

DDS EMPLOYEE NEWS

Governor M. Jodi Rell

Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara

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A Holiday Message from Commissioner O'Meara



I wanted to take this opportunity during the holiday season, to reflect back on the past year, look ahead to 2008, and thank all of you who work hard all year to make our service delivery system one to be proud of.

As you know, this past year marked some significant milestones for our service system including the changing of the agency name to the Department of Developmental Services and the creation of a new Autism Services Division. These changes will enhance our mission for years to come and I appreciate the efforts of everyone who was involved in the proposal and advocacy of these significant initiatives.

As I've mentioned before, it isn't often enough that the efforts of our employees are publicly recognized. Please know that whether you are providing direct care for our consumers, or providing an administrative or executive function in one of our many offices across the state... your contributions are appreciated and recognized not only by the families we provide services to, but also by me and the entire DDS Executive Management Team.

Thank you again for all you do and I wish you and your families a happy and healthy New Year.

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Governor's Service Awards Celebrates Employee Achievements



left to right: Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara, Robert Cox, Steve Robson, Ernest Henderson, Deputy Commissioner Kathryn duPree and North Region Director John Houchin

Governor M. Jodi Rell presented Department of Developmental Services (DDS) employees Robert Cox and Ernest Henderson with *"The Governor's Service Award"*, the highest honor a state employee can receive.

In a ceremony at the State Capitol, Mr. Cox and Mr. Henderson, Supervisors at the North Region's Woodbridge Project in East Hartford were honored for their dedication to the consumers at the DDS transitional program, which supports individuals with the dual diagnosis of mental retardation and mental illness. The program helps individuals who are not quite ready to return home after transitioning out of other facilities.

Steve Robson, DDS Public Program Manger nominated Mr. Cox and Mr. Henderson for the award. "Both Bob and Ernie have found in their hearts ways to enhance the lives of residents of Woodbridge," said Mr. Robson.

"They spent many hours to improve the living environment and as a result have created a warm inviting place for people to live."

"In addition to the dedication to their jobs, both gentlemen contributed countless hours of personal time to provide consistently high quality of services," said Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara. "It is this type of dedication and commitment that raises the bar for all who serve people with disabilities."

Mr. Cox and Mr. Henderson were joined by their families as they were presented their awards.

Below is an additional story on the Woodbridge Program's First Annual Reunion.

Woodbridge Program Celebrates Friendship



Jason Souza and Joseph Addea are just two of many who attended the recent Woodbridge Program Reunion and were able to catch up with old friends.

It was a day of getting old friends together and making new friends as over 30 individuals and staff gathered for the First Annual Woodbridge Program Reunion in East Hartford. The Woodbridge Center is a twelve bed facility operated by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) North Region. It is designed to provide a safe and structured homelike setting for individuals who have experienced a mental health crisis in their lives. The primary purpose of the Woodbridge Center is to successfully transition individuals discharged from acute psychiatric settings back home.

Managed by North Region Staff; SMRW's Ernie Henderson and Bob Cox, Kevin Martin, Program Supervisor and Steve Robson, Residential Manager, the program provides sound, professional assessment by the dedicated team and the 32 DDS employees who staff three shifts.

"This reunion was an opportunity for the individuals we serve to renew their friendships with others and DDS employees," said Mr. Martin. "The day was such a success that we plan to hold a reunion every year."

Others who helped to make the day a success, were retired DDS Case Manager Donna Henderson who catered the food as a gift to the home. In addition, everyone celebrated the completion of a renovation project at the home.