



RICDHH'S 18TH ANNUAL COFFEE HOUR WAS A GREAT SUCCESS.

(Providence, R.I.) – The 18th Annual Coffee Hour hosted by the Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RICDHH) on Nov. 6th at the State House in Providence, RI was a success. This event was to celebrate RICDHH's 27th anniversary of Service and to meet RICDHH's new Executive Director, Earnest Covington, III.

1. RICDHH presented a number of awards to recognize individuals who made a difference in improving the quality of life for deaf and hard of hearing people:

RICDHH 2019 Recognition Award: Tri-County Community Action Agency's Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Deafblind Victims of Crime Advocacy Program, for the leadership, guidance, and dedication with this new thriving program, which provides advocacy and support for deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind victims. The State of RI is very fortunate to have this one of a kind agency that is a model for advocacy nationwide.

RICDHH Certification of Merit award:

1. **David Abell, Rhode Island Office of the Hearing Loss Association of America**, for providing outstanding leadership and implementing innovational strategies that have improved communication for the Rhode Island Office of the Hearing Loss Association of America and for his ongoing commitment with the hearing loop project throughout the state of Rhode Island and the State House.

2. **Adebukola Abisola, Perspectives Corporation**, for being a valuable resource in Rhode Island. She has provided specialized services to deaf and hard of hearing people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and possesses a strong sense of loyalty, patience and commitment to the people she supports.

3. **Nancy Maguire Heath, Rhode Island School for the Deaf**, for providing unwavering commitment and dedication for deaf and hard of hearing students in the state of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island School for the Deaf. She has put the Rhode Island School for the Deaf on the map with an award-winning team of devoted educators and faculty.

RICDHH Certificates for Outgoing Commissioners: Todd Murano of North Providence for four terms and **Susan Pavao** of Fall River, MA for one term.

2. **A New Initiative for Hearing Loops, David Abell and Myron Waldman** of the Hearing Loss Association of America, RI State Office, discussed strategies that have been implemented regarding the hearing loop project.

3. **Earnest Covington, III, RICDHH Executive Director**, introduced himself to the community and gave his vision for RICDHH proposed long and short term goals.

4. Gift Card Drawings: Lastly, four (4) gift cards were given away to four lucky winners. They were eligible for the drawing by showing up at the coffee hour event.

5. **Sponsors:** The events would not be made possible without these sponsors: Thank you!

1. **Neighborhood Health Plan of RI** - Refreshments
2. **Rhode Island Relay** - Postcards
3. **Bridgemark** - \$100 Gift Card
4. **Partners Interpreting** - \$100 Gift Card
5. **Perspectives Corporation** - \$100 Gift Card
6. **SorensonVRS** - \$100 Gift Card

6. Over 25 tables were provided for organizations and agencies to disseminate information to the attendees about their services, programs, and advocates.

The Board of Commissioners are looking forward to having another year of success in 2020!

About:

The Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RI CDHH) is an advocating, coordinating, and service providing entity committed to promoting an environment in which the deaf and hard of hearing in Rhode Island are afforded equal opportunity in all aspects of their lives. The RI CDHH develops policy; initiates and lobbies for favorable legislation; fosters cooperation and awareness among state agencies and community organizations; and educates and advises consumers, state agencies, and employers about Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rights to equal access.

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