MISSION POSSIBLE
AWARDS GALA
MAY 21, 2019 | RADISSON PLAZA HOTEL | KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN
Dear friends,

It is our honor to welcome you to the 2019 LeadingAge Michigan Member Awards Gala. Each year, LeadingAge Michigan honors individuals and groups who embody excellence in leadership, care, and service innovation, and who have made outstanding contributions to their communities and the field of long term care. It is always an evening of celebration and laughter!

As the awards committee, we were absolutely floored at all of the nominations submitted this year. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to nominate their staff and peers. We were truly moved at the stories we read and the testimonies of passion and dedication that each person brings to your organization. It was hard to limit the amount of awards given as there are so many deserving candidates in each of our member communities.

To the 2019 award winners, we want to extend a sincere congratulations! Each of you have contributed greatly to your communities and furthered the mission statements of each of your organizations. We are so excited to celebrate your integrity, talent, compassion, and excellence. We look forward to your continued success and thank you for the impact you have made in the lives of the seniors you serve.

To our members, it is an honor and privilege to recognize the accomplishments of your wonderful staff and team. We love to be a part of your team and mission. Thank you for the opportunity to celebrate your stories of employees, volunteers, residents, programs, communities, efforts, initiatives, best practices, and people that have made a significant difference in the lives of others.

Congratulations and we look forward to a memorable evening of celebration!

Yours truly,
The 2019 Awards Committee
MEMBER AWARD CATEGORIES

Individual Awards

The Business Partner of the Year
Business Partner of the Year Award recognizes an organization providing products and services to senior care providers who has demonstrated unwavering support and active engagement with the association, and continuous commitment to our members and senior care industry.

Caring Spirit
The Caring Spirit Award recognizes the achievements of front-line staff and direct care employees who have made a significant impact upon the lives of older adults through exceptional proficiency and personal commitment in the delivery of quality services and the performance of his/her job duties.

Chair Citation
The LeadingAge Michigan Chair Citation Award honors an individual identified as having great impact on senior care through Michigan policy, legislative development or service.

Emerging Leader
The Emerging Leader Award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated aptitude for and commitment to professional growth as a leader and has successfully assumed expanded leadership responsibilities within a LeadingAge Michigan member organization in the past 3 years.

Individual Volunteer of the Year
The Individual Volunteer of the Year Award recognizes an individual who provides extraordinary service to seniors by volunteering within a member organization and has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to preserve the dignity and well-being of residents/clients.

Leadership in Action
The Leadership in Action Award recognizes an individual whose actions and leadership have greatly enhanced the work environment in their organization as well as quality of life for the residents and clients they serve.
MEMBER AWARD CATEGORIES

Life Member
The Life Member Award is presented to distinguished individuals who have made significant contributions to the field of aging services, creating a lasting and meaningful legacy. The nominee must have worked for a LeadingAge Michigan member and have retired from such employment.

Outstanding Mentor
The Outstanding Mentor Award recognizes the efforts of an individual who has mentored a protégé(s) in the senior services field. A mentor is someone who has nurtured and encouraged others and provided opportunities for personal and professional growth. The nomination should include testimonials or other relevant information from the protégé(s).

Shining Star
The Shining Star Award recognizes a gifted aging services professional who has consistently demonstrated dedication, commitment and enthusiasm in his/her profession, and has made a significant impact upon the lives of older adults.

Trustee of the Year
The Trustee of the Year Award recognizes an individual who has served with distinction on the governing board of a LeadingAge Michigan member organization and thereby made an outstanding contribution to the well-being of seniors, to the employees who serve them, and to the organization’s mission.

Group Awards

Group Volunteer of the Year
The Group Volunteer of the Year Award recognizes a volunteer group, auxiliary or organization working within a member organization that has provided extraordinary service to seniors.

Leading-Edge Care & Services
The Leading-Edge Care & Services Award recognizes a member organization for programs and services that are models of innovation and excellence and contribute significantly to the quality of life of individuals served, or significantly improve the organization’s operations. The nominations for the award can come from the area of innovation in adoption of new technologies, workforce development practices, community collaboration, best practices, etc.
CHAIR CITATION

Pam Ditri  
*Burcham Hills*

We are pleased to recognize Pam Ditri for the Chair Citation Award. Pam is the soon-to-be retired Executive Director of Burcham Hills, a Life Plan Community, where she has contributed nearly three decades of leadership. Her tenure at Burcham has spanned over 27 years, 15 of them as the Executive Director. She is a licensed Nursing Home Administrator and studied Criminal Justice at Lansing Community College.

