

Previous Award Recipients

2008

The Honorable William Creech

Lockhart Follin-Mace

Jo Anne Jeffries

Robert Reilly - *In Memory*

2009

Marian Hartman

Greg McGrew

NC IOLTA

2010

(No award given)

2011

Julia Bick - *In Memory*

Michael Maybee

Dr. Charles Walker

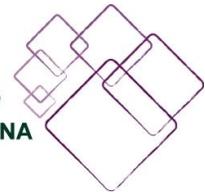


2012 Champions for Equality and Justice

presented by

DISABILITY RIGHTS
NORTH CAROLINA

Champions for Equality and Justice



November 7, 2012

Semans Gallery, Durham Arts Council

120 Morris Street, Durham, NC



MAIN OFFICE

2626 Glenwood Avenue, # 550

Raleigh, NC 27608

WESTERN OFFICE

62 Charlotte Street

Asheville, NC 28801

Phone: 919-856-2195

Toll free: 877-235-4210

www.disabilityrightsnorthcarolina.org

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Thank you, thank you, thank you . . .

The Disability Rights North Carolina Board of Directors and Staff are grateful to everyone who joined us to celebrate this year's recipients of the Champions for Equality and Justice Award.

A special thank you goes to this year's Sponsors!

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Gold Champion

Beth Garriss Hardy

Silver Champions

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Campbell University School of Law
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Bloomfield Hills Insurance Agency
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April Giancola and Scott Conklin
Iris and Joseph Green
Ginny Hilton
Amy Jones
Jessica Keith
Vera Luck
Cheryl Mulloy-Villemagne

Michael Murray
National Association of Social
Workers – NC Chapter
Ken Rose / Center for Death
Penalty Litigation
Janna Shisler
Erin Smith
Beth Trevor and Jonah Liebert
Jane Wettach
Elaine Whitford

tours, food and games. Family members participated with their loved ones in meaningful and fun activities instead of sitting in a dreary ward.

For the first time in the history of Dorothea Dix Hospital, since 1856, Steve arranged for the state's protection and advocacy (P&A) agency, Disability Rights North Carolina, to give presentations to patients and staff on recognizing abuse, neglect and exploitation, self-advocacy tips and rights as a patient in a psychiatric hospital. The P&A agency had attempted to do this in the past but had met with resistance.

When Dix closed, Steve took the same program concept and implemented it at Cherry Hospital. The Quality Council at Cherry conducted a contest that named the mall the "Hope & Wellness Center." The program has collaborated on a variety of projects with Disability Rights NC, National Alliance on Mental Illness, and East Carolina Behavioral Healthcare. At Cherry, Steve was instrumental in establishing the first full-time, on-staff Certified Peer Support Specialist at a North Carolina state hospital. A recent Joint Commission survey identified the Hope & Wellness Center as a leading practice.

Steve is at his best when he is working in equal partnership with patients, supporting and teaching them as well as learning from and being supported by them. It is no secret that Steve eagerly shares credit for his accomplishments with the many staff and patients with whom he feels privileged to have worked.

Karen Murphy who nominated Steve for the award said, "One doesn't hear of many good things coming from mental health these days but Steve is a breath of fresh air for a positive future for some of our State's hardest-to-treat mental health patients."

Disability Rights NC

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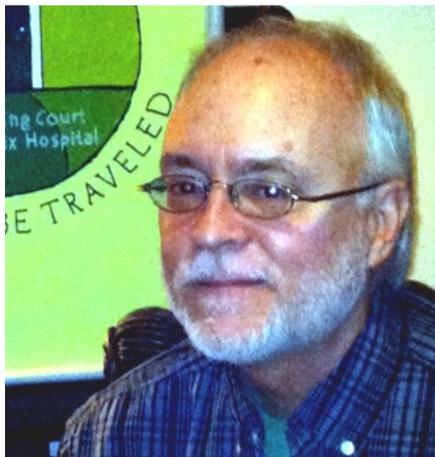
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gram participants named their treatment mall “The Learning Court.” The Learning Court offered groups and classes in coping skills, pathways to recovery, understanding medications, GED, career development, peer support and music skills, to name a few. At the Learning Court, participants went from being patients in a psychiatric hospital to being students, program developers, musicians who played in a band or workers with a paying job.



At the Learning Court, participants learned how to write letters, file grievances/petitions and express their concerns in an effective manner. Patients discharged from Dix left with an improved self-image and self-advocacy skills. Many former patients are now peer advocates in the community. Some are employed as peer advocates and some are now advocates who give presentations on mental health recovery and speak to legislators about mental health issues. All will tell you that they learned their skills from the programs at the Dix Learning Court.

Steve shares his work with inpatient treatment malls through published papers in peer-reviewed professional journals, workshops and presentations. He provides facility-specific technical assistance nationally to numerous state hospitals.

Steve worked to establish the Learning Court as a preferred training site for law enforcement’s Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). Over time, program participants held dialogues and conducted tours with hundreds of law enforcement officers.

Steve was instrumental in developing the “Quality Council” at Dix in 2003. The Quality Council was a peer-representation and decision-making body. The council was open to any interested program participant and was an official subcommittee of the hospital’s Clinical Management Team. Patients who used to stay on wards with nothing to do now were able to partner with hospital management to share ideas, communicate concerns, and have equal input into programming. Hundreds of patients participated as council members over the years. Members prided themselves in learning about and staying up-to-date on the latest recovery research and stories of hope from consumer survivors. The council used its knowledge to develop training presentations for staff and peers and provided consultation for other hospitals, Dix managers, peers and community organizations. The council planned and organized five Annual Family Days at Dix. These events consisted of patients’ families and friends visiting the Learning Court for a day of music, education, program

JEREMY DONOHUE

As a person with Down Syndrome, Jeremy Donohue has faced low expectations and discrimination all of his life. Jeremy set aside stereotypes by doing what many people assumed he could not do – he attended college, is employed and lives on his own.



