



**Community Renewal Team**  
Changing lives... Creating opportunity!

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Resident Care Professionals from CRT's Retreat Awarded Among Best in State** *Jose Ortiz and Betty Padin Among 12 Recipients of CALA Resident Service Award*

HARTFORD—Two Community Renewal Team (CRT) employees from the award-winning assisted living facility for seniors in Hartford—called The Retreat—were awarded themselves for their exceptional qualities and dedication to their professions at the annual Connecticut Assisted Living Association's (CALA) Resident Service Awards Program on June 22.

Jose Ortiz, The Retreat's activities and volunteer coordinator, along with Betty Padin, a CRT senior services case manager, were among the twelve professionals honored at the Water's Edge Resort & Spa in Westbrook. More than 150 assisted living professionals from across the state were on hand along with Connecticut State Senator Gayle Slossberg of Milford.

The Retreat, located in at 90 Retreat Ave. in Hartford, was among the first programs to open under the State of CT's demonstration program for Medicaid-funded assisted living, and is the first assisted living in CT built in an urban area. As of September 2011, The Retreat has been home to approximately 344 seniors. Of those seniors, approximately 147 of them had either moved out of nursing homes back into the community or had avoided premature nursing home placement.

Padin's nomination narrative detailed her "unrelenting loyalty, care, and personalization to the Senior Services profession." It also recalled a story about her role in the 2011 Winter Storm Alfred aftermath, when she showed up right after the storm at The Retreat to knock on every door in the complex to check on the seniors with her flashlight and cell phone in hand. She brought them blankets and tended to those with medical issues that needed medications stored properly and food.

Ortiz was nominated as "an individual that truly understands the need for each member to have a sense of purpose in our Community." His unique, personalized approach to activities coordination at The Retreat includes a Skype program that allows staff and members to talk with Retreat members that are currently housed in long-term care settings while seeing each other on the television. He has also set up a Wii console for members to bowl, play baseball and keep moving while having fun.

The CALA awards program was created in 2005 to recognize assisted living employees – including nurses, CNA/HHAs, food service, activities, housekeeping, maintenance, front desk workers – who have exemplified their professions in providing outstanding service to Connecticut's assisted living residents, according to the CALA Website.

"Connecticut is fortunate to have so many caring and truly dedicated workers in all levels of the assisted living field," said Christopher Carter, CALA president. "This is a great asset to the families in our state who rely on this level of care for their loved ones. CALA's annual awards event celebrates the quality of life older adults enjoy in assisted living communities, thanks to the exceptional care provided by our award winners."

During the event, humorist and Southern Connecticut State University professor Joyce Saltman was the keynote speaker. Saltman, who is a former stand-up comedienne and popular guest on national TV news programs, talked to the group about the therapeutic value of humor – something that assisted living care workers know quite well.

The 2012 CALA Resident Service Award was presented to the following professionals:

- Valentine Anthony, certified nursing aid (C.N.A.), Middlewoods of Newington
- Leonora Cajigas-Rodriguez, activities director, Mulberry Gardens of Southington
- Tammy Daskalakis, RN, SALSA The Gardens (Danbury)
- Mary Lynn Graham, LPN, Academy Point at Mystic
- Cynthia Grey, RN, SALSA designee Essex Meadows
- Patty Hooper, executive chef, The Orchards (Southington)
- Jose Ortiz, activities and volunteer coordinator, The Retreat (Hartford)
- Betty Padin, senior services case manager, The Retreat (Hartford)
- Linda Pierce, executive director, Geer Village (Canaan)
- Leif Swanson, director of dining services, Maplewood at Orange
- Noella Rhone, LPN, Tower One/Tower East, (New Haven)
- Austin Mayer, R.A./C.N.A., The Cottage at Avalon-Stoneridge (Mystic)

The Retreat has received numerous awards since its opening, including the 2006 Annual Connecticut Real Estate Award and the 2009 Gold Award from the regional chapter of the Public Relations Society of America for their Senior Marketing Program. Through supporting seniors in a less restrictive environment, CRT has enhanced their quality of life, while saving the State of Connecticut approximately \$3.2M in long term care costs annually, or approximately \$19.2M to date. CRT also provides 50 units of affordable housing for independent seniors at Coventry Place (Bloomfield) and St. Michael's Place (Hartford.)

**Community Renewal Team, Inc.**

*CRT is the designated Community Action Agency for Middlesex and Hartford Counties and is the largest non-profit provider of human services in Connecticut. The agency's mission is Preparing Our Community to Meet Life's Challenges. The mission is achieved each day by helping people and families become self-sufficient while making sure basic needs are met. CRT's programs include Head*

*Start, Meals on Wheels, energy assistance, supportive housing and shelters, and many others, serving people in more than 60 cities and towns in both our core catchment area and throughout Connecticut. [www.crtct.org](http://www.crtct.org)*

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