Pam also served as a member of the board of LeadingAge Michigan for many years and provided visionary leadership as the board chairman. She has been incredibly involved throughout the years and provided invaluable counsel and wisdom to the leadership team and staff. Some additional accomplishments include an appointment as a Member of Michigan Board of Nursing Home Administrators by Governor Granholm in 2008, a second appointment by Governor Snyder in 2011 and participation in Master Planning with Burcham’s Board of Trustees, Life Care Services and the executive leadership team within Burcham.

Pam is wrapping up a career marked by accomplishment, initiative, collaboration and integrity. In grateful recognition of all she has accomplished, for all of her service and for the person that she is, we wish her a much deserved long, prosperous and joyful retirement!
Thank you for your combined 191 years of service, commitment and dedication to the field of aging services.
BUSINESS PARTNER OF THE YEAR

GMB Architecture + Engineering

GMB Architecture + Engineering was founded in 1968 and is a full-service design firm with mechanical, electrical, civil, and structural engineering, architecture, interior design, and landscape architecture. GMB focuses its expertise on industries that make a positive impact on the world. Their work in senior environment is based on a desire to improve the lives of seniors. The GMB culture of learning, growing and giving aligns well with LeadingAge and its members.

GMB Architecture & Engineering is awarded the Business Partner of the Year Award for their unwavering commitment to innovation in the field of aging and their unwavering support of LeadingAge Michigan and its members for almost a decade. We are so thankful for your alignment and dedication to so many of our members’ missions.
LEADING-EDGE CARE & SERVICES

EHM Wellness Staff
EHM Senior Solutions

While wellness programs are not a new concept, EHM Senior Solutions has embraced the a culture of multi-dimensional approach to wellness by using a multidisciplinary team composed of Wellness Coordinators, Registered Dieticians, Dining Services, Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists, Social Workers, Nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants, Certified Aging in Place Specialists, Technology Solution Specialists, Ministry Services, and more to create a wellness program unlike any other. They provide whole person care to independent and assisted living, memory care, nursing home, CCRC, homecare, private duty, Continuing Care at Home (CCaC) programs, and to the local community. Overall, this is a program that believes in keeping people well, safe, and independent. It is truly a cutting-edge and holistic service for older adults.
GROUP VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Marvin’s Bistro & Krolik Café Volunteers
Jewish Senior Life

The Marvin’s Bistro & Krolik Café volunteers are a group of thirty individuals who, collectively, devote over 12,000 hours a year to running kosher restaurants located within Jewish Senior Life communities. These extraordinary volunteers range in age from 20 to 90 years old and bring genuine sincerity and warmth to the community. Over time, as the volunteers’ positive energy exuded throughout JSL, residents would invite their loved ones for meals, staff would enjoy lunching with coworkers, and community members would gather while enjoying the company of Bistro and Café volunteers. This group would come to “work” early, stay late, organize the shop, chop, clean, prep, cover shifts, and do what needs to get done to serve the residents and provide the best restaurant experience possible. They know the residents by name, know their orders, and go the extra mile, truly nourishing the body and soul!

SAMARITAS SENIOR LIVING OF GRAND RAPIDS

Bobbie Jo Kenyon & Lance Miller
Samaritas Senior Living

Bobbi Jo Kenyon and Lance Miller are a couple who volunteer at Samaritas routinely. They spend time with residents and get to know them individually, becoming regular visitors and support for many who have very little to no family support. They have taught Academy classes, helped with events, decorated the community for the holiday season, visited residents in the hospital, and so much more. Not only have they dedicated their time and love to the Samaritas seniors, but they have recently launched a project with residents using their personal photography, videography and writing skills called “Legacy of Love.” This project works directly with seniors in an interview process to capture the resident’s personal history, family history, and stores of life and love. These lifetime legacy stories are priceless memories for families and residents alike and have touched so many lives. These volunteers are truly outstanding!
Lee Riedl
Samaritas Senior Living

Lee is a newer volunteer to Samaritas that has become integral to the community. She is an advocate for families and residents, volunteering her time and abilities in a multitude of ways. For example, Lee assists families with Medicaid applications, using her unique abilities to help navigate the multitude of paperwork associated with this process. Even more extraordinarily, due to her idea and creativity Samaritas is the proud owner of a Veteran Recognition Wall. She created 3 displays showcasing photos of Samaritas veterans recognizing their service to our country. She brings each resident she interacts with joy and laughter, and has contributed an outstanding amount of time and love to Samaritas.
SHINING STAR

