

# THE ALDEN LEADER

## SPECIAL AWARDS EDITION



An ecstatic Randy Mertes accepts the IHCA's 'Teen Volunteer of the Year' award for volunteering at Alden Gardens of Waterford.

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- ◆ Bloomingdale facilities for special needs residents receive three awards
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**Banner design:**  
Photo of balloon release at Alden Alma Nelson Manor for National Nursing Home Week

## 2009 Awards Recognition

### Alden Facilities Earn Top State Awards

Alden received nearly half the awards—including *Nurse of the Year, Assisted Living Director of the Year and Resident Services Director of the Year*—given out at this year's Illinois Health Care Association (IHCA) awards ceremony.

"These awards reflect the hard work, compassion and commitment that our employees bring to their jobs each day," says Robert J. Molitor, Alden's chief operating officer. "We are pleased that these dedicated individuals have received the highest honors in their respective categories."

Selected from a field of more than 200 nominations, Alden employees and volunteers received 10 of a total 22 awards presented by IHCA. "Tonight we recognize the cream of the crop ... those who have demonstrated excellence and outstanding service in long-term care," IHCA President Robert Hedges told an expectant audience at a gala banquet in Peoria.

The prestigious 'Nurse of the Year' award went to Pat Jentzen, who has worked the night shift at **Alden Orland Park** Rehabilitation and Health Care Center in south suburban Orland Park for 11 years. Receiving the top nursing award, Jentzen says, "is the high point of my career."

After graduating from Loyola University College of Nursing in the 1960s, Jentzen held positions in several hospitals for 25 years before she realized that long-term care was where she could make "a truly meaningful difference."

In the final weeks of her father's life, Jentzen explains, "my family made the difficult decision to have him admitted to a nursing home. The caring hearts of the people who took care of my father and helped our family through that difficult time had a profound impact on me."

Described as "a hero—the epitome of strength, intelligence, integrity, resilience and dedication" by her nominator and Alden Orland Park Administrator Katie Maniatis, Jentzen is particularly pleased to be recognized as "a hands-on nurse. I love the part of nursing that involves direct resident care," she says, "and I think this award shows younger nurses who are at the beginning of their careers that giving of yourself to your patients and their families can be extremely rewarding."

Jentzen and seven other Alden nurses were among 22 nominees for IHCA's 2009 'Nurse of the Year' award. In addition to 'Nurse of the Year,' Alden employees were named *Activity Director of the Year, Assisted Living Director of the Year, Direct Support Person of the Year, Environmental Services Person of the Year, Housekeeping Professional of the Year, MDS Coordinator of the Year, Resident Services Director of the Year* and *Social Service Professional of the Year*. Alden also received the award for *Teen Volunteer of the Year*.



'Nurse of the Year' Pat Jentzen with Alden Orland Park Administrator Katie Maniatis.

# Special Needs Facilities Awarded Top Honors:

- Resident Services Director
- Social Service Professional
- Direct Support Person

**A**lden Village Health Facility for Children and Young Adults and Alden's intermediate care facilities for the developmentally disabled in west suburban Bloomingdale received three honors at this year's IHCA awards ceremony.

Mary Ellen Schweitzer, who oversees Alden's four 16-bed homes for individuals with developmental disabilities, was named **Resident Services Director of the Year**. Embracing her leadership role with exuberance and professionalism, Schweitzer's "relentless patience, work ethic and scope of interaction with special needs residents make her a very special person," says Melissa Allison, administrator of **Alden Village North** Health Facility for Children and Young Adults in Chicago. Schweitzer, whose nomination was enthusiastically supported by residents and their families, is co-chairperson for a Special Olympics program geared to young people with severe disabilities.



*'Resident Services Director of the Year' Mary Ellen Schweitzer at an Alden Springs' holiday party.*



*'Social Service Professional of the Year' Lynisha Lawson waves to cheering co-workers.*

Recipient of the **Social Service Professional of the Year** award, Lynisha Lawson started working with special needs children as a certified nursing assistant at Alden Village in 1997. Laurie Longo, administrator at Alden Village, describes Lawson as "the 'go to' person at Alden Village. Nurses seek her out regarding residents' needs; outside consultants listen to her and implement her ideas; and families value and trust her suggestions and opinions."

