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**The Association For Community Living, Inc.**

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*Press invited to attend.*

## **Celebrating Relationships: Children and Adults with Autism, Down Syndrome, and Other Developmental Disabilities Heralded for Achievements at 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony, June 16<sup>th</sup>**

**THE ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING** held its 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, June 16, 2009 at **The Log Cabin Banquet and Meeting House** in Holyoke. The yearly gathering is primarily a celebration of the achievements of children and adults with Autism, Down syndrome, and other developmental disabilities whom The Association serves.

From transitioning into their own apartment or a shared living situation, gaining empowerment in working with one's medical team, furthering one's education, and taking up leadership roles, to the achievement of other personal goals, such as leading a healthier lifestyle – individuals recognized at the Annual Dinner teach us important lessons in perseverance, persistence, courage and discipline.

**Receiving achievement awards this year were:** Blake Alexander, Ellen Auchter, John Bednarz, Tyrone Bolden, Michael Bonavita, Joseph Budnick, David Cobb, Michael Cooley, Tanya Draper, James Duncanson, Maria Ferreira, Darryl Fredette, Matthew Leavitt, Lori Miller, John Moody, Cynthia Ocasio, Jonathan Paul, Richard Pazik, Doreen Peeters, Rory Quinn, Mary Roberts, Debra Seldin, Mitchell Torres, Joan Watson, Richard Zupkoski

Barbara Pilarcik, R.N., who was promoted to Executive Director of The Association in February 2009, notes "The people we serve have many unique talents and abilities; they are able to achieve far more than most people realize. This meeting and ceremony gives the wider community an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the attainment of success, often against great odds. These achievements mean so much to them and the pride they feel in accomplishing them is a joy to behold. They are an inspiration to us, to each other and to all those who attend."

Prior to entering into her new position, Pilarcik was the Director of Specialized Home Care and Intensive Residential Services, two divisions of The Association – a position she held since 1993. Her relationship with The Association began in 1985, as the Director of Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF) managing ICF/MR programs for people with mental retardation and physical handicaps.

**Thirty-two business sponsors, who provided their generous support, helped to make The Association's 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony possible this year.** They include **2 Platinum Sponsors:** Hampden Bank (Springfield), and Westfield Bank (Westfield); **5 Gold Sponsors:** dani. fine photography (Easthampton), Mansir Printing (Holyoke), Pride Stores (Springfield), The Log Cabin Banquet & Meeting House (Holyoke), TD Banknorth Insurance Agency, Inc. (West Springfield); **2 Achievement Award Sponsors:** George C. Keady, III, Senior Vice President-Investments, and James F. Foard, Jr., Vice President-Investments, for UBS Financial Services, Inc. (Springfield), MassMutual Financial Group (Springfield); **2 Awards Sponsors:** The Bank of Western Massachusetts, and TurningLeaf Design; **9 Program Sponsors:** ADNET Technologies, Inc. (Windsor, CT), Chase Clarke Stewart & Fontana (Springfield), Greenfield Corporate Center (Greenfield), Georgilas Properties (Needham), Ray Goulet Carpentry (Belchertown), Oak Specialists, Inc. (Belchertown), Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. (Springfield), Western New England College (Springfield), and Skoler, Abbott & Presser, P.C. (Springfield); and **12 Donors:** Awards Company (Springfield), Boston Red Sox (Boston), Corporation for Independent Living (Wethersfield, CT), Crocker Communications Inc. (Greenfield), Delta Dental of Massachusetts (Boston), Fenway Golf (East Longmeadow), Hulmes Transportation Services, Ltd. (Belchertown), Interskate 91 (Wilbraham), Majestic Theater (West Springfield), Norman Rockwell Museum (Stockbridge), Southwick's Zoo (Mendon), Spartan Brake & Muffler Shops (Wilbraham), and Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute (Williamstown).

Roughly 400 people attend the dinner annually – community leaders, friends, employees, children and adults with developmental disabilities who are served by The Association, and their families; supporters, care providers and volunteers.

The Association For Community Living was created in 1952 by five mothers of children with intellectual disability who shared a dream that their children would live and grow as valued members of their communities. Today, The Association provides support, resources and programs in Western Massachusetts and northern Worcester County to over 1,548 individuals with developmental disabilities, such as [mental retardation](#), [cerebral palsy](#), [Autism Spectrum Disorder](#), [Down syndrome](#) and [Fragile X syndrome](#), and with major brain trauma such as [Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder](#) and Shaken Baby Syndrome. The Association also supports over 1,208 families.

To make a donation or discuss gifts of stock, insurance or charitable planned gifts to The Association For Community Living, please contact Beverly Herbert, Director of Development, at (800) 536-2910, or visit the website at [www.theassn.org](http://www.theassn.org).