Doug Essix
Friendship Village of Michigan

Doug has been with Friendship Village since 2007. He began his career in the maintenance department, working full time while also furthering his education to become Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) certified. Through his dedication and work ethic, he then was promoted to Maintenance Supervisor. However, what makes Doug outstanding is not his excellence in the field but his character and compassion for the residents and team that he supervises. He goes out of his way to ensure that the residents’ needs are met, even if that means extra time or workload for him. He also anticipates and cares for the needs of his team. Recently, he saw the need for employees to have feedback from their peers and management immediately when they went the extra mile in providing excellent service to residents and staff. To meet this need, he implemented the Team Spirit Award program. At any time, employees and residents can complete an “Awesome Citation” card describing the action of a staff member. This is just one example of Doug’s ability to encourage and uplift staff for the ultimate good of the entire community, and why he is so deserving of the Shining Star Award!

Josie Villegas
The Village of East Harbor

Josie has been with PVM for several years as the Primary Discharge Planner. She works incredibly long hours to make sure every detail of each discharge is covered. She begins by first speaking with each resident and their families to find out their goals, providing support and encouragement every step of the way. Through her careful attention to detail and unwavering compassion, she has increased the number of successful discharges and number of patients who see their primary care doctors within 7 days of discharge. Josie has also redesigned our discharge paperwork to include important information that eases the transition. She is a true advocate for the patients’ best interests, a dedicated social worker and discharge planner, and a shining star.
SHINING STAR

Kelly Esman, MSN, RN
Samaritas Senior Living of Cadillac

Kelly is the Director of Nursing at Samaritas Senior Living of Cadillac. She embodies a Shining Star, providing consistent leadership and dedicated contributions to the seniors she serves. She has greatly improved staff retention during her time at Samaritas through positive leadership and compassionate coaching to the nursing staff. She constantly empowers the nurses to embrace their roles, become critical thinkers and continue being supreme advocates for the residents. She has also reduced the return to hospital rates for the resident, showing uncontested quality of care for seniors. She is a highly valued member of her team, respected by her staff and peers, and a forward thinker who has drastically improved the teamwork, staff morale and overall kinship.

Samantha Stephens
Silver Maples of Chelsea

Samantha is a Social Worker at Silver Maples of Chelsea, fresh out of college. She brought an extraordinary amount of compassion and wisdom to her position and works collaboratively with other internal departments and community agencies to ensure that residents receive optimal services when they are most in need. Under her leadership, the Personal Assistant Program has expanded to serve more residents than ever before while remaining fiscally sound. Residents know that they can rely on Samantha for a variety of social service needs. She does not shy away from tough conversations, but does so with the utmost respect for the people she serves. Finally, Samantha is a natural leader and networker, and is constantly looking for ways to connect residents to the greater community.
Caring Spirit

Cheri Noga
Heritage Community of Kalamazoo

Cheri began her career at Heritage Community in 2006 as the Rehabilitation Aide in the therapy department. She excelled at this position, working with seniors to improve their strength and mobility. When Amber Place, an assisted living memory care community, opened in 2011, Cheri saw an opportunity to utilize her passion for caring for people with dementia and accepted a position as a Medication Assistant. She has a genuine desire to improve the lives of the people she serves and accomplishes this on a daily basis by purposefully engaging the residents in meaningful activities. Cheri exudes excellence personally and professionally and maintains the highest level of quality in memory care through participating in monthly Best Friends™ trainings as an Associate Trainer. She mentors and coaches her peers on the successful approaches that she has learned through the workshops. She brings and exudes respect, empathy, support, trust and humor and genuinely celebrates each and every resident.

Mary Danhof
St. Ann’s Home

Mary has dedicated her career to serving the residents and families of St. Ann’s for over 37 years, devoting her talents, abilities and love to the residents and staff. She serves as a Dietary Aide, bringing unwavering leadership, positivity and stability to the dietary team. What is more impressive than the longevity and quality of her career is the dedication and commitment hidden beneath her resume. Mary’s director and peers continue to applaud Mary for her work ethic and personal approach to her position. She is hailed as a “silent hero” who is always conscious of the day’s tasks and challenges, and goes far beyond what is expected to help ensure that resident meals meet resident expectations. She always arrives with a smile and generous warmth to her peers and strives to bring that joy to others. She really is incredible and so worthy of recognition!
CARING SPIRIT

Stefany Conrad  
*The Village of East Harbor*

Stefany has been a dedicated Resident Assistant for many years at the Village of East Harbor. She has recently taken the professional leap and graduated with a degree in Practical Nursing. Her dedication to both work and furthering her education has been extraordinary. However, it is not just her self-drive and initiative that makes Stefany stand out. She truly goes above and beyond every day, enriching the lives of her residents in memory care. She takes pride in having fun with residents, and keeps a personal supply of activities and crafts with her at work to engage residents in meaningful ways outside of regularly scheduled activities. She spends her own money and time to bring joy into their lives, and goes above and beyond in special ways. For example, during this winter’s inclement weather, Stefany volunteered to pack her bag and stay on campus for three days and nights to ensure that residents would continue to receive quality care. She is a kind, compassionate, and truly caring spirit!