Most importantly, Longo adds, "Lynisha approaches her job with a can-do, make-it-happen, love-for-the-residents attitude. Everything Lynisha does is aimed at making the residents happy and enabling them to have the best lives that they can." Christina Metzfeldt of **Alden of Waterford** in Aurora was also nominated for 'Social Service Professional of the Year.'

Aretha Brown, named **Direct Support Person of the Year**, is in nursing school as well as employed at **Alden Trails** Intermediate Care Facility for the Developmentally Disabled. Known for her compassion, sense of humor and dedication, Brown goes the extra mile with residents—including taking them to Chicago White Sox games and other outings on her days off and being a volunteer coach for the facility's Special Olympics team.

## Waterford Does It Again!

**F**or the second consecutive year, Alden of Waterford facilities in Aurora captured three awards at the IHCA convention. Named **Assisted Living Director of the Year**, Bobbie Skurdna of **Alden Courts of Waterford** Memory Care Assisted Living Facility has "raised the bar and expects nothing but the best that each team member can deliver," says Lynn Woods, regional director of the Alden of Waterford Continuing Care Retirement Community. Commended by her co-workers as "professional, compassionate and a true leader," Skurdna was instrumental in organizing the facility's Advisory Board, which develops community partnerships to benefit residents and give back to the community.

**Alden Gardens of Waterford** Assisted Living Community's Mary Ann Bauer, who received the **Activity Director of the Year** award, "never stops searching for ways to put a smile on residents' faces," says Executive Director Rob Anderson. Bauer organizes plays, fashion shows, musical entertainment and such humorous activities as a 'hairiest legs' competition for male residents and a pizza/charades party. Also nominated in the Activity Director category were Nancy Johnson, **Alden Orland Park**; Marilou Lacap, **Alden Long Grove**; and Lydia Quinones, **Alden of Waterford**.

The youngest award winner, **Teen Volunteer of the Year** Randy Mertes, 18, captured the hearts of more than 300 convention attendees by literally beaming with excitement as comedian and emcee Mark Mayfield lauded his accomplishments. Mertes' involvement with a high school vocational program for students with disabilities led him to begin volunteering at Alden Gardens of Waterford. Today, his frequent visits to the facility brighten the lives of residents and give the teenager a well-deserved sense of accomplishment.



*COO Bob Molitor and 'Assisted Living Director of the Year' Bobbie Skurdna.*

# Resident Advocate Receives Award

IHCA's 2009 *MDS Coordinator of the Year* almost didn't accept his promotion from floor nurse to MDS (Minimum Data Set) Coordinator because he worried that it would take him away from what he loved best: caring for his residents.

Happily, Anthony Valentino accepted the chance to utilize his MDS training and be an advocate for a greater number of residents at **Alden Alma Nelson Manor** Rehabilitation and Health Care Center in Rockford. As a result, he was rewarded with IHCA's highest MDS honor at this year's convention.

"Tony is held in high regard among his peers due to his eye for detail, resident advocacy



'MDS Coordinator of the Year' Anthony Valentino accepts prestigious nursing award.

and willingness to work extra hours when needed," says Linda Good, RN, regional nurse coordinator. "Even though it's not part of his job description, Tony continually educates and re-educates the nurses on care issues and the importance of good documentation and resident care plans."

As testament to his effectiveness, the number of families attending care plan conferences at the facility has more than doubled under Valentino's leadership—resulting in more family input and improved communication all around. Barbara Garner of **Alden of Waterford** in Aurora was also nominated in the MDS category.

## Housekeeping Services Person of the Year

**Rafaela Garcia, Alden North Shore**

Called compassionate, conscientious and caring by residents and co-workers alike, Rafaela Garcia was selected as this year's *Housekeeping Services Person of the Year*.



"Rafaela is a jack-of-all-trades," says her administrator Jennifer Illarde of **Alden North Shore** Rehabilitation and Health Care Center in Skokie. "She is always anticipating the needs of residents, whether it's sewing a button on a resident's blouse or adding extra touches to make a room feel more like home."

Other nominees in the category were Frank Amarillo of **Alden Des Plaines** and Freddie Johnson of **Alden Princeton** in Chicago.

## Environmental Services Person of the Year

**Ben Bautista, Alden Lincoln Park**

As the recipient of the 2009 *Environmental Services Person of the Year* award, Ben Bautista worked his way up from dishwasher to maintenance supervisor, a position he has held for 17 years at **Alden Lincoln Park** Rehabilitation and Health Care Center in Chicago.



