2009 NASW-MA Chapter Awards Recipients

Greatest Contribution to Social Work Practice

Maria Carvalho

Social Worker with Less than 5 years post-degree experience

Katie Galenius

Public Citizen of the Year

Greater Boston Interfaith Organization

Greatest Contribution to Social Work Education

Rebecca Leavitt

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Employer of the Year

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Lifetime Achievement

Cheryl Boissy

Greatest Contribution to Social Work Practice

Maria Carvalho

MARIA CARVALHO was a major force in the integration of cultural competency within the mission of the Social Work Department at Children’s Hospital, Boston. Devoting over 25 years to Children’s Hospital, Ms. Carvalho promoted awareness throughout the medical community of alternative medical practices in different cultures and acted as the catalyst for cultural awareness teaching sessions. A graduate of Boston College, School of Social Work, she demonstrated her dedication to social work as one of the founders of the Interpreter program at Children’s Hospital. Her dedication, creativity, and initiative extends beyond the hospital to the greater community. Ms. Carvalho testified at the State House concerning a bill that required the availability of interpreters in emergency rooms. She lectures at numerous Hospitals and Universities, participates as a member on many advisory committees, and coordinates the Spanish Team at Children’s Hospital. Ms. Carvalho consistently advocates for patients, attending to the special cultural and linguistic needs of Latino and Portuguese families. Ms. Carvalho developed a parent-support group as a source of empowerment and advocacy for Latino parents of children with disabling or chronic illness. Ms. Carvalho works with community agencies, serving immigrant communities such as MIRA and Latino Health Connection. She received an award from the Boston City Council in recognition of her commitment, dedication, and support of Latino families and her leadership in the Boston Community. Ms. Carvalho also received a Letter of Commendation from the Commonwealth recognizing her volunteer efforts to assist immigrants in becoming citizens. Ms. Carvalho coauthored Honoring Patient Preferences: A Guide to Complying with Multicultural Patient Requirements, a cultural resource book to guide service providers in their awareness of important cultural practices. Ms. Carvalho is highly deserving of this year’s Greatest Contribution to Social Work Practice award.
**Social Worker with Less Than 5 Years Post-degree Experience**

**Katie Galenius**

KATIE GALENIUS, a graduate of Salem State College, School of Social Work in 2004 was known as a student who not only studied necessary course material, but mastered its concepts. While still at Salem State, Ms. Galenius’ proficiency was extensive enough to teach a class on elder battered women, family dynamics, and the available resources for elder domestic violence. When interning at Greater Lynn Senior Services she assisted in the development of a program for elder battered women and co-facilitated the Older Battered Women’s support group. Ms. Galenius provided continual compassion, wisdom, and support to women in abusive relationships. She empowers victims of domestic violence to leave their batterers, connecting them to support networks. Ms. Galenius takes every opportunity to educate individuals on indicators of elder domestic violence. She is known as a passionate advocate for the rights of older battered women. Not only does her advocacy work reach clients at a macro level, but Ms. Galenius participated on a research team that compiled data on the issue of elder abuse and eventually published an article based on the qualitative research they acquired. Upon graduating, Ms. Galenius continues to work for the Greater Lynn Senior Services, expanding the program while consulting to other elder care agencies concerned with issues of abuse. Ms. Galenius is active on a number of agency boards in her own community and remains a continual advocate for the older adult population. She clearly demonstrates the qualities of an Outstanding Social Worker with 5 Years or Less Post-Graduate Experience.

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**Public Citizen of the Year**

**The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization**

THE GREATER BOSTON INTERFAITH ORGANIZATION’S (GBIO) primary goal is to develop local leadership for the purpose of advocating for social justice. The organization trains and organizes communities to dissolve barriers of religious, racial, ethnic, class and neighborhood lines for the betterment of all. GBIO is affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) and is inspired by the 65 other IAF-affiliated organizations working in cities and metropolitan areas across the country. GBIO was founded by clergy and community leaders who sought to obliterate barriers that existed between neighborhoods and create relationships that would act as effective constituencies. The organization consists of a variety of institutions within Boston and surrounding communities. GBIO is known for the major role it played in the passage of historical health care reform legislation, promising to provide access to quality and affordable health insurance to 500,000 MA residents. The organization implemented numerous “affordability workshops,” involving hundreds of GBIO members. They pushed the Commonwealth Connector Board to maximize the affordability of health insurance products in the Commonwealth Care program. Additionally, GBIO created the “Moving From Debt to Assets” financial literacy program, enabling dozens of low and moderate-income members of GBIO congregations access to support groups, one-on-one sessions with a financial counselor, hours of intensive classroom training on financial literacy and savings, and a $500 grant to begin paying down debt or to start a savings account. GBIO has also been instrumental in providing Elder Care services through the Aging with Dignity campaign that negotiated an agreement with Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs to alter its Information and Referral (I & R) systems. The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization demonstrates its commitment to community through advocating, supporting, and coalition building to create connected, resourceful, and empowered citizens.
Greatest Contribution to Social Work Education

