

Department on Aging presents 2015 Senior Hall of Fame Inductees and 2016 Outstanding Caregiver Award recipients

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Awards highlight service to the community & exceptional caregiving

Springfield– Today, the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) presented awards to the 2015 Senior Hall of Fame inductees and the 2016 Outstanding Caregiver award recipients. The department recognizes the special contributions made by older adults in the categories of community service, education, and the labor force, in regard to their employment as well as the compassion and dedication of caregivers throughout our state.

“We are pleased to acknowledge the contributions these individuals have made,” said IDoA Division Manager of Community Relations and Outreach Elizabeth Delheimer. “Their accomplishments have helped make Illinois communities a better place to live and we thank them for their dedication.”

The Senior Illinois Hall of Fame was created by the Legislature in 1994 to honor Illinois residents age 65 and older for their personal achievement. Since then, 98 people have inducted into the Hall of Fame including the 2015 inductees. Each inductee is chosen through a statewide nomination and selection process. IDoA compiles a list of nominees then consults with the members of the Illinois Council on Aging to determine the winner of each category.

The 2015 Senior Illinois Hall of Fame inductees are:

Robert A. Saddler, M.Ed, Ed.D., 81, of Chicago, is the 2015 inductee of the Education category. For nearly 60 years, Dr. Saddler has gone above and beyond to build a foundation of educational success for Chicago youth. Dr. Saddler holds a doctorate in Education Leadership and supports several educational programs aimed at improving the lives of students and preparing them for college. He recently began a mentoring program for young men in 7th and 8th grade to provide moral support and academic guidance. Through various volunteer initiatives, Dr. Saddler continues to instill his passion for education and commitment to helping students achieve success.

James Thomas Pioth, 68, of Oak Forest, is the 2015 inductee of the Labor Force category. Pioth has worked close to 50 years for the Oak Forest Fire Department. He started out as a junior firefighter and soon became a full-time firefighter. Early in his career he found a strong interest in the fire investigation unit, was a founding member of the fire investigation team, and was instrumental in establishing a yearly investigative training program. Pioth is a decorated firefighter who continues to contribute to the Oak Forest Fire Department and serve the residents of Oak Forest.

Martin G. Vilimek, 69, of Bridgeview, is the 2015 inductee of the Community Service category. Vilimek has dedicated most of his life to volunteering. He is a retired firefighter who was instrumental in making Bridgeview the third community in Illinois to receive certification from the National Weather Service as a storm ready community. In addition, Vilimek has been a volunteer with the Masons and Shriners for more than twenty years, having won the Meritorious Service Award and volunteering at the Shriners Children’s Hospital. His other recognitions include the Community Leader Award for community involvement and civic duty and serving in various leadership roles.

The Outstanding Caregiver distinction is awarded to caregivers in five categories who have been exceptional in their service to their clients. The five categories for Outstanding Caregiver are housing facility, nursing facility, home health services, Community Care Program services and Older American Act services.

The 2016 Outstanding Caregiver Award recipients are:

Sandra Foster of Washington, IL—Sandra Foster is the recipient of the 2016 Outstanding Caregiver Award for a Housing Facility. She has been serving as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Caregiver for Supportive Living in Washington, Illinois for over 30 years and celebrated her retirement last month. Sandra is passionate and extremely dedicated to her residents, always going above and beyond her expectations as a CNA to ensure residents are receiving the best care possible.

Sharon Rigler of Pekin, IL—Sharon is the recipient of the 2016 Outstanding Caregiver Award for Nursing Facilities. During her father's residency at Timbercreek Rehab and Health Care in Perkin, Illinois, Sharon decided to go back to school to pursue a career as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). Upon the completion of her certification, she began serving as a CNA at Timbercreek and has continued to work there for the past ten years. She is incredibly loving, comforting and kind and has impacted the lives of countless individuals through her extraordinary work.

Geraldine Coleman of Melrose Park, IL—Geraldine Coleman is the recipient of the 2016 Outstanding Caregiver Award for Home Health Services. She has been serving as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Life Enrichment Aid for the Supportive Living Community Victory Centre in Riverwoods, Illinois for nine years. Geraldine is extremely passionate about her work, always going above and beyond to provide residents with a comfortable and fulfilling lifestyle.

Carol Lane of Joliet, IL—Carol Lane is the recipient of the 2016 Outstanding Caregiver Award for Community Care Program Services. She currently works at Community Care Systems, Inc., in Joliet, Illinois. Through her service here, she has positively impacted and improved the lives of countless individuals. Carol recognizes the value of each of her clients and constantly strives to help them achieve their dreams, no matter how big or small.

Joyce Schweig of LaGrange, IL—Joyce Schweig is the recipient of the 2016 Outstanding Caregiver Award for Older American Act Services. She has been serving as a Chore Worker at Aging Care Connections since March, 2008 and has demonstrated exemplary work in her field. Providing 26 clients in their home with companionship and assistance completing household tasks, Joyce is unmistakably dedicated to improving the lives of not only those she serves, but every person she encounters in life as well.

About the Illinois Department on Aging

The Department's mission is to serve and advocate for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity and quality of life. For more information, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (or TTY for the hearing impaired at 1-888-206-1327), or log on to the website at www.illinois.gov/aging