Helping residents, however, is what he does best. Passionate about his job, Bautista's willingness to go the extra mile shows in everything he does—from painting resident lounges on his days off to teaching a resident to speak English.

Also nominated in the Environmental Services category were Jaime Guzman of **Alden Village** in Bloomingdale and Charles Wallen of **Alden Orland Park**.

# Recognizing Employee Excellence

**ALDEN SALUTES THE DEDICATION OF ITS EMPLOYEES. THE FOLLOWING EMPLOYEES WERE ELIGIBLE FOR 5, 10, 15 AND 20-YEAR ALDEN SERVICE PINS DURING THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2009.**

### Alden Alma Nelson Manor

Johnny Soto, 5 yrs  
Rebecca Stevens, 5 yrs

### Alden Estates of Barrington

Francisco Medina, 5 yrs

### Alden Estates of Evanston

Julieta Marcelo, 10 yrs  
Agustin Nerissa, 5 yrs  
Percival Gutierrez, 5 yrs

### Alden Estates of Naperville

Ashley Edwards, 5 yrs

### Alden Courts of Des Plaines

Maria Reino, 5 yrs

### Alden Lakeland

Rebecca Ampene, 5 yrs

### Alden Lincoln Park

Linda Ponce DeLeon, 10 yrs  
Sarah Aderibigbe, 5 yrs  
Chita Pagalunan, 5 yrs

### Alden Long Grove

Lydia Esteban, 5 yrs

Raul Salgado, 5 yrs

### Alden Northmoor

Ewa Wasilik, 10 yrs  
Mayra Zelaya, 5 yrs

### Alden North Shore

Alicia Cabrera, 10 yrs  
Natividad Godwin, 10 yrs  
Senka Vujoshevich, 10 yrs  
Charlotte Brizo, 5 yrs  
Roselle Pasia, 5 yrs

### Alden of Old Town East

Angelita Intal, 5 yrs

### Alden of Old Town West

Salome Osada, 15 yrs

### Alden Orland Park

Amiee Cleary, 10 yrs  
Louise Green, 10 yrs  
Carla Alexander-Grant, 5 yrs  
Latasha O'Neal, 5 yrs

### Alden Park Strathmoor

Stacy Abron, 5 yrs

Judy Stults, 5 yrs

Juana Vazquez, 5 yrs

### Alden Poplar Creek

Joynalyn Gueco, 5 yrs  
Tisha Johnson, 5 yrs  
Aparna Modi, 5 yrs  
Mary Renaud, 5 yrs

### Alden Princeton

Carolyn Redmond, 10 yrs

### Alden Terrace of McHenry

Susan Carolan, 10 yrs

### Alden Town Manor

Elizabeth Burns, 10 yrs  
Claudio Pina, 10 yrs  
Lisa Shay, 10 yrs  
Chenette Burkes, 5 yrs  
Maria Dirutigliano, 5 yrs  
Denia Parayao, 5 yrs

### Alden Valley Ridge

Bonita Richardson, 15 yrs  
Rosalina Banoyo, 10 yrs

Rowena Avendano, 5 yrs

Nathaniel Javier, 5 yrs  
Arlita Quinto, 5 yrs

### Alden Village

Paula Leahy, 15 yrs  
Salome Osada, 15 yrs  
Janet Fazoranti, 5 yrs  
Mary Tandang, 5 yrs  
Gabriel Tsida, 5 yrs

### Alden Courts of Waterford

Victor Lopez, 5 yrs

### Alden Gardens of Waterford

Elizabeth Paredez, 5 yrs  
Ancelma Varela, 5 yrs  
Dawn Wilson, 5 yrs

### Alden Wentworth

Jason Bell, 15 yrs  
Theresa Smothers, 15 yrs  
Kionie Abraham, 5 yrs  
Lopoo Jordan, 5 yrs  
Khalilah Lofton, 5 yrs

Jamaal Wright, 5 yrs

### Heather Health Care

Aretha Sorrell, 20 yrs  
Kenneth Rogers, 10 yrs  
Dan Culley, 5 yrs  
Anthony Whitney, 5 yrs  
Jacquelyn Smith, 5 yrs

