

# THE ALDEN LEADER

## SPECIAL AWARDS EDITION

## Awards Galore!

### Alden Facilities Receive State Recognition

**A**lden facilities received the most awards at this year's Illinois Health Care Association (IHCA) Convention in Peoria—including *Administrator of the Year* and *Assisted Living Director of the Year*.

Marc Villafania, who has worked at Alden for 19 years and has been administrator at *Alden Princeton Rehabilitation and Health Care Center* since 2005, was named Administrator of the Year amidst cheers from Alden colleagues and staff from the facility located in Chicago's Englewood community.

"I am thrilled to accept this award on behalf of Alden Princeton and my entire staff," said Villafania, who earlier in the year was named a 'Hero in Long-Term Care' (page 3). "Words cannot express how grateful I am to everyone who has given me the opportunity to advance in my career over the years."

A licensed nursing home administrator, Villafania also is a certified nursing assistant (CNA) and holds a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from The University of the East in Manila, Philippines. At the IHCA convention, he was described as "an individual who stands apart from the rest for many reasons—his compassion, understanding, sense of humor and leadership. He is credited with increasing staff morale because he treats everyone with dignity and respect."

Robert J. Molitor, Alden's chief operating officer, believes the awards reflect a commitment to excellence. "We are very proud of Marc," he says. "He exemplifies the leadership qualities that we strive to instill in all Alden employees."

Villafania began his career in health care at *Alden Valley Ridge*

*Rehabilitation and Health Care Center* in Bloomingdale, where he worked in housekeeping, maintenance, nursing, medical records, personnel and laundry before enrolling in Alden's Administrator in Training program. He also met his wife, Sandy, at Alden Valley Ridge where she still works.

Villafania and Jennifer Illarde, administrator of *Alden North Shore Rehabilitation and Health Care Center* in Skokie, were among 13 nominees for Administrator of the Year.

In addition to Villafania, Alden employees were named *Assisted Living Director of the Year*, *CNA of the Year*, *MDS Coordinator of the Year*, *Dietary Manager of the Year*, *Environmental Services Person of the Year* and *Social Service Director of the Year*. Alden also received awards for *Adult Volunteer of the Year*, *Community Partnership Program of the Year*, *Innovative Program of the Year* and *Publication of the Year*.



Desserts such as this 'Chocolat Mousse Galette' helped Alden of Waterford's Chef Ed Kropiwicz earn IHCA's top dietary award.

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Banner design:  
Photo of stained glass ceiling  
in Alden North Shore's lobby.



'Administrator of the Year' Marc Villafania and the Alden Princeton team at IHCA's 2008 Convention in Peoria.

# Alden Gardens of Waterford



*'Assisted Living Director of the Year' Rob Anderson (left) congratulates Chef Ed Kropiwec for being named 'Dietary Manager of the Year.'*

- **Assisted Living Director of the Year**
- **Dietary Manager of the Year**
- **Adult Volunteer of the Year**

**A**lden Gardens of Waterford Assisted Living Community in Aurora received three awards—the most for any one facility—at this year's IHCA Convention.

Rob Anderson was named *Assisted Living Director of the Year* for his “outstanding dedication to his job, caring attitude toward his employees and sincere commitment to the residents and their family members,” the Master of Ceremonies told an audience of more than 300 health care professionals. Anderson was lauded for his attention to “the little things that sometimes matter most—from taking a resident outside to count swan eggs to walking around the building with a hand vacuum making sure the facility is immaculate.”

Alden Gardens of Waterford's Chef Ed Kropiwec, described as a “culinary wizard who has seasoned his dining room with love and a passion for excellent food,” was named *Food Service/Dietary Manager of the Year*. “Ed's knowledge and skills in the kitchen are

matched by his management style in training and leading his staff,” says Anderson, noting that when Kropiwec was asked to cater a bridal shower for a resident's daughter, he enrolled in a cake decorating class to make the event perfect.

“The shower was so successful that Ed and his staff now cater cakes for residents of the entire Alden of Waterford Continuing Care Retirement Community,” Anderson says. Dietitian Aurora Garcia of *Alden Valley Ridge Rehabilitation and Health Care Center* in Bloomingdale and Ed Munao, Jr. of *Alden Estates of Barrington Rehabilitation and Health Care Center* in Barrington were runners up.

Wayne Betz, the 2008 *Adult Volunteer of the Year*, is described as “not just a volunteer but a real friend to the residents, families and staff.” Over the years, Betz has volunteered to do everything from setting up and tearing down tables for special events and helping bring horse and buggy rides to the campus to making cookies and cakes for the annual bake sale. Betz even “donned a tuxedo to be an escort at Alden Gardens of Waterford's annual fashion show,” says Anderson, adding that his “unselfish acts of kindness make everyone feel special.” Other Alden nominees for Adult Volunteer of the Year included Bob Merten, *Alden Estates of Naperville Rehabilitation and Health Care Center* in Naperville, and Roz Simler, *Alden North Shore Rehabilitation and Health Care Center* in Skokie.

