

2017 CP of NYS Annual Awards Winners

Al Felmet Achievement Award – Jane Gefell, CP Rochester

Jane Gefell is an accomplished author, artist, public speaker, advocate for people with disabilities and a dedicated community volunteer. She has written three books and speaks passionately about the importance of believing in oneself and how to establish and achieve goals.

Additionally, Ms. Gefell volunteered at a shelter for homeless people in Rochester for 14 years because she says she felt a calling to help those who have less than she does. She says she would still be volunteering every week if she was physically able to. She also visits grade schools in the area to speak to students about her life with a disability. Many notes from the children mention how they were inspired by her achievements.

Ms. Gefell offers hope and inspiration to others through her writing and speaking engagements by communicating her strong belief that there is joy and purpose in everyone's life. Her message is unwavering. She encourages people to discover their own gifts and to use them to express themselves and, more importantly, to help others.

Anthony J. Koenig Volunteer Service Award – Charles Dieteman – Empower

Though only a ninth grader, Charles Dieteman has been a dedicated and trusted volunteer for Empower for three years. In sixth grade he worked with a school club to build support for Word Cerebral Palsy Day. He worked with teachers, students and his mother to sell CP Awareness Ribbons, earning more than \$600 for Empower. Since then CP Awareness fundraisers have become an annual event at the middle school, raising more than \$2,500 for Empower.

Through his philanthropic efforts, his advocacy and his winning personality, Mr. Dieteman has helped educate his peers, break down barriers and show others that there are no limits to what people with disabilities can accomplish. His accomplishments have earned him the "Do the Right Thing Award" from Police Athletic League and the Junior Leadership Award from Empower.

Mr. Dieteman's good work doesn't stop with his support of Empower. He has also supported other charitable endeavors including hospice and environmental issues. He is also active in other activities, serving as a ball boy for the school's varsity football team and delivering presentations about cerebral palsy.

Daniel Wieder Leadership Award—James Moran, Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State

We present Jim Moran this award in recognition of his decades-long commitment to excellence and outstanding dedication to CP of NYS, its Affiliates, and the thousands of people with disabilities and their families that have benefited from his efforts on their behalf. Jim worked in State government for over thirty years and consistently put people with disabilities first in all his actions and efforts. He was instrumental in ensuring people with the highest needs supported by CP of NYS Affiliates were always included in any decision regarding funding and program design. Since joining CP of NYS, he again demonstrated exceptional analytic and strategic thinking skills to benefit not only CP of NYS Affiliates but also the entire disability field. Working closely with OPWDD and DOH he persevered in his advocacy, moving them to make critical changes in their rate methodologies and reimbursement formulas. His tenacity, knowledge and professionalism provided CP Affiliates better rate structures and a much-needed understanding of the complex reimbursement system. Also an advocate for those working in the field, he developed the lynchpin of the field's successful bFair2DirectCare campaign, combining political savvy with financial wizardry in his proposal to bring workers to a living wage. His leadership over the years has resulted in untold benefits for people with the most significant disabilities, their families, and agencies in New York State.

Employer of the Year Award – Helen Hayes Hospital

Helen Hayes Hospital in Rockland County has been committed to hiring and supporting people with disabilities. They have welcomed interns and have hired people with disabilities and provided a stable and nurturing work environment for everyone. One person from the Jawonio employment program has worked at Helen Hayes Hospital for more than 21 years. "I really like working at Helen Hayes Hospital," said Ronald.

Another employee was hired through Jawonio's Employment Training Program. The hospital staff recognized his potential early on and made the decision to hire him immediately. They have allowed him flexibility in his schedule and have shown patience as he has acclimated to the new environment.

The Helen Hayes staff always finds time to address concerns or special needs of their employees and are committed to providing an accessible and supportive work environment. The employees are proud to be a part of the organization and are made to feel valued and an important part of the hospital's team.

Natalie Rogers Employee of the Year Award – Kim Kiely, Empower

Kim Kiely has been in this field for more than 30 years and her hard work and leadership skills have earned her the respect of everyone she encounters. She has spent most of her career in a sheltered workshop environment, but has been quick to adapt to a new direction. Under her leadership Empower was the first voluntary agency in the state to submit a workshop transformation plan.

Ms. Kiely leads by example and her staff follows as she shows the way through the changing landscape. Largely because of her determination, the entire staff of the Job Training and Day Programs Division is enthusiastically moving forward and instituting new plans and programs to meet the challenges.

