



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 14, 2017

RICDHH's 16th Annual Coffee Hour Was a Success.

(Providence, R.I.) – The 16th Annual Coffee Hour hosted by the Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RICDHH) on Nov. 9th at the State House in Providence, Rhode Island was a success. The theme of this event was, **“Celebrating RICDHH’s 25th Anniversary”**.

1. Citations to recognize the RICDHH’s 25th Anniversary and Steven A. Florio’s 15 years of service were given by the following individuals:

Governor Gina Raimondo
House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello
Senator Joshua Miller

In Steve’s absence, his wife, **Michelle Florio**, was present to accept citations for his 15 years of service.

On behalf of **Frank Montanaro, Executive Director of the Joint Committee on Legislative Services (JCLS)**, Speaker Mattiello also gave an overview of the state-of-the-art Loop System installed in the State House. He recognized the innovative partnership and strong commitment between JCLS and RICDHH, acknowledging the generous funding support from RICDHH in making the State House accessible.

2. 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 2017 Recognition Award: Danielle Loughlin for her commitment to provide better services and support for deaf and hard of hearing children and families in the State of Rhode Island. Danielle Loughlin was present to accept this award.

RICDHH 2017 Legislative award: Hayley Baccaire for her commitment to improve the quality of interpreting services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the State of Rhode Island. Hayley Baccaire was present to accept this award

RICDHH Certificates for Outgoing Commissioners: George Herchenroether of Wakefield for two terms and **Heather Niedbala** of North Kingstown for three terms.

3. The featured speakers were **Bruce Bucci** and **Beth Wilson**, RICDHH Commissioners who served when the agency was established (restructured) in 1992. Bruce and Beth shared their rich experiences of what they had contributed to RICDHH 25 years ago and visions for the next 25 years. In addition to the presentations, Bruce also connected Steve with the community during the event via live video teleconference.

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 event would not be made possible without these sponsors: Thank you!

1. **Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island** - Refreshments
2. **Bridgemark** – 25th Anniversary Cake
3. **Rhode Island Relay** - Printing of postcards for this event
4. **Allied Court Reporters, Inc.** - CART Services
5. **Partners Interpreting** - \$100 Gift Card
6. **Perspectives Corporation** - \$100 Gift Card
7. **Sorenson VRS** - \$100 Gift Card
8. **Bridgemark and Sprint** - \$100 Gift Card (\$50/\$50)

6. 25 tables were provided for organizations and agencies to disseminate information to the attendees about their services, programs, and advocates. Guests and exhibitors enjoyed the RICDHH's 25th anniversary cake as the Coffee Hour event neared conclusion.

The Board of Commissioners are looking forward to having another year of success in 2018!

About:

The Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RICDHH) 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 RICDHH 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. The RICDHH also provides direct services in its operation of a Sign Language Interpreter and CART Referral Service, a lending library of books and videotapes, and as a clearinghouse of information and referral on all topics related to hearing loss.

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