### AMS

Harold Scales, 20 yrs  
Jennifer Fuller, 15 yrs  
Thomas Catania, 10 yrs  
Anna Chamberlain, 10 yrs  
Patricia Aguilar, 5 yrs  
Stamatia Ftikas, 5 yrs  
Ramon Mercado, 5 yrs  
Nisha Patel, 5 yrs  
Jennifer Ross, 5 yrs  
Rosalinda Tolentino, 5 yrs  
Donna Williamson, 5 yrs

### Alden-Bennett Construction

Dan Christenberry, 5 yrs

# Nominees Give Time, Energy, Heart



*Alden nominees were recognized among the 'best of the best' in Illinois at the IHCA's 2009 Convention in Peoria.*

## Experience the Difference

Orthopedic Rehabilitation  
 Neurological Rehabilitation  
 Cardiac Rehabilitation  
 Skilled Nursing  
 Alzheimer's Care  
 Respiratory Services  
 Ventilator Care  
 Respite/Vacation Care  
 Senior Living  
 Hospice Care

### Mission Statement:

To be the best residential and long-term care provider for our customers

Located throughout Chicago and the suburbs, Rockford and southern Wisconsin

- 22 Rehabilitation & health care centers
- 2 Alzheimer's residential centers
- 3 Assisted living communities
- 6 Special needs facilities
- 7 Senior living communities

### CIRCLE of Values

Compassion  
 Integrity  
 Respect  
 Continual Improvement  
 Learning  
 Enthusiasm

The Illinois Health Care Association's annual awards banquet honors the top rehabilitation and long-term care employees and volunteers throughout the state. "These men and women give of their hearts, time and energy to assist those who can't assist themselves," IHCA President Bob Hedges told this year's banquet attendees. "Every nominee is a winner and deserves to be honored for their hard work and dedication." The following were additional 2009 award nominees from Alden facilities:

#### ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR

Greg Nienaber, *Alden Estates of Barrington*

#### ADULT VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Nora Jackson, *Alden Lincoln Park*

Robert Merten, *Alden Estates of Naperville*

Roz Simler, *Alden North Shore*

#### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR

Generation Crossroads,

*Alden Estates of Barrington*

#### CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT OF THE YEAR

Jose Bardales, *Alden Poplar Creek*

Margaret Boyd, *Alden Alma Nelson Manor*

Carlos Gildeleya, *Alden of Waterford*

Chris Silvestre, *Alden Long Grove*

Joseph Simbeye, *Alden Lincoln Park*

Carline Williams, *Alden Orland Park*

#### DIRECTOR OF NURSING OF THE YEAR

Kimmie Dile, *Alden of Waterford*

Ireen Evangelista, *Alden Estates of Barrington*

Richelle Hofilena, *Alden Estates of Evanston*

Tishawn Mitchell, *Alden Princeton*

#### DIETARY MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Lou Munao Jr., *Alden Estates of Barrington*

#### GROUP VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Alden Orland Park Advisory Board,

*Alden Orland Park*

Anti-Cruelty Society, *Alden Lincoln Park*

St. Elizabeth Seton Catechism Classes,

*Alden Estates of Naperville*

#### INNOVATIVE PROGRAM OF THE YEAR

1st Annual Special Olympics Motor Activities

Program, *Alden DD Facilities*

The Russian Program at Alden Long Grove,

*Alden Long Grove*

#### MEDIA EVENT OF THE YEAR

Chicago Cubs' Wives, *Alden Village North*

#### NURSE OF THE YEAR

Evelyn Chanittikul, *Alden of Waterford*

Angellie Dam, *Alden North Shore*

Suzette Despres, *Alden of Old Town West*

Tess Gline, *Heather Health Care*

Binu George, *Alden of Waterford*

Gino Papal-Latoc, *Alden Lincoln Park*

Denise Shewchuk, *Alden Poplar Creek*

#### PHOTO OF THE YEAR

'Gardens Goes Green,'

*Alden Gardens of Waterford*

'Kettle Full of Candy,' *Alden Alma Nelson Manor*

'Make A Wish,' *Alden Lincoln Park*

#### PUBLICATION OF THE YEAR

Pediatric Pulmonary Recovery Unit Brochure,

*Alden Village*



## Lucky Winner!

Awards weren't the only prizes given out at the IHCA's 2009 convention.

After the convention, IHCA Executive Director Dave Voepel presented Jodi Wubbena, assistant administrator of Alden Alma Nelson Manor in Rockford, with a flat-screen high definition television she won in a drawing sponsored by convention exhibitors.