Rebecca Leavitt

DR. REBECCA LEAVITT is a professor of Social Work at Bridgewater State College, where she has taught for approximately thirty years. She demonstrates an immense commitment to social work education, as well as the college community. A Graduate of the Boston University Graduate School of Social Work, and receiving her Ph.D. from Simmons College, Dr. Leavitt was a vital force in establishing the BSW program at Bridgewater. She simultaneously developed program and curriculum, taught, and hired new faculty. She continually exceeds expectations of curriculum standards, offering creative, fresh, and invigorating studies. Recently, Dr. Leavitt offered the course, “Travel While Staying at Home,” introducing the adventure of travel and inspiring students to analyze issues globally. Dr. Leavitt has been a major leader in Gender Studies, and has been an integral part of a multi-departmental course on the Holocaust, which received national recognition. She was responsible for two successful re-accreditation self-studies submitted to the Council on Social Work Education, while acting as chair of 200-250 social work majors and six full-time faculty. She has produced numerous publications, and given many presentations and workshops. Dr. Leavitt is a member of the Baccalaureate Program Director’s Association, and member of the Council on Social Work Education. Dr. Leavitt consistently explores environments where she can learn more. She has received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Collaboration to Improve Teaching from Bridgewater State College. Beyond her classroom and curriculum development, Dr. Leavitt is an active member of the Women’s Advisory Committee, Campus Climate Action Group, and the Honorary Degree Advisory Committee. It is evident through her service to students, faculty and the community that Dr. Leavitt is deserving of the Greatest Contribution to Social Work Education Award.

Beverly Ross Fliegel Award for Social Policy & Change

Ann Hartstein

ANN HARTSTEIN continually demonstrates a deep commitment toward the development of social policy in the field of gerontology. As the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of Older Americans, Inc., she designed and assisted with the implementation of a premier program which reduced prescription drug costs for health plan members in the Boston area. The Massachusetts Association of Older Americans Board sees Ms. Hartstein as a leader in promoting programs and policies that provide economic security for older adults. She is described as a grassroots organizer who works tirelessly to find a common ground among individuals of varying backgrounds and income levels in order to achieve the best outcome for all older adults of the Commonwealth. Ms. Hartstein is dedicated to educating the public, and policy makers, concerning income needs for older adults, and works persistently to develop policies and programs that promote their financial security. When she worked for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, she implemented new and innovative programs such as the first-in-the nation prescription drug insurance plan for older adults. After receiving her Bachelor’s of Social Work from the University of Kansas, she began her career as a social worker at Cambridge Nursing Home, then as a case manager in Senior Home Care Services, and later moved to Hospice Administrator/Coordinator of Social Services at South Bay Home Health Agency and South Bay Hospice. Ms. Hartstein was executive director of the Needham Council on Aging, and Director of Barnard Services. Ms. Hartstein achieved a Masters in Management of Human Services from Brandeis University, as well as a Masters in Gerontology from the University of Massachusetts. Her deep commitment to the development of policy, and advocating for the needs of older adults, demonstrates the qualities of a recipient of the Beverly Ross Fliegel Award for Social Policy and Change.

Each year the Massachusetts Chapter of NASW gives its Beverly Ross Fliegel Greatest Contribution to Social Policy and Change Award to honor the memory of the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter’s first Executive Director. Beverly Ross Fliegel was an outstanding social worker who cared tremendously about what happened to disenfranchised people. Beverly died of cancer at the untimely age of 42. This award helps keep alive the memory of a very special social worker, and reaffirms NASW’s commitment to social justice and social change.
Employer of the Year

Brockton Neighborhood Health Center

BROCKTON NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH CENTER (BNHC) serves over 12,000 patients a year, with over 130 staff members, 8 of whom are social workers. BNHC’s distinguished reputation comes from its unprecedented dedication to meeting patient needs by committing resources and social work staff in a primary care setting. Acting as a community health center, Brockton serves individuals who are uninsured and who live at or below the poverty line. Domestic violence, homelessness, poverty, housing and food needs, HIV/AIDS, issues of mental health, and substance abuse are evident throughout their clientele. BNHC is in the business of primary medical and dental care. It does not hold a mental health clinic license and therefore, does not have a behavioral health department. Yet, despite the inability to bill insurance for mental health services, the Board of Directors and Management of BNHC understand the value of social worker intervention. Medical providers praise the social workers and routinely rely on their assistance with patients. Many policies and procedures incorporate social work input. The Medical Director at Brockton Neighborhood Health Center underscores the importance of social work intervention by requiring a social worker on duty during all patient appointment hours. BNHC provides internships for four social work Masters students each year, from various schools throughout the area. BNHC highlights the value and the necessity of utilizing the resources provided through social work staff. Brockton Neighborhood Health Center is worthy of recognition as the Employer of the Year.

Lifetime Achievement

Cheryl Boissy

CHERYL BOISSY emanates dignity, composure, and sheer professionalism under even the trying circumstances of an acute inpatient psychiatric unit at Heywood Hospital. Her work there is instilled with purposefulness and attention to detail. Ms. Boissy is a fierce advocate of the disenfranchised and disadvantaged. With over 25 years experience as a clinical social worker, Ms. Boissy extends her capabilities through the expansion and implementation of programs enhancing hospital services to patients and their families. Ms. Boissy successfully highlighted the availability of mental health services in the Hospital by developing promotional literature for the public. In spite of the many physical obstacles she must overcome daily, Ms. Boissy’s dedication is evident through her continual service to clients and colleagues. She facilitates group therapy, and provides direct clinical care for mentally ill patients, as well as frontline support for psychiatrists and nursing staff. As President of the Board of directors of the Leominster Spanish-American Center (Centro Hispano Americano), the City of Fitchburg Human Rights Commission, and the North Central MA Minority Commission, Ms. Boissy demonstrates her efforts to provide advocacy and facilitate awareness of the needs of the disenfranchised. The Martin Luther King Coalition of Fitchburg and Leominster recognized Ms. Boissy’s incredible contributions as recipient of the 2005 Outstanding Achievement and Community Service Award. She also received an Official Citation from the City of Fitchburg in recognition of her thirteen years of service to Fitchburg’s Human Rights Commission. Ms. Boissy exemplifies the service and dedication to social work of a Lifetime Achievement Award recipient.