

**Catholic Charities of Steuben Recognizes Service to Others at Annual Dinner**

BATH, NY – Catholic Charities of Steuben (CCS) is pleased to announce the recipients of our 2016 Annual Awards. Each year CCS recognizes individuals or organizations in Steuben County for outstanding commitment to the agency, its mission, and the service priorities that combine to advance the mission, including Kinship Family & Youth, Substance Free Living, and Turning Point. Awardees were recognized at a dinner held Thursday, October 27 at the Bath Country Club May Street Restaurant. Nearly 100 people attended, including Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R-C-I), Sharon Sitrin-Moore from Senator Tom O'Mara's (R, C, IP) office, and Sharon Murphy from Congressman Tom Reed's (R) office, who each presented official proclamations from their respective offices to the award winners. Awards included the Friends of Catholic Charities Award, the William and Dorothy Belknap Award, the Barbara Fairbanks Award, the Works of Love Award, the Spirit of Turning Point Award, the Andy Mazzella Compassion Award, the Golden Shoe Award, and the Robert Turissini Award. A new award was also added this year in honor of this year's theme, "Together We Can."



Catholic Charities of Steuben Board Chair Michael Gabrielli was joined by Assemblyman Phil Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore from Senator Tom O'Mara's office, and Sharon Murphy from Congressman Tom Reed's office in presenting the Friends of Catholic Charities Award to the United Way of the Southern Tier. Accepting the award on behalf of the United Way was their Board Treasurer, Frank Vassallo. (From Left: Michael Gabrielli, Frank Vassallo, Assemblyman Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore (Senator O'Mara), Sharon Murphy (Congressman Reed))

The highest community honor, the **Friends of Catholic Charities Award**, recognizes an individual or organization that has helped CCS achieve its mission to build communities that care for all people by strengthening and enriching the quality of life for individuals, families and children; working to reduce poverty; and advocating for social justice. This year the honor went to the **United Way of the Southern Tier**. The United Way of the Southern Tier is the number one funder of human service programs, aside from government, in Chemung and Steuben counties. Their support was instrumental in launching CCS' Turning Point poverty services in Bath, Corning, and Hornell, and is essential to continuing the work, not only of Turning Point, but also of so many other CCS programs, including the Bath Community Child Day Care Center, Healthy Families Steuben, Bath Area Hope for Youth, and Steuben Council on Addictions. In presenting the

award, CCS Board Chair Michael Gabrielli said, "The United Way of the Southern Tier has been a partner of our agency for nearly 20 years, and we would not be able to do the work that we do without their support. Together, we have been able to positively impact the lives of children and create lasting change."

The **William and Dorothy Belknap Award** was established to honor this couple who saw a need in the Bath community for youth services and recreational activities, so they took the initiative to start Bath Area Hope for Youth. The award recognizes an individual or organization who has, through their efforts and dedication, promoted providing Substance Free Living Prevention Services to youth, families, and communities. This year's award went to **Tim Lyons of Addison, NY**. Mr. Lyons has been a teacher and mentor to students since 1991, currently in the Addison Central School District. He has coached cross country and track, JV boys' basketball, and youth sports teams, including lacrosse and basketball. He has been named Coach of the Year for cross country several times and was selected as Steuben County Coach of the Year. His teams have also won a number of cross country sectional titles, and he has coached a number of athletes who have gone on to compete at the state level. Jim Bassage, Substance Free Living's Prevention Services Director, presented the award stating, "When you see Tim interact with students, you can see the spark of fun and enjoyment that he brings to learning for them. He makes every effort to include our agency in his classroom and in providing information to students. His dedication to the youth and to the district of Addison is one that is beyond compare he truly exemplifies service to youth, community, and family through education and athletics." As Mr. Lyons was unable to attend the Annual Dinner, the award was presented by Mr. Bassage and Steuben Council on Addictions Prevention Educator, Stacey O'Dell, prior to the event.

The **Barbara Fairbanks Award** honors the memory of this woman who worked hard to enrich the lives of children through her service on the Kinship Board of Directors, the Kinship Advisory Board, and many other boards throughout the community. The award recognizes an individual or organization who exemplifies a strong commitment to advocating for Steuben County children by supporting of one of CCS' Kinship Family & Youth programs. This year's recipient was **Read to Me Steuben**, a program of ProAction of Steuben and Yates, Inc.



CCS' Substance Free Living Prevention Services Director, Jim Bassage, and Steuben Council on Addictions Prevention Educator, Stacey O'Dell, presented the William and Dorothy Belknap Award to Tim Lyons of Addison, NY. (From Left: Jim Bassage, Tim Lyons, Stacey O'Dell)

Read to Me Steuben partners with agencies conducting home visits to provide children's books, educational and



Assemblyman Phil Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore from Senator Tom O'Mara's office, and Sharon Murphy from Congressman Tom Reed's office joined Lisa Galatio, CCS' Kinship Family & Youth Director, in presenting the Barbara Fairbanks Award to Read to Me Steuben. Accepting the award on behalf of the program were Linda George and Zach Housworth with ProAction of Steuben and Yates, Inc. (From Left: Lisa Galatio, Linda George, Zach Housworth, Assemblyman Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore (Senator O'Mara), Sharon Murphy (Congressman Reed))

Linda George and Zack Housworth with ProAction of Steuben and Yates, Inc.