## Alden North Shore Earns Nursing Honors

**T**wo members of *Alden North Shore Rehabilitation and Health Care Center's* nursing staff were honored by IHCA. Emilio Nicolasin, Jr. was named *CNA of the Year* and Mary Horvath, a registered nurse (RN) at the Skokie facility, received the *MDS Coordinator of the Year* award.

Affectionately called ‘the singer’ and ‘miracle worker,’ Nicolasin is “a talented musician who considers his work a ministry to the elderly and infirm, inspiring them to get better through his caring touch and his music,” says Jennifer Illarde, Alden North Shore's administrator.

In a letter nominating Nicolasin, the daughter of a resident wrote that the Alden North Shore CNA had learned conversational Greek to be able to better communicate with her mother. “I can count on Emil for a hug, a

song, a happy story, but mostly, the confidence that my mother is loved and well cared for,” she wrote.

Linda Cabrera of *Alden Valley Ridge Rehabilitation and Health Care Center* in Bloomingdale and Nellie Vega of *Alden Lincoln Park Rehabilitation and Health Care Center* in Chicago were also among the 19 nominees for CNA of the Year.

Mary Horvath, the MDS (Minimum Data Set) Coordinator at Alden North Shore, “is a giant among her peers despite her slight stature,” says Alden's MDS Director Jennifer Fuller. “She guides and leads the interdisciplinary team in planning the care needed to successfully discharge patients to their homes. Although Mary's job entails a mountain of paperwork, she is a great listener and gives families a sense of assurance that



*Alden Chief Operating Officer Robert J. Molitor (center) with 'CNA of the Year' Emilio Nicolasin, Jr. and 'MDS Coordinator of the Year' Mary Horvath.*

their loved one will be well taken care of.”

Karen Baker of *Alden Orland Park Rehabilitation and Health Care Center* in Orland Park was also a nominee in the category.

## 'Heroes' in Long-Term Care Recognized by State Organizations

Twenty-one Alden residents, employees and volunteers were selected this year as 'heroes' in long-term care by the Illinois Health Care Association and the Illinois Council on Long Term Care.

The following award recipients were chosen for positively impacting the quality of life in long-term care facilities:

### **Alden Des Plaines**

- Frank Amarillo, Building Manager

### **Alden Courts of Des Plaines**

- Rosa Toledano, CNA

### **Alden Estates of Evanston**

- Rosita Drapiza, CNA
- Carine Jeanty-Metellus, Laundry Aide
- Maria Kakates, Dining Room Aide
- Reynaldo Magsino, LPN

### **Alden Lincoln Park**

- Brandi Brice, Social Service Director

### **Alden Terrace of McHenry**

- Gail Powers, Volunteer

### **Alden Naperville**

- Althea Edwards, Assistant Director of Activities

### **Alden North Shore**

- Norma Bartolome, CNA

### **Alden of Old Town East**

- James Nyema-Baker, CNA

### **Alden of Old Town West**

- Kelia Randolpjh, Resident

### **Alden Princeton**

- Tishawn Mitchell, Director of Nursing
- Antoinette Stevenson, LPN
- Marc Villafania, Administrator

### **Alden Springs**

- Mary Ellen Schweitzer, Facility Manager

### **Alden Trails**

- David Nevarez, Resident

### **Alden Valley Ridge**

- Yasmin Yusufi, Resident

### **Alden Gardens of Waterford**

- Barb Davis, Volunteer
- Ernest King, Resident

### **Alden Wentworth**

- Ernest Knowles, Resident

## Environmental Services Person of the Year

*Robert Benka, Alden Alma Nelson Manor*

Robert Benka became the first-ever recipient of IHCA's *Environmental Services Person of the Year* award at this year's convention. Described as "highly organized, honest, cost-conscious and a self-starter," Benka has the task of keeping a 268-bed building looking good and operating smoothly. Not only does he do his job superbly, says Sherry Gillihan, administrator of the Rockford rehabilitation and health care center, "being building manager is more than a job for Bob. Whether he's grilling hamburgers at a cookout or taking a resident for a twirl around the floor, Bob truly enjoys himself and makes sure the residents are safe and comfortable." Frank Amarillo of *Alden Des Plaines Rehabilitation and Health Care Center* and Jose Gonzales of *Alden North Shore Rehabilitation and Health Care Center* were runners up in the category.



*Environmental Services Person of the Year' Robert Benka.*



*'Social Service Professional of the Year' Brandi Brice.*

## Social Service Professional of the Year

*Brandi Brice, Alden Lincoln Park*

*Alden Lincoln Park Rehabilitation and Health Care Center's* Brandi Brice was named IHCA's *Social Service Professional of the Year*. A person who is rarely seen in her office because she knows how important it is to be accessible to residents and families, Brice "does whatever it takes to make residents feel comfortable," says Carrie Groulx, administrator of the Chicago facility. "She's able to make the admission process a smooth and easy transition and is extremely insightful when answering residents' and families' questions." Nominated for the same honor was Lynisha Lawson of *Alden Village Health Facility for Children and Young Adults* in Bloomingdale.