Through his advocacy and the advocacy of others, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro started the Beyond Academics program – a program that offers people with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to participate in the college experience in an inclusive environment. As a member of the first class in Beyond Academics, Jeremy was a pioneer. During Jeremy’s four years in college, he lived with other college students, got to know the campus and learned to live independently. Jeremy lived alone in his own apartment during the last year of college.

The Beyond Academics program was not initially accepted by the larger university community. When the program first started, one university staff member said that a competitive college was not a place for “those people.” Other staff members quietly shared the same bias. Many advocates were outraged and angered by the erroneous preconceptions and fought to convince the university community of the importance of Beyond Academics.

Jeremy never tried to convince the naysayers with words or threats. Instead, he advocated by simply making friends and demonstrating his many abilities. Beyond Academics is now an accepted part of the university community and grows every year. Where eloquent arguments failed, Jeremy’s style of self-advocacy won the day. It is easy to forget that the most effective advocacy often comes in the form of a person with a disability living an ordinary life in the community. In May 2011, Jeremy and seven classmates graduated and traded their student ID cards for UNC-Greensboro alumni cards.

After graduating from Beyond Academics, Jeremy joined the workforce as a truck loader for a retail store – a job he appreciated but did not find fulfilling. Jeremy likes working with people. He approached the management of a Japanese restaurant and asked that he be hired as the door greeter. The manager told him that the restaurant did not have a greeter

position. Jeremy then offered to volunteer his time as the restaurant's greeter. The manager reluctantly agreed. Jeremy showed up for work the first night dressed in kimono top and handed out business cards and origami kimonos. Halfway through his first shift, the manager decided Jeremy's idea was good for the restaurant and decided to pay him. Jeremy is now an accepted member of the restaurant's family and, after demonstrating his capabilities, his role at the restaurant has expanded greatly.

Jeremy's actions demonstrate the power of self-advocacy. He was not going to take "no" for an answer and took the steps necessary to show the restaurant's staff how valuable an asset he could be.

Jeremy was nominated for the Champions Award by his good friend, Michael Murray. Michael said, "Jeremy Donohue is an amazing man and my best friend. He is full of joy and love; he is dynamic and charismatic. When my friend walks into a room, that joy is contagious. Once you know Jeremy, you can't imagine a world without him."

Today, Jeremy lives in his own apartment in Winston-Salem. He hangs out with friends, attends a local church, participates in community theater, and goes to work.

ELLEN RUSSELL

Ellen has a long history of supporting and advancing the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in North Carolina. She began her advocacy career as a volunteer board member of a local chapter of The Arc. She later became the Executive Director of The Arc of Orange County and, in 1996, joined The Arc of NC as Director of Advocacy and Chapter Services. In her nomination of Ellen, Jane Wettach called her "the consummate advocate."

Ellen believes that all people have the right and ability to live in their local communities. As the primary author of The Arc's 2007 publication titled *Life in the Community: A Roadmap for System Success*, Ellen created a vision for supports and services that would allow people to live in their local communities with a supportive service system. Ellen's work with The Arc's Housing Resource Coordinators demonstrated that she is a champion for choices - working to ensure people have a range of housing options available to them and a real choice about where and with whom they live.



Throughout her career, Ellen has been actively involved with promoting health and wellness for people with I/DD. She served as The Arc of NC representative on numerous NC Office on Disability and Health (NCODH) advisory committees and work groups, guaranteeing that the voice of family members and people with I/DD is heard as the state develops and implements policies, practices and programs designed to promote access to health care and health promotion opportunities for people with I/DD.

Ellen's ten-plus years of leadership for the Special Needs Federation (SNF) exemplify her commitment to equality and justice for students with special needs. During that time, she has focused on inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream education and was a strong proponent of laws to protect students from seclusion and restraint. In her role as the leader of SNF, she communicated with state officials, including members of the General Assembly, on behalf of students with disabilities on many issues over the years.

The many advocates and self-advocates Ellen has developed and mentored may be her greatest contribution to our state. Ellen accomplished this through training, information dissemination, resource referral and supporting advocacy and self-advocacy. She serves as a role-model to so many who are working to see that people with I/DD are valued citizens of our state.

On a more personal level, Ellen has been a tireless advocate for her daughter, Emily, who has I/DD. She made sure Emily was included in the full experience of life. Now in her 30's, Emily is enrolled in Beyond Academics at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Ellen has recently reduced her work responsibilities as a first step toward retirement and some well-earned relaxation.

STEVEN WEBSTER

Steve first worked at Dorothea Dix hospital while in divinity school as a student clinical chaplain. He took a job as a health care technician and earned an award in 1985 as "Health Care Technician of the Year" for the State of North Carolina. Over the years, Steve held many other positions at Dix and was a member of the Dix Executive Staff. Along the way he earned the Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner credential with the US Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association.

Steve directed a group of extremely dedicated hospital staff that implemented the treatment mall model at Dorothea Dix Hospital. Treatment malls are centralized programming areas - away from the residential units - where patients and staff go for a significant portion of the day to give and receive treatment, education, skills training and support. The ultimate goal of the treatment mall is to evolve a culture of recovery. Pro-