The **Works of Love Award** recognizes the extraordinary effort of a member of the Steuben County faith community who collaborates with CCS to act on social justice issues and serve the most vulnerable in our community, advancing the mission of the organization through various works of love.

This year's award went to **Francis Curran of Hammondsport, NY**. CCS' Turning Point Director, Lynda Lowin, presented the award explaining some of the many "little" ways in which Mr. Curran gives of himself to help those in need—ways that, when viewed in aggregate, amount to so much more. Curran organizes a local effort through St. John Vianney's Parish and several other churches in Hammondsport, NY and Bath, NY to collect empty pill

parenting information, and guidance to families of low income or at-risk children. The program provides the books, support materials, and training, while utilizing partners, such as CCS' Kinship Family & Youth programs, to deliver the materials and support services to participating families. CCS' Kinship Family & Youth Director, Lisa Galatio, presented the award saying "Our families love the books they receive! Families who were not reading together are now doing so consistently. Children who reportedly would never sit still for a story are listening to a whole book. Families who had already been reading to their children report they are reading as a family even more now. Thank you to Read to Me Steuben for all of the wonderful books and enriching experiences they have given to our families." Accepting the award on behalf of the Read to Me Steuben program were



Assemblyman Phil Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore from Senator Tom O'Mara's office, and Sharon Murphy from Congressman Tom Reed's office presented the Works of Love Award to Frank Curran of Hammondsport, NY. Angela Staszak of Hammondsport, NY assisted Frank Curran to the front of the room to accept his award. (From Left: Angela Staszak, Frank Curran, Assemblyman Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore (Senator O'Mara), and Sharon Murphy (Congressman Reed))

bottles to be sent to Africa, where people are often given medicine without containers. He has managed the returnable can and bottle drive at St. Gabriel's in Hammondsport, NY since the early 2000s, donating the deposits collected from this effort to Turning Point to help those in need. He served as a board member for many years when Joseph's Hammer ministry started. He shovels neighbors' sidewalks and visits the ill, bringing both company and communion. He's been known to coordinate a gift donation and distribution effort for five or six families at Christmastime, or to ensure that a needed item such as a bed, fridge, or sofa was found, picked up, and delivered. Said Mrs. Lowin, "These are just a few examples that we know about because of the quiet nature of Frank's ways, but we know the impact and the effect of his presence in our community, and we recognize Francis Curran for his works of love this year."



Theresa McKinley, CCS' Turning Point Bath Site Coordinator, was joined by Assemblyman Phil Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore from Senator Tom O'Mara's office, and Sharon Murphy from Congressman Tom Reed's office in presenting the Spirit of Turning Point Award to Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE). Pat Lamphier accepted the award on behalf of CCE. (From Left: Theresa McKinley, Pat Lamphier, Assemblyman Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore (Senator O'Mara), and Sharon Murphy (Congressman Reed))

monthly Mobile Food Truck days. CCS' Turning Point Bath Site Coordinator, Tess McKinley, presented the award saying, "This organization has done so much for Turning Point in the last year. They have helped our clients to better themselves financially, taught our staff to be financial coaches, showed our consumers how to cook healthy food, and have donated much needed freezer space for our Thanksgiving Giveaway. And they have done all of this at no cost. This organization has collaborated with us in many different ways and shows that 'Together We Can' make a difference and give thousands of people opportunities to live healthier and happier lives."

The **Spirit of Turning Point Award** recognizes a volunteer whose contribution helps to advance the work of Turning Point, either through advocacy, education, building relationships, developing resources, or increasing capacity. This year, CCS chose to honor **Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County**. Turning Point partners with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) on a number of projects, including budgeting classes for Turning Point clients and financial coaching classes for Turning Point staff, all taught by CCE employees. CCE visits Turning Point twice a month or more to demonstrate recipes and tips on how to cook for a family on a low-cost budget while also serving nutritious and delicious meals. CCE brings this service to many Turning Point events as well, including the Thanksgiving Giveaway, Back to School Supply Drive, and some of the

The **Andy Mazzella Compassion Award** was established in honor of Andy Mazzella, who has dedicated many years of service to CCS as both a volunteer and a paid staff member, working with deeply felt compassion to assist low income families in our community who are struggling. This award is intended to give special recognition to those individuals in CCS or in the Steuben County community who have given selflessly of themselves to improve the human condition of others. This year the award went to Turning Point's Steuben County Rural Ministry Program

**Coordinator, Sister Susan Cain of Canisteo, NY.** Sr. Susan came to the Steuben County Rural Ministry about 17 years ago out of concern for low income children and families in the Canisteo Valley area. Since then, she has engaged individuals, businesses, the faith community, and civic and community organizations to help provide the resources required to assist families in need. In October of 2012, the Sisters of Mercy requested that the ministry come under the umbrella of CCS, and was placed under the Turning Point service priority area, which focuses on poverty services. CCS Executive Director Laura Opelt presented the award saying, "Sr. Susan feeds the hungry; gives drink to the thirsty; clothes the naked; shelters the homeless; counsels, instructs, and comforts others, which are all Works of Mercy done by a Sister of Mercy. Our Sister Susan is loving, generous, and is an inspiration to those she serves as well as those she works with and is most deserving of the Andy Mazzella Compassion Award."