## IHCA Award Nominees

The following are additional 2008 IHCA award nominees:

### **Housekeeping Professional of the Year**

Frank Amarillo, Alden Des Plaines  
Jose Gonzalez, Alden North Shore

### **Activity Professional of the Year**

April Davidson, Alden Courts of Waterford  
Nancy Johnson, Alden Orland Park  
JoAnna Soto, Alden Estates of Evanston

### **Teen Volunteer of the Year**

Cassie Birmingham, Alden Town Manor

### **Group Volunteer of the Year**

Alden Orland Park Advisory Board,  
Alden Orland Park  
Anti-Cruelty Society of Chicago,  
Alden Lincoln Park  
Bloomingdale Church Youth Group,  
Alden Valley Ridge

### **Direct Service Person of the Year (DD)**

Idolga Pace, Alden Village

### **Nurse of the Year**

Tessie Alvarado, Alden Long Grove  
Cherilyn Corcuera, Alden Orland Park  
Celia Garcia, Alden Valley Ridge

### **DON of the Year**

Ireen Evangelista, Alden Estates of Barrington  
Richelle Hofilena, Alden Estates of Evanston  
Donna Whaley, Alden Alma Nelson Manor

### **Media Event of the Year**

'Mission Impossible' Team Creates New  
Alden Website, Alden Management Services  
'Rehab Residents Fights Against the Odds,'  
Alden Valley Ridge

### **Photograph of the Year**

'A Bag Full of Candy Helps the Medicine Go  
Down,' Alden Alma Nelson Manor  
'A Kiss and a Candy Bar,'  
Alden Terrace of McHenry  
'How to Milk a Cow,' Alden Town Manor  
'I Can Swim,' Village North

# Specialty Awards: Behavioral Health, The ALDEN Leader and Food Bank Initiative

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## Innovative Program of the Year Behavioral Health Program

*"I had been to just about every nursing home in Chicago and my family and doctor knew I needed help. When I first got here my self esteem was low and I felt like I would never be able to live a decent life ... Now I feel different because of the women here who helped me keep my faith, be a lady, stay strong and work hard. It had been over 20 years since I'd had six months of sobriety. I am now on the road to becoming the person I was born to be ... NOT a drug addict, alcoholic, prostitute or crazy."*

That powerful testimony, read at the 2008 IHCA Tribute Ceremony, came from a resident participating in Alden's Behavioral Health Program—winner of IHCA's **Innovative Program of the Year**. Introduced in 2005, the program grew out of the acute need for alternative treatment programs for people with mental illness. "Alden was aware of the public's negative perception of nursing homes that house the mentally ill," says Karla Ismay, program director, "so from the start we were determined to develop a state-of-the-art program that focused on both treatment and rehabilitation."

Today, Alden has Behavioral Health Units at rehabilitation and health care centers in Harvey (**Heather Health Care**), Chicago (**Alden Princeton, Alden Wentworth and Alden Lakeland**), Long Grove (**Alden Long Grove**) and Rockford (**Alden Park Strathmoor**), which provide group therapy, one-on-one counseling and other mental health services

in home-like, secure and familiar settings. The other Alden nominee in this category was the Alden University Continuing Education Program at **Alden Poplar Creek Rehabilitation and Health Care Center** in Hoffman Estates.



Behavioral Health Program Director Karla Ismay (far right) and unit managers receive 'Innovative Program of the Year' award.

## Publication of the Year The ALDEN Leader

In its fifth year of publication, 'The ALDEN Leader' was named IHCA's **Publication of the Year**. Produced in-house with reporting, photos, articles and graphic design done by Alden employees, the quarterly publication was described as an "attractive, informative official newsletter." The newsletter has a circulation of 10,000 and "tells the story of what Alden's facilities, employees and residents are doing to accomplish the company's mission."

The other Alden nominee in this category was 'The Fine Art of Senior Living,' a brochure highlighting **Alden Gardens of Waterford Assisted Living Community**.

## Community Partnership Program of the Year

### 'Picnic with a Purpose'

A partnership between the Rockford branch of the Northern Illinois Food Bank and Alden's two Rockford facilities earned IHCA's 2008 **Community Partnership of the Year** award.

In 2007, **Alden Alma Nelson Manor Rehabilitation and Health Care Center** and **Alden Park Strathmoor Rehabilitation and Health Care Center** became permanent drop-off sites where members of the community, staff, residents and families can donate food items.

The first quarterly food drive, called 'Picnic with a Purpose,' collected more than 700 pounds of food to help in the fight against hunger. The program continues to serve community agencies, including local food pantries and shelters.