



OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois Community Advocacy Award Winners Announced

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Shelli Dankoff / Media Relations Supervisor (309) 655-3897

(Peoria, IL | Dec. 17, 2019) – OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois cares for patients from throughout Illinois and annually recognizes those who are making a difference in the lives of children. The 29th annual Community Advocacy Awards were recently presented to the following:

There were two winners of the **Bill Houlihan Professional Award:** [Gail Eaton from Goodfield](#). Gail Eaton was instrumental in the initial development of the Congenital Heart program at OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois in 1980. She has provided care, education, emotional support, and coordination of services for children with congenital heart disease. The team has performed over 7,800 surgical procedures. Gail founded The Organization for Understanding Congenital Hearts (T.O.U.C.H.), an educational and support network for CHD patients and families. In 1985, Gail was instrumental in bringing Family House to Peoria. The driving force behind Gail's success is commitment, passion, and dedication to the complex care of CHD patients. Recently retired, Gail still leads with her heart for all CHD patients.

[Shelley Lee from Peoria](#). Shelley Lee has been the "glue" of the St. Jude Midwest Affiliate for 30 years. Her career began as a Child Life Specialist and evolved into the Patient Care Service Coordinator. She oversees all aspects of patient services for children with cancers and blood orders. Shelley is Administrator for the Heller Center for Kids with Cancer and helped start the Dax Locke Foundation Camp Hope. Shelley navigates for newly diagnosed patients and their families, then works with their long-term care program. The outpatient clinic averages over 4,000 visits annually.

This award recognizes a professional who advocates for children through their work, going over and beyond the daily expectations to improve the lives of children.

Christine Zak-Edmonds Volunteer Award given to [Rev. James DeLoatche from West Peoria](#). James DeLoatche is a retired Army Captain who received two Purple Hearts and three Bronze Stars. He now serves as senior assistant pastor at Grace Baptist Church in Peoria. For 20 years he has sponsored a basketball program, established in memory of his son, Julius, for approximately 50 boys and girls in 5th through 8th grades. For eight weekends each summer, players receive instruction, equipment, food, and support. James uses sports for young people to promote the healing of body and spirit.

This award recognizes adults who embrace children and their issues, offer their time and talents as a volunteer to improve the lives of children.

Joey Stowell Youth Award given to [Kaden Moore from East Peoria](#). Kaden Moore, 12, has severe allergies and asthma and has been an OSF Healthcare Children's Hospital of Illinois patient. Because of this, he has a heart for hospitalized kids and is an advocate for OSF Children's Hospital. Kaden participates in fundraising through Children's Miracle Network Hospitals Extra Life Game Day, The Drive for Miracles Radiothon, and "Cookies for Kaden," where he raises nearly \$800 in four hours at a lemonade stand to purchase gifts for patients. Kaden's humble personality and compassionate heart makes him a unique young man and a grateful patient that has the children who need OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois services and programs in his heart.

This award recognizes a person or group, 18 years or younger, whose unique accomplishments have improved the quality of life for children and/or teens in central Illinois.

Children's Advisory Board Group Award given to the [New Beginnings Worship Center from Peoria](#). In the past 10 years, New Beginnings Worship Center has worked to impact the lives of unserved children on the Southside of Peoria. Their annual Back-to-School Festival provides physicals, dental, wellness checks, and other medical services. This fun family event coordinates public services and distributes school supplies sponsored by 20 businesses. New Beginnings has donated more than 50 bikes to kids who have never had one. New Beginnings is planting "Parks on the Southside of Peoria" with the first one planted two years ago. A second park will be planted in 2020 to give children a safe place to play. New Beginnings Worship Center is a young church that has a heart for the city and the 500 - 1,000 young people it serves annually.

This award recognizes a company or organization that works continually over time, in a variety of ways, to improve the lives of children.

Dr. Mary Schultz Physician Award given to [Dr. Sally Jo Winek from Peoria](#). Dr. Sally Jo Winek is board certified in Child Neurology and Pediatrics, and works with the youngest children to older teens who have a wide range of diagnoses, abilities, and needs. Dr. Winek leaves no stone unturned to get the necessary information to make an accurate diagnosis, and to mobilize the best services for her patients and families once the diagnosis has been made. For example, when a new OSF Children's Hospital treatment for babies who sustained brain damage from low oxygen levels during a difficult birth process was initiated, Dr. Winek volunteered to get the additional specialized training needed to assess and follow these babies. In the last five years, she has completed 985 patient visits - including 358 unique patient encounters - within the Child Development Clinic.

Dr. Mary Schultz was a champion for children throughout her lifetime. She was well respected by all who knew her. The Dr. Mary Schultz award was created to carry on Dr. Schultz's legacy as well as honor other physicians who spend their life bettering the lives of children.