OUTSTANDING MENTOR OF THE YEAR

Chris Simons  
*Clark Retirement Community*

Chris is the Director of Dementia and Life Enrichment Services at Clark Retirement Community. She has been instrumental with leading the entire Clark community in the sphere of “person-centeredness” purposefully and with compassion. She has led the entire life enrichment team and dementia services team through regular education and in-service events, providing valuable training in quality care. Chris was also highly influential in helping our community craft the “Person Centered Living Statement,” and has been at the forefront of establishing the Montessori program for older adults with dementia. A fierce advocate for people with dementia, she has changed the way her community cares for and understands this disease, impacting countless lives. Everyone who has the pleasure of learning and interacting with Chris feels encouraged, empowered and cared for...she truly is a wonderful and outstanding mentor.
OUTSTANDING MENTOR OF THE YEAR

Janet Butler  
Woodhaven Retirement Community

Janet Butler is currently the Director of Nursing and Health Services at Woodhaven Retirement Community. However, her scope of knowledge and influence spans well beyond the Livonia community, as she is one of Michigan’s foremost and most well-known Directors of Nursing. She began her life in the Philippines, where she received her nursing education. As a young single girl, she came to the United States and has worked for 29 years, not only as a Registered Nurse with increasing amounts of responsibility, but as a mentor who has taught and coached others around her. She has dedicated her life to the not for profit long term care field, where she feels she has been called and her personal mission, but also where she truly excels. She provides direct clinical oversight and staff support in assisted living, as well. She is genuine, compassionate, concerned, available, nurturing yet firm, consistent and passionate about her expectations and those she serves.

Kevin Evans  
Martha T. Berry Medical Care Facility

Kevin currently serves as the Executive Director at Martha T. Berry Medical Care Facility. However, his long term care experience spans all the way back to his high school days, where he volunteered at a nursing home in Grand Rapids. Since then, his career has grown and developed throughout the aging industry. Prior to Martha T. Berry, he has had nine years of operational experience at two five star medical care facilities, held the position as the Director of Regulatory Affairs at LeadingAge Michigan, taught the American College of Health Care Administration exam preparation courses for over ten years, and more. More than his leadership experience, though impressive, is his ability to mentor while leading. He shares his skills, knowledge and expertise with every person he comes in contact with. He has a keen ability to listen, even during the most difficult conversations, and truly makes his staff feel heard and valued. His caring and compassionate spirit is infectious, and his leadership inspires his team to the same excellence that he brings.
EMERGING LEADER

Lisa Gamble
*Samaritas Senior Living of Cadillac*

Lisa Gamble has worked in senior living programs with Samaritas since 1979. In her career, she has had direct line staff and management positions including: dietary aide, dietary manager, short order cook, activity aide, activity director, social services, admissions, MDS coordinator, rehab director, and quality coordinator. In December of 2018, she transitioned into an Administrator position. Lisa is not only committed to Samaritas, she has a deep commitment to ensuring that her residents get the absolute best care. What made Lisa stand out in each role that she excelled at was that her team could see the pure joy that she got from caring for residents. In 2018, Lisa quietly took the Administrator courses as she believed the knowledge would benefit her and also provide more support and more effective collaboration with the Administrators. In December of 2018, she took a leap into leadership as the Administrator of a Samaritas Skilled Nursing Facility in Cadillac MI, where she will have the ability to mentor and develop other caregivers and senior living leaders.

