most frequently listed on Majora Lane Center's customer service satisfaction surveys completed by residents when they return home.

In addition to her regular duties, Susan will come in at a moment's notice, and will also stay over and help other nurses with admissions, IVs, treatments, medications and other needs.

Susan's focus is always on providing excellent care for all residents. According to Majora Lane Center Administrator Dianna Jackson, "She is one of the best patient advocates in our facility, and will always look out for the best interests of our residents. Her knowledge, skill and support make this a better place for our residents and staff."

Majora Lane Center provides the Holmes County area with excellent rehabilitation programs, skilled nursing care, and special care for people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Nurse Aides of the Year

Sarah Sharp, STNA, Care Companion
Briarwood Village, Coldwater

Sarah Sharp, STNA, is a Care Companion at Briarwood Village, Coldwater, where she has worked for the past three years. Since the beginning of her employment, Sarah showed excellence performance and dedication to her job. In May of 2009 the staff moved to a new care community with a focus on Person Centered Care. The STNA's role changed to that of a care companion, and Sarah embraced the change; under her leadership her "neighborhood" was one of the first to run smoothly under the new concept.

To care for the elderly as a nursing assistant requires a special individual; someone who can look beyond the non-glamorous task of the job to the fulfillment one receives for providing for the physical and emotional needs of the residents. Sarah is just such an individual, remaining positive and flexible in any situation.

Sarah reaches out to residents, working with those who have difficult mood and behavior issues, that suffer from dementia, cerebral palsy, MR, organic brain syndrome, bi-polar disorder and schizophrenia. She finds a way to make a connection with each of her residents no matter what their need; she sees the person, not the disease.

"She once told me she thinks about her residents all the time," said DON Mary Delzeith, who nominated Sarah for the award. "She is a leader . . . and works hard to ensure the operations of her neighborhood are smooth and that each resident receives the care they need!"

Nurse Aides of the Year

Michelle Stollmer, STNA
Piqua Manor, Piqua

Michelle Stollmer, STNA, has been at Piqua Manor for 14 of her 20 years in long-term care. During that time she has worked as a nurse aide, restorative aide and an activities assistant. According to administrator Kelly Wilhelm, in her current role as nurse aide, Michelle is an example of each of the seven Service Excellence standards that define what the facility looks for in an employee: teamwork, positive attitude, dependability, communication, privacy, patience and respect.

Michelle is completely dedicated to her residents, working in the transitional care area, anticipating the needs of residents before they ask. An excellent preceptor for both new staff members and providing support for those employees needing encouragement, Michelle does what is right and not what is easiest, which is an ideal attitude for training staff and caring for residents. The staff looks to her for guidance.

“She is a person that is defined by her integrity,” says Wilhelm; “to do the best she can every day, to do what is right for the residents, and to be true to herself.”

Michelle is the type of person and employee we should all strive to become, indicates the nomination form. Her head, her heart and her hands are always doing the right thing at the right time. She is a natural leader because of her confidence, positive attitude, and her dedication. Her residents come first and her goal is to serve each of them to the best of her ability every day.

Activities Professional of the Year

Judy Waterman, Activity Assistant
Van Wert Manor, Van Wert

Judy Waterman, Activity Assistant at Van Wert Manor for the past 7 years, always goes above and beyond the call of duty. As a retired self-employed hairdresser, her forte is fingernails, and always makes a point to have the resident's fingernails looking good and polished as if they had visited a spa. But in her regular duties, she is dependable, caring, positive, and energetic and puts caring into action as she savors her love of others.

Also trained as an STNA, visitors can find Judy sitting at a resident's bedside as she talks with him or her and listens. She helped to organize and initiate the resident choir, also taking the time to find authentic concert attire. She became a member of the resident's Pizza Club, which she attends in the evening on her own time.

Residents also know that Judy likes to shop, so whenever they need something she has no problem picking up items for them while she is out.

On Father's Day, Judy joins the men on their annual fishing trip, supplying much of the equipment including fishing reels, worms, tackle, a home-made picnic and grills. She welcomes residents with open arms into her own home, and is beloved by residents, families and other staff members.

