



Kentucky Personnel Cabinet Office of the Secretary

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Governor's Ambassador Awards recognize public employees *First annual award recipients named*

FRANKFORT, Ky. — First Lady Jane Beshear today recognized 20 public service employees, presenting them with the first annual Governor's Ambassador Awards. Created in October 2008, the awards program was established to highlight stories of employees who have positively impacted the lives of their co-workers, customers and community.

"State employees are official ambassadors of our Commonwealth," said Gov. Beshear. "The stories of these individuals encourage and inspire. They are extraordinary examples of what it means to be a Kentuckian and what it means to be a public servant."

Nominations were accepted throughout the year in six categories: customer service, courage, leadership, professional achievement, teamwork or community service and volunteerism. Ninety-eight nominations were submitted, involving more than 300 employees.

All nominations were reviewed by a selection committee and three finalists were chosen in each category. Mrs. Beshear, along with Personnel Cabinet Sec. Nikki Jackson, served as co-chairs of the selection committee. Gov. Beshear selected the six overall winners in each category. All names were removed from the submissions to ensure fairness and anonymity.

"So many of our employees are contributing to and impacting the lives of others, not only through their activities at work, but also through voluntary efforts in their communities," Mrs. Beshear said. "I cannot think of a more appropriate way to recognize employees than with an award that recognizes their stories of compassion and service for the Commonwealth."

All nominees were invited to attend today's ceremony. Award recipients will be honored

by having a personalized engraved brick placed along Ambassador Avenue outside the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History.

For additional information regarding Kentucky Public Service Recognition Week and the Governor's Ambassador Award Program visit the Personnel Cabinet's Web site, <http://personnel.ky.gov>

See pages below for recipient information.

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The recipients are:

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM AWARD

Michele Sither

Cabinet for Health & Family Services

Michele identified the need for a playground that would be accessible to all children. She initiated fund raising efforts, and supervised construction for the “boundless” playground located in Paducah’s Noble Park, the first playground of its kind in Kentucky. Its design encourages inclusive play where children of all abilities can play together throughout the entire space. Michele put in countless volunteer hours to see this project completed.

COURAGE AWARD

Michael Cepeda

Justice & Public Safety Cabinet

Michael not only works to ensure the safety of the public as a correctional officer but also serves as a sergeant in the KY Army National Guard. Michael was driving the lead Armored Security Vehicle during a convoy escort mission when his vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb. Michael was momentarily knocked unconscious by the blast. After regaining consciousness, he attempted to reach his headquarters on the truck radio and assess the situation. He jumped out of the top hatch of his vehicle, and then helped to move two other soldiers to safety. Michael was injured himself, but managed to apply a tourniquet to a soldier’s severely injured legs and provided medical aid to others. His actions helped save their lives.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD

G. Mitchell Mattingly

Public Protection Cabinet

Mitchell serves as staff attorney for the Crime Victims Compensation Board, the Board of Claims and the Sexual Assault Examination Program. During challenging economic times he was able to reduce case backlogs by 50 percent, worked to revise statutes to serve crime victims more effectively, and prevented a break in service for indigent and financially challenged victims of violent crime and citizens who are victims of negligence. For Mitchell, no duty was too insignificant, tedious or seemingly minor. He carried out his responsibilities with professionalism, grace, good humor and camaraderie, creating an atmosphere that encouraged staff to excel and produce.

LEADERSHIP AWARD

Melissa Humphrey

Cabinet for Health and Family Services

As Branch Manager for the Children’s Benefits Workers, and as previous Branch Manager for the Regional Billing Specialists, Melissa oversees a team of 60 or more statewide. She works diligently to create a great team and reinforce a teamwork concept. In addition, she has motivated her employees to work with outside agencies to benefit children of the Commonwealth. Melissa is an advocate for health insurance coverage for all children as outlined by the Governor. Melissa has daily contact with foster and

adoptive parents, answering questions and providing them with the help they need to help keep the child in their home.

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

John A. Carrico

Cabinet for Health and Family Services

John works as a Family Support Supervisor in the Department for Community Based Services. In an attempt to make the work process easier and more efficient for all caseworkers John created: Excel versions of commonly used forms with workbooks to simplify entry for staff, online operation manuals, web pages, and instructional materials for caseworkers. By streamlining various processes, he has reduced the workload for caseworkers and improved the eligibility process for the customers served. John works on multiple projects for the department and provides a great deal of assistance to the Division of Family Support.

TEAMWORK AWARD

Western Kentucky Veterans Center

Department of Veterans Affairs

Lori Hardwick-Hill, Guinn Cost, Sam Beeny, LaDonna Scott, Angela Wolfe, Mary Lynn Troop, Ruth Pettus, Kathy Son, Morrine Cox, Gina Marks, Lisa Foster, Candice Watts, Mark Bandy, Tim Brister and Lisa Revlett

During the ice storm of 2009, these employees exceeded all set standards to ensure the health, safety and emotional well-being of the residents of the Western Kentucky Veterans Center. Employees from all areas of the facility, and from organizational units located elsewhere, helped to provide critical nursing, food, laundry and housekeeping services. Employees stayed at the facility – sleeping, bathing, eating, and working hard to ensure that residents were secure, warm, and well taken care of.