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Carolyn Martin
*The Village of East Harbor*

Carolyn Martin has worked at the Village for over 15 years. She has worked her way up from Sales Manager to Administrator with hard work, dedication, and education. She wears many hats around the organization, and oversee several departments, juggling many responsibilities with grace. She has a gift of seeing qualities and strengths in people that they don’t always see in themselves. She uses this leadership ability and puts her staff in roles or situations where their gifts can best be used. She truly brings out the best in everyone because she sees the best in everyone. She leads by example with a caring heart, a fun spirit and professional focus. She encourages self-improvement, community, and fosters good team relationships and has lead her staff to a work culture change for the better. Her talents and abilities are only outshined by her compassion for resident care, making her community a great place to work and live!
LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Denise Rabidoux  
*EHM Senior Solutions*

After graduating from Oakland University with a degree in nursing, Denise built a career of serving older adult in Michigan. Since 1999, she has served as the President and CEO of EHM Senior Solutions (formerly Evangelical Homes of Michigan). She previously served as Chief Executive Officer (Executive Director) of the Jewish Homes and Services for Aging in Metro Detroit and was Regional Vice President/Director for one of the largest for profit skilled nursing providers in Michigan. She is also a former President of the Board of Directors of LeadingAge Michigan. She is a Past Chair of the Michigan Chapter of American College of Health Care Administrators and the former Co-Chair of Michigan’s Council for Continuing Care Policy. These are just a few of many examples of ways that she is embedded in the senior care industry. 2019 will see the end of a career that spans decades, has affected the lives of thousands, and has forever touched the senior care industry.

Julie Deppner  
*Silver Maples of Chelsea*

Julie Deppner started as CEO of Silver Maples in April of 2016. She had previously worked in the Chelsea School District as Assistant Superintendent. Prior to that, she was a teacher and high school principal in Chelsea. She is a long time resident of the area and is actively involved in a number of community organizations including the Chelsea Rotary club, the SRSLY Coalition, and the Chelsea Chamber of Commerce, where she is currently the Chair. Julie is immersed in the community at Silver Maples and the community at large, and through her unique journey to senior services brings with her a wealth of knowledge and passion for the field. For example, she helped develop a new mission and vision statement for Silver Maples and also worked tirelessly to complete a much anticipated million-dollar kitchen expansion. She has truly changed the culture of the community, improved all levels of communication, and brought better service and care to the residents she serves!
Katy was born and raised in Albania. She immigrated to the United States in her twenties. Her education and career eventually landed her to the senior living industry, and in 2008, her career brought her to Glacier Hills. Throughout this professional trajectory, she quietly accepted responsibilities and sought ways to expand her horizons. In 2016, she obtained her NHA license and became the NHA of the Care and Rehab Center. In 2017, she was promoted to Executive Director of the entire campus, accepting each responsibility with grace and wisdom. During her time at Glacier Hills, she and her team took the facility from a 2 star to a 5 star facility. More outstanding than her drive and accomplishments, however, is her leadership and selflessness. She is always willing to take on projects or new roles when needed. She is focused on developing staff. She gets results through inspiring, not commanding. She never gives up on a problem, and has developed a “can do” culture around her.
TRUSTEE OF THE YEAR

Steve Finney
Clark Retirement Community

Steve Finney is the Chief Operating Officer at Irwin Seating Company in Grand Rapids and has had a highly successful career here for over 35 years. He began his career in engineering, moving quickly up to Engineering Manager, then head of Manufacturing before his present position. Additionally, Steve is involved with many organizations in the community, and gives generously of his time and expertise. He currently serves as the Board Chair at Clark Retirement Community, and has been on the Board since 2013. He goes above and beyond the expectation of a board member in exceptional and creative ways, having personal meetings with each individual board trustee, executive leadership and outside advisors at Clark. He also meets with residents in their homes to get to know them personally and to gain an understanding of why they chose Clark. Steve truly embodies a mission-driven man who lives and breathes Clark Retirement’s mission statement, and is an irreplaceable member of the Board of Directors.

Ronald E. Goldsberry, PhD
Hartford Village

Dr. Ronald Goldsberry has had a widely successful and unique career as a major corporate executive, entrepreneur and business owner, scientist, philanthropist, consultant, civic leader and church member. He has held positions at distinguished Fortune500 companies including Ford Motor Company and Deloitte Consulting. He brings his experiences and leadership from his incredible career to provide skillful leadership for both the board of directors of Hartford Village – Detroit’s newest non-profit senior living community - and the board of managers of Hartford-PVM LLC. For nearly 10 years, his passion, persistence, commitment and steady guidance has played a significant role in the successful development of Hartford Village. He was actively engaged from the very first conceptual discussions, through the entire development process and continued chartering the board up to achieving 100% occupancy and a growing wait list. He has provided wisdom in navigating numerous challenges experienced during the planning, construction and transition to operations. He has truly been an instrumental leader to the Hartford Village community and the community at large.
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Omnicare applauds all the Award Recipients for their contributions to the senior care field.