Ms. Kiely is dedicated to helping families, program participants, and the staff understand and embrace a new model of supports and services. She oversaw the launching of *Empties for Empower*, a new bottle and can redemption business serving as an integrated community prevocational worksite. She is a strong and determined leader with high expectations for everyone, including herself.

Program Innovation Award – Jawonio, Inc.

Jawonio has been a leader in the Mid-Hudson region of New York for 70 years in providing integrated general health and behavioral health services for people with disabilities. The organization's innovative programs provide support and services despite the barriers often encountered that in the past have limited the way in which services are able to be provided.

Jawonio's employment programs have provided thousands of people with special needs opportunities to gain the independence and, integration, and increased self-esteem that comes with meaningful work.

Jawonio's model of integrated care is inherent in every program operated by the agency. Their focus on addressing the specific goals and needs of each individual they support helps promote independence and well-being in everyone they support. Every Jawonio program has integrated services to allow behavioral health evaluation, training for staff and parents and individualized programming for those affected by behavioral health challenges.

Providing professional development opportunities for staff, identifying additional funding sources and providing opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of expertise have been critical elements of Jawonio's success.

**Robert Schonhorn Direct Support Professional of the Year Award – Phillipa Hartwell,
Queens Centers for Progress**

Phillipa Hartwell loves going to work every day and, in fact, refers to the residence where she works as her second home. She always seems to be able to keep the residents and the staff upbeat and in a positive frame of mind.

She goes above and beyond her normal duties to ensure that the residents she supports have every opportunity to be active members of their community and to reach their full potential as individuals. One of the people she supports wanted to learn to research and prepare healthy, nutritious meals. Ms. Hartwell helped the person purchase herbs and vegetables for a garden. They then worked together to maintain the plants and they now have fresh vegetables and herbs to use in preparing meals. They also have enough to share with other QCP residences.

Ms. Hartwell's energy and positive attitude is an example followed by her colleagues. She is respected and liked by staff and residents alike and is a shining example of what a team player with compassion for others and a heart as big as all outdoors can accomplish.

**Visions of New York Art Contest Winner – Geill Shippee, Cerebral Palsy of the North
Country**

Geill Shippee, has been named the winner of the 2017 State CP of NYS *Visions of New York* Art Contest. This is the 14th year of the contest, and Ms. Shippee is the first artist to win the award for a second time, having been recognized previously in 2013. Her winning entry is the centerpiece of the annual commemorative poster highlighting artwork from 17 CP of NYS Affiliates.

**Legislator of the Year Award -
The Honorable Robert Ortt, New York State Senate
*The Honorable Aileen Gunther, New York State Assembly***

Senator Robert Ortt and Assemblymember Aileen Gunther have been named the CP of NYS Legislators of the Year because of their commitment to improving the lives of people with disabilities, their families and staff. They have been true friends to CP of NYS, its Affiliates, the people we support, their families and staff.

Over the past few years, Senator Ortt and Assemblymember Gunther have not only chaired the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committees in their House but both have shown true leadership, dedication and support for people with developmental disabilities and

their families. Over the past year and a half, Senator Ortt and Assemblymember Gunther have shown outstanding and unwavering support of Direct Support Professionals in their **struggle to secure funding to begin to achieve a living wage.**

People with disabilities, families, staff and volunteers have been secure in the knowledge that Senator Ortt and Assemblymember Gunther have been their staunchest advocates and champions and were key to the success of the first two years of the #bFair2DirectCare funding toward a living wage and we know that they will continue to be there for all of us to continue the fight for a living wage.

For all those reasons, they are our Legislators of the Year.

Elks Award - David Brown, Cohoes-Waterford Lodge #1317

David Brown was chosen to receive this award for the second time by his colleagues because of his long-standing and continuing commitment to the support of the Home Service Program and for leadership in raising funds and awareness in support of the mission and vision of Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State.

Mr. Brown is a strong advocate for people with disabilities and the professionals who support them and a valued friend of CP of NYS and especially the Home Service Program. He is currently the Major Projects chair for the Cohoes-Waterford Elks Lodge #1317, as well as the Major Projects chair for the Northeast District. He makes certain that whenever a CP Ambassador and his or her family come into town for a District function, all their needs are met, from arranging the hotel, escorting them to and from the function, or setting up that "special" meal. He becomes close with each CP Ambassador Family and stays in touch with the Ambassadors as they grow to become adults. He conducts two or three District fundraisers a year to help his Lodges exceed their Major Projects fundraising goals. He loves the work and treasures his relationship with the Major Projects Program.