

**Profile: Healthy Families Illinois of the Visiting Nurse Association of Fox Valley**

**T**he VNA Healthy Families Illinois program was first initiated by the 708 Inc Board in 1994 and continues to receive support from Inc Board today. The program receives additional support from the Illinois Department of Health & Human Services, The Ounce of Prevention Fund, Pentair & several community clubs and private foundations.

The VNA Healthy Families Illinois (HFI) program provides an early prevention system to families at high risk of becoming neglectful or abusive of their new children. By identifying and screening families before or very close to the time of birth of their first child, services can be provided when families are most open to receiving assistance. New parents are referred to Healthy Families by local community partners, such as the Kane County Health Department, local hospitals, and schools and are systematically assessed to determine program eligibility based on levels of family stress and child abuse potential. Families deemed to be at risk are offered the voluntary & free program of weekly home visits provided by a trained Family Support Worker (FSW). The FSW provides research based curriculum for each family, teaches and models effective parenting skills, helps the parents connect to other services in the community and serves as an important source of social support for new parents.

Services are provided in the home to reduce the family’s social isolation and to remove barriers such as lack of transportation or child care that make it difficult for some families to access center-based services. In addition, families enrolled in home visiting services receive annual screening for domestic violence, routine post-partum depression screening, and frequent screening for developmental delays in the child. The results of these screenings guide FSWs to make referrals to other community agencies with whom we partner. FSWs also make video tapes of families engaged in routine activities with their babies. Viewing the tapes with the FSWs allows parents to step back from the act of parenting, and see for themselves what behaviors and interactions seem to work best for them and their child. HFI does this through the establishment of a supportive, helping relationship between the family and the Family Support Worker. Visits occur weekly during the first year, supplemented by prenatal groups with other new parents and doula services. A doula is a specially trained birth attendant who prepares families for labor, attends the birth of the baby, and supports new families during the challenging first few weeks with the new baby. Healthy Families doulas provide or suggest physical comfort measures during labor and birth such as massage, breathing exercises and positioning. Doulas help families communicate with caregivers and helps families feel comfortable as they experience pregnancy and labor. This care becomes especially critical for the new mom who does not have the support from the father of the baby or extended family. Healthy Families services continue until the child’s third birthday, at which time the child is then transitioned to preschool services.

**Thank you...and Welcome**

With great regrets we say Thank you and Good-bye to Bill Catching, Aurora Township trustee. Bill will continue as a township trustee, but will no longer be serving on the Aurora 708 Board. We look forward to continuing to work with Bill. Bill’s departure, however, opens up the opportunity for trustee Mark Semmler to serve as the Aurora Township liaison to the Aurora 708 board. We look forward to working with Mark on serving Aurora Township residents.



**Elderday Interim Director**

Traci Eggleston has been appointed Interim Director of Elderday Services, an INC-funded agency. We look forward to working with Traci. We also wish to thank the previous executive director, Micki Miller, for her 13 years of service at Elderday. Well done Micki!

## CONGRATULATIONS!!!



David Conroy, Chairman and Karen Beyer, Executive Director of Ecker Center, presenting the Maureen Withers Award to Jerry Murphy for his advocacy for Mental Health providers in Kane County.



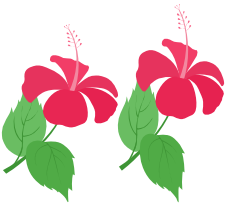
Cathy Hoyda, Gina Richter and Jerry Murphy as Gina receives her Lyle E. Oncken Community Service Award at the May 12th Advocates Network meeting.

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### Allocations for 2011-2012

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The Board of Directors of INC Board approved agency allocations for 2011-2012, as well as Operating and Building Fund budgets for the same period. All three documents will be available after year end changes are approved at the July INC Board meeting. With prudent use of taxpayer funds, INC was able to increase funding to local agencies by an overall 3.6% over last year, in order for the agencies to address increase demand for services and cuts from other funding sources.



#### In Memoriam

It's with great sadness that we report the death of Lynlee Gilbert, 17 year old daughter of Jeff and Janet Gilbert, founders of Hope For Tomorrow, an INC-funded agency. Our hearts and thoughts are with Jeff and Janet in their grief.