



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

media release

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For Immediate Release

National Family Week Honors Local Champions

In honor of families who have overcome tremendous obstacles, Franklin County Children Services recently collaborated with its Family-to-Family community partners and hosted the *National Family Week Celebration* at the Lincoln Theater in downtown Columbus. The agencies' recognized five families for their successes and five community advocates for their efforts.

St. Stephen's Community House (Greater Linden Area) Honorees:

It was because of her positive spirit and commitment to helping her children have a better start in life that Linden area resident, **Dawn Martin** was honored by St. Stephen's Community House. Martin is a single mother of four children, who has done everything in her power to ensure a strong, safe and loving environment for her children. She works two jobs, but makes sure that she is home in time to help them with their homework and talk about their day. St. Stephen's also presented their community advocate award to **Israel Wright**, who has a driving passion to educate, inspire and motivate others to achieve personal and financial success.

Central Community House (Columbus Near East Side) Honorees:

Cheryleta Ballard has worked diligently for her children to make sure they stay healthy and strong. She has been a continual source of love and motivation for her family and those that know her. One of her children had some very critical medical needs and with the help of her service team, she was able to get the problems addressed. Central selected CareSource Community Education Representative **Pam Shields** as their community advocate. She reaches out to Family-to-Family participants and seniors about the importance of health care coverage and gives them explanations that are easily understood.

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Gladden Community House (Franklinton and Surrounding Neighborhoods) Honorees:

Terri Walker is a grandmother who took custody of her two young grandchildren in a time of difficulty and challenge. She strives to provide them with an environment for growth and happiness. Gladden also honored **Communities in Schools Stable Families program** as their community advocate. The stable family program has been a tremendous resource and support for Family-to-Family clients. Through their wrap-around services, they provide budget counseling, help with rent and utilities, and make sure children continue to attend school in their own communities.

South Side Settlement House (Columbus South Side) Honorees:

Patricia Craig has custody of five grandchildren ages 4 to 16. Craig has made it her mission to turn their lives around. The kids receive awards for honor roll, perfect attendance and achievement awards. Craig is also a consistent member in the Women Helping Women Moving Forward support group. South Side honored **Pamela Palmer** as their community advocate. Palmer currently works as a volunteer for the South Side Neighborhood Pride Center helping residents gain access to public benefits, housing, legal services, veteran services and affordable health care.

The Neighborhood House (Columbus Near East Side) Honorees:

Tina Gamble is a mother of four children who found herself and her children in a homeless situation due to a disrupted marriage. With the assistance of the service team, Gamble was able to secure housing and employment. She has continued to demonstrate the strength and ability to develop goals and work toward their completion. The Neighborhood House honored **Jean G. Manuel** as their community advocate. Manuel is being recognized for his outstanding work he has done to keep families together in Columbus and Haiti. Manuel is presently the President of the Commission Coalition of Columbus for Haiti (CCCH).

Key note speaker Angela Cornelius Dawson, director of the Ohio Drug and Alcohol Addiction Services ended the evening with her remarks about the tremendous impact community partners have on the well-being of families in need.

Franklin County Children Services is the agency mandated by Ohio law to provide protection and care to children in need. These children may be abused, neglected or dependent and may be living in their homes, with relatives, in foster care, or in residential care. Services are provided to strengthen family life to enable children to remain safe. Nearly 24,500 children in Franklin County each year receive services through Franklin County Children Services.

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