Dietary Services Professional of the Year

Marlene Stinson, Dietary Aide/Cook
Alois Alzheimer Center, Cincinnati

Marlene Stinson, has served Alois Alzheimer Center in Cincinnati as a Dietary Aide and Cook for the past 11 ½. Though she works in the dietary department, Marlene is always eager to help the nursing department with meals when they are needed elsewhere. She is service-oriented, recognizing that she is there to enhance the lives of residents, and willing to help them in any way she can.

“Marlene takes great pride in her work, and will take the extra minute or two to ensure that all food is served at the right temperature, promptly and in an attractive manner,” says Amber Adams, Director of Dietary. “If she believes a resident is having difficulty, she will first comfort the resident and notify the proper staff member to provide additional assistance, and always follows up with the resident.”

According to Adams, Marlene sets the standard for what a dedicated employee should be. She pays attention to all the residents she comes in contact with, always with a smile on her face. She is often observed stopping to help those who seem distressed or in need of assistance. If she is concerned or senses a change in a resident, she will immediately seek out the proper person to notify. Her positive attitude has made her the employee that is selected when new employees need training and guidance.

“Her demeanor is always the same, she steps up to the task at hand and gets it done,” says Adams. “It is evident that she is dedicated to the residents, their families and her co-workers . . . she is a special person, indeed!”

Rehabilitation Services Professional of the Year

Robin Crites, Rehabilitation Aide
St. Catherine's Manor of Washington Court House

Robin Crites has been a rehabilitation aide for 15 of her 20 years in long-term care. At St. Catherine's Manor of Washington Court House, she treats every resident with the dignity and respect that she shows her own family, and is constantly striving to improve resident care.

Robin became an STNA in 1989, and after her sister was involved in a serious accident found her true calling as a restorative aide at St. Catherine's. Her sister eventually became a resident, and Robin was able to see that she received the care she needed and deserves, along with the other residents under her care. When her sister fell in love, got married and left the community, Robin stayed on and became a full-time restorative aide in 2002.

"Robin has the kind of care and concern for residents, their families and other staff that as an administrator you can only pray for," said Sue Creamer. "Her dependability, reliability, positive attitude and team approach are unmatched, and she takes great pride in what she does."

Robin deserves this recognition for the simple reason that she would never ask for it, nor would she expect it, Creamer says. Her focus is always on others, not herself, and it is time the rest of the state knows what a valuable contribution she has made and will continue to make to the lives of the residents we serve!

Support Service Professional of the Year

Sue Long, Marketing – Community Relations
Colonial Manor Health Care Center/JacLin Manor, Loudonville

Sue Long has served as the voice and face of Colonial Manor Health Care Center and Jac-Lin Manor in Loudonville as Marketing and Community Relations Director for the past 18 years, starting her career in long-term care as a nurse's aide 38 years ago.

With all of the negative press received by the long-term care community, Sue makes sure that the facilities receive as much positive coverage as possible. Whether in the form of the Employee of the Month, Resident of the Month, department recognition or special events including the Relay for Life, National Nursing Home Week and holiday projects, Sue feels that there is always good happening at the facilities, and the need to get it out to families and the community.

“She is constantly thinking of new ideas for both facilities – she markets constantly,” says Linda Snowbarger, Administrator at Colonial Manor. “All any of us has to say is ‘we need _____’ and she’s off and running with novel and innovative approaches.”

Never one to pat herself on the back, Sue is always seeking ways to have managers recognize talent in their departments by having them recognized for their positive contributions in the long-term care community.

Sue annually attends the OHCA Convention, and looks for ways she can improve on her abilities to recognize the positive in others and encourage them to continue to provide the highest quality of care. She has a never-ending thirst for knowledge, says Snowbarger, and she constantly researches and utilizes resources to share with others through newsletters for employees, residents and families, and through press releases and newspaper articles.

Adult Volunteer of the Year

Johanna Zeilman

Hillebrand Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Cincinnati

A senior citizen herself at 77, **Mrs. Johanna Zeilman**'s bright smile, cheerful face and vibrant attitude proves comfort and inspires residents, especially the newer residents who might be a bit uncertain about attending and participating in group activities at Hillebrand Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Cincinnati. This attribute is very helpful to the staff that may have a difficult time encouraging residents to attend group activities.

