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**New York State
Office of
Children & Family
Services**

NEWS

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OCFS HONORS SARATOGA COUNTY PSA UNIT FOR OUTSTANDING WORK WITH VULNERABLE ADULTS



The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) today (Dec. 18) awarded Certificates of Recognition For Excellence in Providing Protective Services for Adults (PSA) to the supervisors and caseworkers of the Saratoga County Department of Social Services (DSS) PSA Team.

OCFS Commissioner Gladys Carrión, Esq., said: "Protective Services for Adults workers are on the front lines in responding to referrals of adult abuse, neglect and exploitation. They are the ones who act to protect vulnerable adults with impairments, who have

no one else willing and able to assist them. With these Certificates of Recognition we proudly acknowledge and celebrate superlative work by PSA workers."

This honor recognizes the PSA Team's great success in collaboration with other providers and systems to protect vulnerable adults from harm. Over the years, the PSA Team has been involved with many complex and demanding cases, and their collaboration with county mental health, public health nurse, local code enforcement, the developmental disabilities services office (DDSO), the county attorney, among others, has been key to the successful outcomes of many of these difficult cases.

The certificates were presented by OCFS Associate Commissioner Kirk Maurer, Bureau of Adult Services Director Alan Lawitz, and Paula Vielkind, also of the Bureau of Adult Services. Saratoga County DSS Commissioner Robert Christopher also attended.

In nominating this team for consideration, Commissioner Christopher cited as recent examples:

- working together with law enforcement, DDS and the county attorney to protect a young disabled adult from abuse and neglect;
- assisting an elderly woman who was facing eviction for a very dirty home to remain in her home, by obtaining cleaning services and acting as an advocate for the client in court;
- identifying an adult child willing to serve as a guardian for a client who is a nursing home resident and unable to communicate; and
- working with the public health nurse to assist a client obtain medical attention, and then arranging for benefits and subsidized housing for the client, who had become homeless.

Commissioner Christopher stated that the OCFS recognition of the Saratoga County PSA Team is well-deserved, and cited the team's creativity, dedication and diligence in delivering services in the least restrictive manner to this at-risk population.

The following Saratoga County DSS PSA Team members received Certificates of Recognition:

Carol Clark - Supervisor
Reed Lehan – Senior Caseworker
Randy Hadley – Caseworker
Donna Miter – Caseworker
Karen Wanek – Caseworker
Peter Jones – Caseworker
Bruce McAllister – Caseworker – retired 4/30/08

Adults, 18 or older, may need protective services for a variety of reasons. For the telephone number of a county's adult protective services, call: 1-800-342-3009 (press option 6). For more information, visit the website of OCFS, which oversees adult protective services: www.ocfs.state.ny.us .

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