Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey

SHA

Cornerstone Award

SHA-NJ 2020



Carol Dougherty

Carol Dougherty has spent her entire career championing for people living with developmental and intellectual disabilities. So of course it was inevitable that as a cherished former SHA Board member and previous Board Chair, Carol was destined to be honored at SHA's 22nd Annual Conference and receive SHA's Cornerstone Award. It also seems fitting that Carol be honored at SHA's first Virtual Conference since she herself is a pioneer and trendsetter. Carol launched her lifelong mission over 40 years ago, with the goal to redesign society and its physical infrastructure to match the needs of individuals who live with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Carol began her journey in social work for New Jersey's Department of Human Services/Division of Developmental Disabilities. She went on to hold a variety of professional positions over several years for the State, developing an expertise in the area of licensing that she would bring to the non profit world. Shortly after its inception, Carol joined Partnerships for People as their Executive Director, a non-profit providing comprehensive services and residential supports to people in Northern New Jersey. She led Partnerships as CEO for 30 years, an organization that bears her hallmark focus on the individual. Carol's personal objective was simple: She wanted individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities to be able to have the same opportunities as everyone else; to build relationships. develop skills, and to love and work as valued members of their communities. It is no surprise, then, that Carol was an early adopter of the concept of Person Center Planning. Today, that is the centerpiece of Partnership' services for adults with special needs. To this end, a Plan is developed for each individual, ensuring positive behavioral support, and promoting choice, control, and positive community experiences. Carol has always been a forward thinker, addressing the problems of today while planning for the future.

Carol's love of people has helped her build close relationships with many who have become integral partners. Her skill at empowering the creativity of people she works with has led to pioneering projects in her industry. When she retired from Partnerships in 2018, she left a well-prepared professional team to carry on her important work and stayed on as a consultant to guide them. Her experience in both the private and public sectors has made her insight invaluable to so many audiences. She has consulted for Keystone Human Services, P.I.L.O.T, Better Tomorrows and South Jersey Regional Day Program – a constituency group of 10 providers, in the areas of program development, expansion of services, Medicaid management and potential housing options.

Friends, colleagues, and clients all seem to agree on one thing: Carol's most important attribute is her concern for people and commitment to improving lives. This attribute has been her North Star and the reason why hundreds of people with special needs can now enjoy the lives they deserve. All of us count ourselves lucky to have her in our field of special needs and supportive housing and moreover in our lives. To know Carol is to have been blessed.