

# 2007 AHCA/NCAL Annual Awards



## Alexis Starkey

Every year the American Health Care Association (AHCA) and the National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL) seek outstanding individuals and recognize their extraordinary dedication and commitment to touching the lives of residents in long term care facilities throughout the nation.

From a host of worthy candidates and programs nationwide, AHCA/NCAL presents annual awards to three out-

standing volunteers—young adult, adult, and group; DD Hero of the Year; Noble Caregiver in Assisted Living; NCAL Administrator of the Year; and best National Assisted Living Week programming. Also included this year is a Friend of Quality award. The 2007 awards are sponsored by My InnerView, Wasau, Wis.

The winners will be recognized during the 58th AHCA/NCAL Convention & Exposition in Boston, Oct. 7-10.

## BEN THACKER

Young Adult Volunteer of the Year

Now 18, Ben Thacker began visiting The Cedars in Charlottesville, Va., as a toddler accompanying his mother to work. He has since become an integral part of the facility's daily routines—planning group activities, like horse shoes, Bingo, and shuffleboard, and delivering meal trays to bedridden patients. But his contributions reach far beyond the everyday stuff in ways that keep patients and staff in good spirits. For example, he ran a haunted house that brought more than 400 community members to The Cedars and built an award-winning float on behalf of the facility. A member of his high school varsity baseball team, he arranged for residents to attend games and recruited teammates to work as volunteers, making regular visits to individual residents. "Ben is a shower of blessings," says Ruth Estes, an 83-year-old resident at The Cedars.



Thacker

## STANLEY WATSON

Adult Volunteer of the Year

Stanley Watson volunteers so much of his time at WoodBridge Health Campus – Trilogy in Logansport, Ind., that Executive Director Vickie Isaacs says she thought he was an employee when she first started. Over the past two years, he has volunteered more than 1,200 hours of his time—doing everything from delivering mail, to reading the newspaper to people with visual impairments, to shopping for residents, and filling in as dance partner. He's always the man for the job when the facility needs a Santa Claus or an Easter bunny for special events. According to Resident Program Director Ellen Toco, Watson is simply never negative. One of his most important roles is accompanying residents to outside physician appointments, where he is a master at easing people's anxieties.



Watson

# 2007 AHCA/NCAL Annual Awards

## THE BINGO ANGELS Group Volunteers of the Year

The Bingo Angels have been serving the residents of Syl-View Health Care Center in Sylvania, Ga., for more than 20 years. Its name belies the fact that the group does far more than support Bingo games. They seem to be everywhere at Syl-View, conducting church services, holding sing-a-longs, hosting parties and square dances, and serving as sponsors for residents who have no families. One stated goal of the Bingo Angels is to

*One goal of the Bingo Angels is to get all residents involved in activities.*

help get all residents involved in activities and, according to Activities Director Betty Scarborough, “they are very good at it.” Over the years, the Angels have given an astounding 60,200 hours of volunteer services to the facility.

## CAROL STEWART DD Hero of the Year

As chair of the Human Rights Committee at Preferred Community Homes in Boise, Idaho, Carol Stewart serves as a volunteer guardian for Jacob—a client with no family of his own. So thoroughly has Stewart integrated Jacob into her own family, according to Renee Naylor, regional rep with Westacre Management, that she keeps Jacob’s picture on the mantle with the rest of her family photos. “Without her, Jacob would not know what the love of family is,” says Naylor. “She makes sure that Jacob has normalization in his life by throwing him birthday parties and providing Christmas presents.” Even when Stewart was diagnosed with a serious illness, she

*She makes sure that Jacob has normalization in his life by throwing him birthday parties and providing Christmas presents.*

continued her visits and her work on the Board of Guardians. “Not only has she so eloquently touched the lives of those she serves, we who watch her are unduly impressed with her sweet understanding of what service is,” Naylor said.

## BRENDA CAUDILLO Noble Caregiver in Assisted Living

A medication aide at the Golden Living Community in Scottsbluff, Neb., Brenda Caudillo’s commitment to the residents in her daily care is conveyed through her personal work philosophy of getting to know the residents as individuals. She helps make every day count by asking her residents about what affects them, ranging from family happenings and health conditions to foods



Caudillo

they like and dislike. She has an often uncanny ability to recognize when a resident is at risk and to address that individual’s needs before they become problems.

Residents love her, and she returns that love by baking them special treats or helping them with their crafts during activities. She has worked for the Golden Living Community for the past 19 years.

## MARY JANE KOREN 2007 Friend of Quality Award

Mary Jane Koren, MD, MPH, assistant vice president of the Program on Quality of Care for Frail Elders at The Commonwealth Fund, has established an impeccable reputation for advancing the practice of quality in long term care. She serves on the Advancing Excellence in America’s Nursing Homes campaign steering committee, where she helped facilitate a major grant from The Commonwealth Fund to assist the campaign in funding its strategic initiative to improve coordination and effectiveness among its Local Areas Networks for Excellence. Her career has included a high-profile position as director of the New York State Department of Health’s Bureau of Long Term Care Services during the state’s implementation of the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1987. She also directed the establishment of the federal Quality Improvement Program when she served as principal clinical coordinator for the New Jersey Peer Review Organization. As an academician, Koren has served in various capacities at Montefiore Medical Center and the Bronx VA Medical Center.

## 2007 AHCA/NCAL Annual Awards

### HELEN CRUNK

NCAL Administrator of the Year

As the administrator of Victoria Gardens, an assisted living facility for individuals with Alzheimer's disease located Bellevue, Neb., Helen Crunk is highly regarded for her commitment and expertise by residents, their families, and caregiving staff, as well as by the local community. She is adept at designing specialized activities programs with residents' past and present interests in mind, and she attends every event. Crunk's outreach to families includes spending countless hours helping them to cope with and understand Alzheimer's disease. She leads her caregiving staff by example, conducting monthly staff meetings to show how state regulations apply to their jobs. In addition, she and her caregiving team have held muffin sales and raised thousands of dollars for the local Alzheimer's Association chapter. Crunk's passion has motivated many people to participate in the annual Alzheimer's walk. She

has been a consultant on design for assisted living facilities specializing in the care of residents with Alzheimer's, and she has testified before the state legislature on the topic. Crunk often volunteers to speak on how best to care for residents with Alzheimer's, and her peers have twice elected her president of her Nebraska Assisted Living Association district.



Crunk

*She is adept at designing specialized activities programs with residents' past and present interests in mind, and she attends every event.*

# 2007 AHCA/NCAL Annual Awards

## THE VILLAGE AT REGIONAL WEST National Assisted Living Week Award

The Village at Regional West, Scottsbluff, Neb., is recognized for designing activities that best exemplified the “Hearts in Harmony” theme of National Assisted Living Week 2006. Activities involving residents and staff as well as the local community highlighted the importance of family and friends getting together to share good times. A carry-in dinner allowed everyone to share a meal, laughter, music, and entertainment, with a time of reflection and a photo for reminiscing. A local motivational speaker discussed the importance of communica-

tion and caring between family members, residents, and staff. Resident participation in a Senior Olympics used

exercises as a way to stress the importance of strong hearts.

Staff created a Mexican Independence Day fiesta to promote appreciation of different cultures.

“We were provided with tools for greater acceptance of our differences, ability to see mystery in the ordinary, and openness to experience and appreciate new things,” said Karen Vorse, administrator of the Village at Regional West.



**Residents, families, staff, and community share good times.**