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ADAMHS HONORS FOUR WITH AWARDS AT ANNUAL DINNER

Painesville, OH — The Lake County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board bestowed four awards Monday at the organization's Annual Dinner/Board Meeting. The ADAMHS Board is responsible for planning, funding, and evaluating Lake County's mental health and recovery services.

According to ADAMHS Executive Director Kim Fraser, the annual Jack Miller Award pays tribute to an individual who personifies the spirit of volunteerism on which ADAMHS agencies, consumers and family members depend. The Jack Rakosky Award recognizes a consumer of mental health services who has been especially successful in working toward and achieving personal goals. The Elaine P. Waytes Award honors an unsung hero in the ADAMHS service provider network. And the Daniel Schwendeman Award celebrates the contributions of a family member, friend, or other supporter.

Winner of the 2009 Jack Rakosky Consumer Achievement Award is Iva Gordon, who was nominated by the ADAMHS staff. "Iva is an eager and tireless volunteer here at the ADAMHS office," said Fraser. "Her positive outlook has helped her meet and overcome many challenges, and she brings a smile with her wherever she goes. Iva inspires others with her strength and character."

The 2009 Jack Miller Award was presented to Mike Lynch, Principal of Lake Elementary School in Mentor. He was nominated by Amy Korsh of Crossroads, who cited Lynch's leadership during a collaborative school readiness initiative. "Mike really embodies what this award is all about," Fraser said. "One of the things we really appreciated was that he encouraged and facilitated dialog between the mental health professionals and educators who were working on the project. The result was that each understood the other's perspectives more clearly, which led to a more coordinated, effective end result."

The 2009 Family and Friends Award was given to Lake County Commissioners Daniel Troy, Robert Aufuldish and Raymond Sines. "The Commissioners are such a vital partner to our system that we felt the spirit of the award was very well served by this presentation," said Fraser. "When we started considering options relative to our soon-to-expire tax levy last year, step-one was to seek counsel and guidance from our three Commissioners. Each was genuinely supportive and helpful as we began to navigate the decision-making process. Plus, the Commissioners appoint ten of our 18 board members. The strength and diversity of talent on our board speaks to how seriously they clearly take that responsibility."

The 2009 Elaine P. Waytes Award was presented to Marilee Ward. She was nominated by Melanie Blasko and Dave Hanlon from Lake Geauga Recovery Centers. "Marilee has been a substance abuse counselor for Lake Geauga Recovery Centers for more than twenty years," Fraser noted. "Her experience and knowledge are truly impressive, but it's clear that what really makes this woman special is her unique mix of compassion, dedication, and energy."

During the annual event ADAMHS Executive Committee member Dave Enzerra led a special presentation honoring Tony Kuhn who has retired as president/CEO of Lake Geauga Recovery Centers. “I know Tony feels a lot of personal pride in how far his agency has come over the years, but the true measure of his success is in the amazing number of people whose lives have been turned around because of the work he and his staff have done so skillfully, compassionately and competently,” Enzerra said. “Plus Tony has been one of our system’s most ardent and active supporters. He not just one of us, he’s helped define us.”

The ADAMHS Board is established by Ohio Statute. Board members — eighteen Lake County residents who serve without compensation — include medical professionals, mental health and recovery experts, consumers (people who need and use services), relatives of consumers, community leaders and business professionals. The resulting blend of expertise and perspectives makes the ADAMHS Board uniquely qualified to handle these important issues effectively and efficiently. More information is available at www.HelpThatWorks.us.

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