

Richland Newhope honors staff, board members

Richland Newhope saluted more than 85 employees and board members during the agency's 28th Annual Recognition Banquet on May 5.

Named the 2016 Employee of the Year was Aurelio Diaz, manager of Social and Integration Services in Adult Services. Aurelio, who was the February Employee of the Month, is described by co-workers as someone who provides supports to individuals that help them build self-confidence, obtain independence, and pursue their passions.

Aurelio is the long-time mentor of the Richland Newhope Industries, Inc. (RNI) Dance Troupe and also founded the Men's and Women's Empowerment Group.

"It takes a lot of people to help each other," he noted while describing the challenging year as RNI transitioned away from the Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities into a separate, private entity.



“This (award) is really a reflection of everyone,” added Aurelio.

Also recognized during the event was this year’s winner of the Hero with Heart award, Makayla Luther, who is a student at Mansfield St. Peter’s.

In accepting the award, Makayla noted the importance of being kind – something her mother began teaching her at a young age.

“Kindness is amazing,” she says. “You don’t have to pay money for it. It makes the world such a better place.”

Honored for 35 years of service at Raintree was Karen Al-Farsi.

Three employees were singled out for 30 years of service: Julie Litt, Hali Parsons, and Vicky Todd. Honored for 25 years of service were Deb Marth and Londa McCormick. Seven employees were acknowledged for their 20 years of service: Jenny Echelberger, Ron Frasher, Gary McKean, Robert Moore, Patti Reece, Cindy Shenberger, and Michel Smith.

Staff employed for five, 10, and 15 years were also recognized as were 12 retirees, members of the Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Richland Newhope Industries, Inc., and Pediatric Development Center, Inc. boards, plus five community members who serve on DD Board committees.

More staff honored

Twenty-nine people with five, 10, and 15 years of service were honored during Richland Newhope’s

28th Annual Recognition Banquet on May 5. They represent not only current employees of the Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities but also those who were board employees prior to their transition to Richland Newhope Industries in December.

The honorees are as follows:

5 Years: Melanie Gebbie, Kathy Peters, Paula Ward,

10 Years: Toni Barabani, Michelle Briggs, Jama Compston, Megan Franta, Diana Haumesser, Shirl Johnson-White, Susan Monastra, Kim Perret, Eva Pickens, Renee Putman, Andrea Spencer,

15 Years: Laura Brackett, Amy Crager, Ben Crouch, Dan Eaton, Lavina Frye, Shereen Hammett, Brenda Howard, Carla Johnson, Suzanne Madden, Julie Pfahler, Nancy Riebau, Karen Smith, Jeff Stacklin, Nicole VanTilburg, Jessica Winans



Hero with Heart

Makayla Luther says she has been volunteering with people with disabilities for as long as she can remember. That says a lot considering Makayla is only 15 years old.

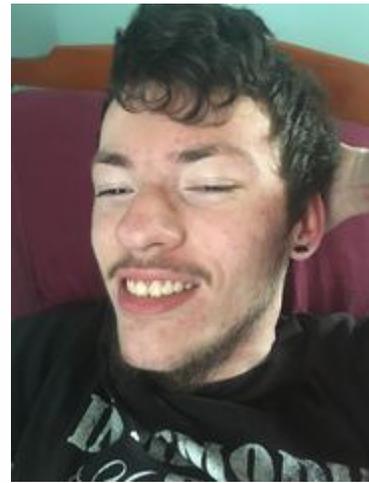
As a young child, she would help with activities at Starfire, a residential facility in Cincinnati where her aunt was employed. In 2014, shortly after moving to Mansfield, Makayla and her mother signed up to volunteer at Raintree, a similar facility operated by Richland Newhope.



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Award winner

Congratulations to Corey France, a senior at Lexington High School, for being named one of this year's McGowan Courage Award winners. Corey was one of eight local high school students to be honored. The award is presented each year by the Rotary Club of Mansfield.



The person who nominated Corey calls him 'a great ambassador for people who have a disability.' He is recognized for being kind to everyone and challenging himself to take classes outside of his multiple disabilities setting.

May Employee of the Month

Name: Kim Duncan

Position: Individual Consultant



Employed since: February 11, 2013

Nominators Comments: Kim is very dedicated to her job and to the individuals she serves. She puts forth 100% every day, and the individuals that she works with like and admire her, as do her co-workers. Kim is extremely detail-oriented, which is vital for this position. She gets things done correctly and on time. She is reliable and always helpful to others. Kim is a pleasure to work with and deserves this recognition.

Holiday reminder

Richland Newhope's Administrative Offices, Service and Support Administration, and Early Childhood Center will be closed Monday, May 29, for Memorial Day.

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