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Helping Angels Founder Receives BCBS's 'Claude Pepper Award'

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan honors Troy resident James Forrer, 70, for his volunteer work and dedication to senior citizens.

Posted by [Jen Anesi](#) (Editor) , June 21, 2012 at 08:14 PM



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Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

Two Michigan seniors and an organization that helps enrich the lives of older adults were honored for their outstanding dedication and advocacy to senior issues by the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Senior Advisory Council. The awards were presented during the Older Michiganians Day event at the Lansing State Capitol on June 20.

"Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan is committed to ensuring that Michigan's seniors are respected and treated with care. The Blues' Senior Advisory Council has a longstanding tradition of honoring community members and organizations who share that same commitment," said Kevin F. Kelley, education chair of the BCBSM Senior Advocacy Council.

The Claude Pepper Award is presented to two individuals whose professional or volunteer efforts have made significant contributions to improving the lives of Michigan seniors, particularly those whose access to health care services may be hindered by physical, mental, financial or geographical limitations.

This year's honorees, who each received a \$1,000 check to be given to nonprofit organizations of their choice, are:

Larry Emig of Reed City, 66, has served on the Osceola Commission on Aging Advisory Board for more than 26 years, helping oversee in-home care, transportation and nutrition services for hundreds of seniors in Osceola County. A former mayor of Reed City, Emig has served in leadership roles for several organizations at the local, regional and state levels, including a recent appointment by Governor Snyder to the Michigan Commission of Juvenile Justice. He has also served on the Area

Agency on Aging of Western Michigan's Board of Directors since 2006, helping oversee the agency and services to over 38,000 seniors in a nine-county region.

James Forrer of Troy, 70, recently started his own nonprofit organization called Helping Angels, a grassroots organization that dedicates time, compassion and resources to helping others. Forrer is also an active volunteer for Meals on Wheels, Area Agency on Aging 1-B, Salvation Army, Shoplifters Anonymous and Troy Police Volunteer Corp. Additionally, Forrer has worked as a motivational speaker working with Fortune 500 companies and high school students.

The Blues' Senior Advisory Council has honored outstanding senior citizen advocates with the Claude Pepper Award since 1990. The award is named after the late Claude Pepper, the U.S. congressman from Florida who was one of the principal sponsors of the Older Americans Act of 1965 and a major force in strengthening Social Security and Medicare.

The Blues' Senior Advisory Council also presented an award named in honor of Diana C. Jones, retired Blues' vice president of Community Affairs, who is known for her advocacy and concern for the needs of the elderly. This award recognizes an exceptional organization that provides older adults with health or social services, allowing them to continue to live meaningful lives.

This year's Diana C. Jones Award was given to the The North Ottawa County Council on Aging of Grand Haven. Since 1969, NOCCOA has enriched the lives of people 60 and older in North Ottawa through more than 40 programs ranging from personal visits to in-home social work assessments. The agency offers a wide variety of opportunities to learn, interact and exercise the mind, body and spirit. This past year, NOCCOA provided services for more than 40,000 older adults.

The following individuals and organizations received certificates of merit for their help to improve the lives of the elderly:

Claude Pepper Certificate of Merit winners:

- Dorothy J. Collins – Detroit
- Lois Davenport – Fowlerville
- Carl Duman – Detroit
- Anne Grissom – Bloomfield Hills
- Lola Manner – Linden
- Dr. Niru Prasad – Ypsilanti
- Dr. Shahid Tahir- – Bingham Farms
- Fran Weinstein – Ann Arbor
- Ora Williams – Detroit

Diana C. Jones Certificate of Merit winners:

- Adult Well Being Services – Detroit
- Lending Hands of Michigan, Inc. – Portage
- Luella Hanna Memorial Foundation – Detroit
- St. Patrick Senior Center – Detroit
- Senior Neighbors – Grand Rapids
- Senior Services of Southwest Michigan – Kalamazoo

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, a nonprofit organization, provides and administers health benefits to nearly 4.34 million members residing in Michigan in addition to members of Michigan-

headquartered groups who reside outside the state. BCBSM also offers dental, vision and hearing plans. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. For more company information, visit bcbsm.com.

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