

NEW YORK STATE HONORS FOUR INDIVIDUALS FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

Probation, Social Services officials from Orleans and Onondaga counties recognized for service, collaboration at annual Probation Officers' Association Conference

New York State today recognized four individuals for outstanding contributions to community corrections and interagency collaboration at the annual Mid-Atlantic States Correctional Association Conference and Training Institute, sponsored this year in Albany in association with the New York State Probation Officers' Association and the New York State Corrections and Youth Association.

Three individuals from Orleans County – Probation Director Lucille Taylor-Welch; Carol Ludwig, retired commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS); and current DSS Commissioner Thomas Kuryla – shared the 2011 Award for Outstanding Collaboration between Probation and Social Services, and Onondaga County Probation Officer Kristen Jackson received the 2011 Award for Outstanding Service by a Probation Officer.

Both awards were presented by Robert M. Maccarone, director of the Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives at the state Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), during the conference, which was held at the Crowne Plaza in Albany. There are more than 3,100 probation officers in New York State; last year, they supervised 125,000 adult and 17,000 juvenile probationers across the state.

“Probation officers and their partners in community corrections and social services make a significant difference in the lives of countless at-risk youth, as well as young adult and adult offenders,” Director Maccarone said. “Their work can often go unnoticed, so it gives me great pleasure to present these awards to these four deserving individuals. Through their dedication and professionalism, they exemplify the best of the best, and allow us to highlight the important role that they and their colleagues play in ensuring community safety in each of the state’s 62 counties.”

The 2011 Award for Outstanding Collaboration between Probation and Social Services is presented in recognition of a collaborative partnership that has “significantly contributed to the field of prevention and juvenile justice to strengthen a county’s ability to improve outcomes for youth and families through evidence-based practices and programs.”

The Orleans County collaboration centers upon the creation of evidence-based programs in the county to better address Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS cases). The Orleans County programs emphasize family mediation, conflict resolution and parenting skills. The creation of the Juvenile Adjustment Services program has resulted in a reduction in PINS petitions and foster care placement rates and fewer juvenile detention placements.

“Historically, Probation and DSS throughout the state have not always seen eye-to-eye or had solid working relationships with each other. Through the formation of Juvenile Adjustment Services, the Director and Commissioner have shown that two agencies with philosophical differences can work together to form a collaboration for the good of the community,” wrote Probation Supervisor Jeannette Riley and Juvenile Adjustment

Services Coordinator Carrie O'Neill, in their nomination of Probation Director Taylor-Welch, Retired DSS Commissioner Ludwig and current DSS Commissioner Kuryla.

Added David B. Callard, chairman of the Orleans County Legislature: "The Orleans County Legislature is very proud of the manner in which Social Services and Probation have come together in partnership to keep families together and reduce the foster care population. We are very pleased that the state also recognizes the outstanding efforts of our employees. This is certainly a validation that empowering people to do the right thing pays off."

Ms. Taylor-Welch earned an associate's degree in criminal justice from Genesee Community College and a bachelor's degree in social work from SUNY Brockport. She has been with the Orleans County Probation Department since 1989, when she first served as student intern. She rose through the ranks and was appointed director in 1999.

A graduate of the SUNY Geneseo with a bachelor's degree in English, Ms. Ludwig served as DSS commissioner from 1993 through 2009, when she retired. Prior to working for DSS, she served as director of the Orleans County Office for the Aging for 17 years.

Mr. Kuryla has been commissioner of the Orleans County DSS for the past 1½ years. Prior to that, he worked for the Seneca County Department of Social Services for 19 years, holding every position in the Children and Family Services Department, from caseworker to deputy commissioner. He earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and psychology from Hobart College in Geneva and a master's degree in public administration from SUNY Brockport.

The 2011 Award for Outstanding Service by a Probation Officer is presented "in recognition of exceptional service, dedication and professionalism by a probation officer."

A graduate of SUNY Cortland with a degree in sociology, Ms. Jackson has been an Onondaga County probation officer for six years. She is a member of the office's Community Development Team, which participates in a variety of community details including Operation IMPACT, the state's initiative to target violent and gun crime through interagency partnerships and cooperation, and the Commissioner's Cabinet, a select group of probation officers who assist the department's leadership by reviewing existing policies and procedures and developing and implementing new ones.

"PO Jackson's attitude and professionalism are her strongest points," wrote Probation Supervisor Scott Snyder in his nomination of Ms. Jackson. "Simply put, she is one of this department's finest probation officers. It is my belief that the Onondaga County Probation Department enjoys an outstanding reputation locally and statewide, and it is through the hard work, effort and dedication of probation officers like Ms. Jackson that this reputation has been earned."