



Several nominees for the Champions of Children awards gathered at a ceremony at Catholic Charities on Main Street Friday. They are, back row from left, Mary Murphy and Betty Pitts of Northern Panhandle Head Start, John Moses of Youth Services System Inc., Jana Shubat of the End Childhood Obesity 5K Race, Sandy Brock of Head Start and Claudia Raymer of the Ohio County Family Resource Network, which sponsors the awards. Front row from left are Jeanie Hores of The King's Daughters Child Care Center, community winner Dr. Ellen Kitts of Easter Seals, early childhood winner GERALYN HEMMANN of W.Va. Birth to Three, and Cheche Price and Reba Stead of Head Start.

Champion of Children Awards Set Friday

As part of activities planned for Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month, the Ohio County Family Resource Network and the Ohio County Partners in Prevention will hold its annual Deborah Doleski Allen Champion of Children Awards ceremony at 2 p.m. Friday at the Catholic Charities Center, 2000 Main St.

The awards are named in honor of the late former director of the Family Resource Network, who died unexpectedly in 2010. Nominations for the award were taken from community members and were voted on by network members who comprise various agencies that serve children in the county. Nominees are those who have shown outstanding effort in helping children in Ohio County live happy, healthy childhoods.

In the Early Childhood category, the nominees were GERALYN HEMMANN of West Virginia Birth to Three, who won the award, as well as Paula Sikora, Cheche Price, Jeanie Hores, Rebecca Bean and the staff of Head Start's Orchard Park 2 site in Wheeling. Hemmann was nominated by the Birth to Three Region 1 director Wendy Miller. "She is an unsung hero who is diligent in her work, comes in early and stays late, never complains, refuses to be 'good enough,' and takes on additional responsibilities," Miller wrote in her nomination. "Relying on her fine-tuned abilities, professionals turn to her for guidance. Her job performance reflects the

mission that drives her: to help children and families."

In the Social Services category, the nominees were the late Bruce Patalano, who won the award, as well as John Moses, Ruth Mayhugh, Scott Steele and Linda Reeves. Patalano worked for the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources and died unexpectedly in late January. Carol Helfer of the WVU Extension office nominated Patalano: "Bruce was a quiet and unassuming man who devoted his life to helping others, most particularly children. Bruce was a passionate thinker and writer, and loved to share his ideas with others. His writings most often focused on how to help abused and broken children heal from their wounds."

In the Community Member category, the nominees were winner Dr. Ellen Kitts, Candia Riddle, Jana Shubat, Fran Kinley and Stephanie Crow. Kitts was nominated by David Hacker of Easter Seals. In the nomination, Hacker said: "Dr. Ellen Kitts has worked for Easter Seals for nearly 25 years. She has serviced over 50,000 visits

providing specialty physician care to children of the Ohio Valley. Ellen has seen children from birth through adult achievement and 'treats' not only the child, but the entire family. She is truly a champion of children."

The award ceremony is open to the public and will include a proclamation by Wheeling Mayor Andy McKenzie and the dedication of the Children's Memorial Flag in honor of child abuse victims and survivors.

CHAMPS

■ Winners of the 2013 Deborah Doleski Allen Champion of Children Awards are **GERALYN HEMMANN, the late Bruce Patalano and Dr. Ellen Kitts.**