

# Richard C. Palermo Quality Award



St. Joseph's Villa Community Awards were established in 2004 to honor significant contributions to the agency.

Richard C. Palermo Quality Award, named in honor of late Board Chair and Villa quality mentor, is presented to an individual or group whose efforts has improved the quality of care or services the agency provides. We are honored to have Dick's wife Mary Anne here with us this evening to help with the Award presentation.

This year's Palermo Award is being presented to **Linda Kurtz**. Linda is the Director of the Rochester Regional Office for the NYS Office of Children & Family Services.

Linda has been with the NYS Office of Children & Family Services for 20+ years; the majority of that time as the Regional Director.

Within the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Linda is seen as a leader. At the Villa in our leadership training program, we define leadership as "Leadership is Influence" and Linda has truly influenced the Child Welfare System throughout her career, and by doing so she has influenced the lives of the children at the Villa.

## Highlights of Her Career

1980's worked very closely with Matilda Cuomo in the "Decade of the Child" work.

As a result of the Federal Audit of New York's Child Welfare System in 2001, she led the response in "Family Engagement Strategies" for NYS.

Currently leading as a result of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Federal Audit New York's response on Permanency Outcomes. What do we mean by permanency for every child? For the Villa this means that for every young person who leaves us that they have an adult in their lives who will be with them and support them.

Translates to our Mission Statement – Relationships based on caring, respect and hope are the foundation of our efforts.

## Regional Level

- Over the last 12 years, brought the nine counties in our region together with the private agencies to work together to better the outcomes for children and families in our region.
- Led the effort of Cross Systems Work. How do we bring the necessary and right services to every child and family by breaking down the funding silos of child welfare, mental health and developmental disabilities?

Bottom line: A true child advocate – Linda thinks nothing of calling me anytime, any day, and any hour, to say... I have a tough situation. Will you give this kid a shot? I know the Villa can do it.

It is an honor for me to present the 2008 Richard C. Palermo Quality Award to Linda Kurtz.