Assemblyman Phil Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore from Senator Tom O'Mara's office, and Sharon Murphy from Congressman Tom Reed's office joined Catholic Charities of Steuben Executive Director Laura Opelt in presenting the Andy Mazzella Compassion Award to Steuben County Rural Ministry's Sister Susan Cain. (From Left: Laura Opelt, Sr. Susan, Assemblyman Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore (Senator O'Mara), and Sharon Murphy (Congressman Reed))



Catholic Charities of Steuben Fundraising/Communications Director Paula Smith presented the Golden Shoe Award to Kacey Blaney of Jasper, NY. (From Left: Kacey Blaney, Paula Smith)

The **Golden Shoe Award** recognizes the walker who raised the most funds for CCS' annual Steps to End Poverty in Steuben (STEPS) Walk. The one mile walk not only raises funds to support Turning Point's poverty programs, but also raises awareness about poverty in Steuben County.

More than 300 people participate county-wide each year, this year raising a record of more than \$35,000 to assist families in need. This year's Golden Shoe Award recipient was **Kacey Blaney of Jasper, NY**, who single-handedly raised more than \$1,650. CCS'

Fundraising/Communications Director, Paula Smith, presented the award saying, "Kacey has been a volunteer at Turning Point Hornell for the past two years. She is a Hope Society-level donor and is also generous with her

time, talent, and energy in her ongoing efforts to support Turning Point, most recently hosting a basket party earlier this week to raise funds for Turning Point Hornell. We are truly blessed to have her support." As Mrs. Blaney was unable to attend the Annual Dinner, the award was presented to her by Mrs. Smith after the event.

The **Robert Turissini Award for Extraordinary Service** was established by the CCS Board of Directors as a special way to honor outstanding employees. Bob Turissini was instrumental in establishing Catholic Charities of Steuben. His dedicated service and leadership as the first Chairman of CCS' Board of Directors guided the agency from its creation in 1997 and brought it to its respected level today. This year's recipient was CCS Administrative Specialist **Jamie Fuller of Arkport, NY**. In presenting the award, CCS Executive Director Laura Opelt said, "Over the years this individual has demonstrated extraordinary flexibility in service of the organization with an unwavering willingness to be involved or help wherever her skills are needed. As our Centralized Services have developed and expanded, she has taken on the added responsibilities of being our point person for IT, HR, and most recently Corporate Compliance. In her role as a senior accountant, she has helped the agency identify ways to save money and achieve outcomes. She has willingly taken on the responsibility to learn about the changes resulting from Medicaid redesign and to help us to understand how those changes will affect our agency. She has helped our organization through her focus on excellence, achieving outcomes, and continuous quality improvement. We are most appreciative of Jamie Fuller and all she has done and continues to do to position our organization for success."

A new award called “**Together We Can**” was bestowed in honor of this year’s Annual Dinner theme. The honor went to Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester’s shared services personnel in Finance and Human Resources (HR). Accepting the award were Senior Accountant **Lois Pruden of Elmira, NY**; Finance Director **Lee Randall of Elmira, NY**; Human Resources Director **Barbara Poling of Victor, NY**; and Employee Relations Manager **Donna Rieker of Elmira, NY**. CCS Executive Director Laura Opelt presented the award saying, “The theme of our program this year is ‘Together We Can.’ It is difficult to think of this theme without thinking about the dedicated and hardworking employees in Human Resources and Finance Central Services. It has been an especially difficult year with the implementation of Medicaid redesign, Federal Labor Standards Act changes, new compliance requirements and other mandated changes and reporting. Both HR and Finance have guided us, supported us, and helped to make the changes seamless for our employees. We are very blessed to have the caliber staff that not only have excellent skills but also are very caring and compassionate. We hope this special recognition helps to communicate our appreciation for all of their hard work and support.” CCS’ mission is to build communities that care for all people by strengthening and enriching the quality of life for individuals, families, and children; working to reduce poverty; and advocating for social justice. For more information, please visit [CatholicCharitiesSteuben.org](http://CatholicCharitiesSteuben.org).



Assemblyman Phil Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore from Senator Tom O’Mara’s office, and Sharon Murphy from Congressman Tom Reed’s office joined Catholic Charities of Steuben Executive Director Laura Opelt in presenting the Together We Can Award to Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester’s shared services personnel in Finance and Human Resources, including Senior Accountant Lois Pruden of Elmira, NY; Finance Director Lee Randall of Elmira, NY; Diocesan Human Resources Director Barbara Poling of Victor, NY; and Southern Tier Director of Human Resources Donna Rieker of Elmira, NY. (From Left: Donna Rieker, Laura Opelt, Lois Pruden (back row), Lee Randall (front row), Barb Poling, Assemblyman Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore (Senator O’Mara), and Sharon Murphy (Congressman Reed))