To say that Johanna exceeds the expectations of a volunteer would be an understatement. "Mrs. Jo" as she likes to be called, uses her great attitude to win the heart of residents. She has been a volunteer at Hillebrand for over 22 years, donating over 20,000 service hours to residents.

In April of 2007 she was honored with the Lifetime President's Volunteer Service Award, a national honor offered in recognition of volunteer service. Mrs. Jo has given generously of herself and her time, passionately serving the facility, residents and community.

Motivating residents to attend, participate and just have fun with one another is just one of the many talents visibly noticed by staff and family members alike. Mrs. Jo enthusiastically engages the residents in meaningful conversation, encouraging them by example to stay active and enjoy life. Her cheerful demeanor and willingness to help out when needed has been a great example for other volunteers, as well. Mrs. Jo is influential in promoting healthy, happy relationships among residents, staff volunteers and family members.

She's contagious!

Teen Volunteer of the Year

Michelle House
Hennis Care Centre, Dover

Nothing seems too big or too obscure for volunteer **Michelle House** to say an enthusiastic “yes!” From helping the Hennis Care Center staff pull off a two day “Skin Care Fair” for STNA week by building tiki booths and finding “island” prizes or participating in the facility “Run for Home,” a community-wide charity event for Habitat for Humanity, Michelle is right in the thick of things.

A merit student at her high school, Michelle plays violin in her school orchestra, sings in the high school Women’s Choir, paints downtown storefronts with the art club, dances in an apprentice company where she studies tap, jazz and her favorite ballet. She is a Silver Star Girl Scout working to achieve her Gold Star and an aide to the sixth grade religion class at church, yet still finds time to spend 8 – 16 hours per week during the school year at the facility, and 15 hours per week in the summer. Michelle has volunteered at Hennis Care Centre for the past seven years.

She has been involved in the facility pet therapy program to enhance the Person Centered Care approach throughout the facility, and helping to mentor the development of “Neighborhood Kids” on the Alzheimer’s and Dementia specialty unit. During the debate over the long-term care budget, Michelle volunteered to go to Columbus with a group of staff for a rally at the State House, and was thrilled to be part of state government in action.

If asked what she has done as a volunteer, Michelle would say “lots of things, but I don’t keep track because I do it just because I love it.” If you speak to the residents many ask for her by name – and some of them know her by the red hair!

Group Volunteer of the Year

Girl Scout Troop #2423

Winchester Terrace, Mansfield

The members of **Girl Scout Troop #2423**, Mansfield, which was formed three years ago, have been a part of Winchester Terrace since its inception. The troop composed of ten youngsters has girls of varying ages, abilities and ethnicity but they have one purpose – assisting residents of Winchester Terrace however they can. They are dedicated to their work, and rejoin the troop and assist at the facility each year. Some have even learned some American Sign Language in order to better communicate.

The girls in the Troop participate in the many evening dances, National Nursing Home Week Prom, and the annual Christmas Party. They help in any way they can, with snacks and punch, singing and dancing. Some of them bake cookies for the resident Christmas Party, and assist Santa as he hands out gifts and has pictures taken. Each year they carol throughout the facility. Impromptu singing during the evening meal also occurs frequently. They often draw and paint pictures to bring to their ‘favorite’ residents before the meetings held in the facility. Valentines are sent, and the girls readily help with the Halloween party.

Last year, the troop helped the residents with their vegetable gardening by assisting in the planting and caring for seeds and new plants. Currently, they are working on a play for residents, and planned a sensory garden which they will install this spring.

Many of the girls in the troop are daughters and grand daughters of staff members. The employees are proud to have their children understand what they do for a living a little better, and are proud when they hear a resident talk about how their child helped them. The Troop has encouraged many residents to participate in events they otherwise may not participate in, and seem to bring a special “fun” to parties.

These girls have touched the hearts of residents, families and staff members with their kindness to the residents!