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NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICE RECOGNIZES NETWORK LEADERS WITH TENACIOUS CAREGIVER AND COMPASSION AWARDS

Tenacious Caregiver and Compassion Awards recognize professionals in the NSO community who display exceptional commitment in supporting life-changing outcomes for families.

DENVER, COLO. (Sept. 28, 2023) – The National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership® and Child First announces the award winners of the 2023 Tenacious Caregiver and Compassion Awards. Five distinguished Nurse-Family Partnership providers and three outstanding Child First team members were recognized on Sept. 12 at the National Symposium, the National Service Office’s annual education summit.

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) is a national program offered through the National Service Office (NSO) that serves first-time moms and their children affected by economic inequality. Since 2018, the NSO has presented the Tenacious Caregiver Awards to recognize the performance and dedication of NFP teams, nurses and leaders in five categories: NFP Nurse, NFP Support Staff, Nurse Supervisor, NFP Administrator and Network Partner.

Child First is an evidence-based, intensive, early childhood model offered through the NSO that works with the most challenged young children and their families, helping them heal from the damaging effects of stress and trauma. This year, the NSO additionally presented the inaugural Compassion Awards which recognize outstanding members of the Child First community in three categories: Clinician, Care Coordinator and Clinical Supervisor.

Kate Siegrist, chief nursing officer for Nurse-Family Partnership said, “The NSO received an amazing slate of nominees in all categories this year – a true testament to the outstanding impact and dedication of our NFP and Child First teams across the country.” Rebecca Parilla, Child First national clinical director added, “It was thrilling to offer the inaugural Compassion Awards at this year’s symposium. To recognize the hard work of such outstanding members of the Child First community was humbling and inspiring.”

Together, the Tenacious Caregiver and Compassion Awards recognize professionals in the NSO community who have displayed exceptional commitment and performance in delivering the programs and supporting life-changing outcomes for families. The NSO is pleased to highlight each award recipient below.

The **Tenacious Caregiver Award for NFP Nurse** recognizes a professional who exemplifies the model’s client-centered principles and brings passion and excellence to their nursing practice. This year’s recipient of the Tenacious Caregiver Award for NFP Nurse was awarded to **Lynne Easterly, B.S.N., R.N.**, of Intermountain Nurse-Family Partnership in Colorado.

Lynne Easterly, B.S.N., R.N., has been an NFP nurse for 16 years, both as a supervisor and nurse home visitor. Easterly’s career in nursing began with her work with the Peace Corp in Ecuador which helped prepare her to primarily partner with Latina moms through NFP. Easterly enjoys working with her clients on attachment theory, ecology theory and self efficacy theory as they define their goals as new parents. Easterly’s team loves her for her honest, passionate approach to her work.

The **Compassion Award for Clinician** recognizes a professional in the Child First community who centers relationship-based and reflective practice within their work and has achieved outstanding performance in delivering the model. The inaugural

Compassion Award recipient in the Clinician category was awarded to **Proslina Chery-Jean** of the Center for Child Counseling in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

Proslina Chery-Jean is a therapist with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a double master's degree in mental health and family counseling. Chery-Jean is devoted to creating nurturing environments for families, breaking intergenerational trauma and fostering a healthy society. Chery-Jean brings a unique perspective and passion for supporting the Haitian and Creole populations in Palm Beach County by using her native language. Her future goals include pursuing a doctorate in psychology.

The **Tenacious Caregiver Award for NFP Support Staff** is given to celebrate an NFP team member who provides critical programmatic, data and other support services. The award recognizes a professional who displays outstanding commitment to the program and who goes above and beyond to support innovation and impact on their team. This year's recipient of the Tenacious Caregiver Award for NFP Support Staff was awarded to **Heather Trajkovski** of Oakland County NFP in Michigan.

Heather Trajkovski has dedicated 11 years of service to NFP which inspired her to further her education in the area of health and human services. She recently began her master's degree in health administration. Trajkovski said working alongside the NFP team has encouraged her to be a compassionate leader herself. Her colleagues shared that Trajkovski goes above and beyond the call of duty to support her team, her agency and the families in her community.

The **Compassion Award for Care Coordinator** recognizes a professional in the Child First community who authentically partners with families and always centers relationship-based and reflective practice. The inaugural Compassion Award for Care Coordinator was awarded to **Celine Julien** of Families First of Palm Beach County in Florida.

Celine Julien has been a Care Coordinator with the Child First program for three years and provides services to families in both English and Creole. Julien most enjoys facilitating joyful, reciprocal and developmentally enriching activities through Abecedarian approach to learning. As her team would share, Julien is a true partner to families and goes above and beyond to build partnerships in her community and connect families with the resources they need.

The **Tenacious Caregiver Award for Nurse Supervisor** recognizes an outstanding team leader who goes above and beyond to support their team's wellbeing, professional development and impact. The Tenacious Caregiver Award for Nurse Supervisor was awarded to **Christine Wanous, M.P.H., B.S.N., R.N.**, from Nurse-Family Partnership of Forsyth County in North Carolina.

Christine Wanous, M.P.H., B.S.N., R.N., has served as a nurse supervisor since the NFP program in Forsyth County launched more than 10 years ago. She received eight nominations from her team – a true testament to her leadership and impact. Wanous says providing reflective supervision and leadership to such a caring and committed team is a highlight of her career. Already holding a bachelor's degree in nursing and a master's degree in public health, Wanous is currently pursuing her doctorate degree in public health.

The **Compassion Award for Clinical Supervisor** recognizes an outstanding Child First leader who goes above and beyond to support their team's practice, wellbeing and professional development and who engages their community to enhance Child First's impact. The inaugural Compassion Award for Clinical Supervisor was awarded to **Clarissa DeWitt** of the Center for Child Counseling in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

Clarissa DeWitt is a licensed mental health counselor who specializes in maternal and early childhood. She is a rostered provider of Child Parent Psychotherapy along with

holding a stellar reputation as an expert and leader in infant mental health. DeWitt served in the first leadership cohort under the Florida Association for Infant Mental Health that is bringing endorsement to the state. She lives out Child First's principles every day and serves as an example to each member of her team celebrating their uniqueness, strengths and professional growth.

The **Tenacious Caregiver Award for NFP Administrator** is given to an exceptional Network Partner leader who advocates for Nurse-Family Partnership in their community and supports high performance from their team. This year's recipient of the Tenacious Caregiver Award for NFP Administrator was awarded to **Laura Shulman Cordeira, M.P.H.**, from RVNAhealth in Connecticut.

Laura Shulman Cordeira, M.P.H., has led the NFP program since RVNAhealth began offering NFP in 2020. Despite the challenges that came with starting up during the pandemic, the program has grown impressively in a short time thanks to Shulman Cordeira's dedication and leadership. She has been a steadfast advocate for NFP– using her voice to testify for increased funding and working to build a strong community of support behind NFP in her community and across Connecticut.

Finally, the **Tenacious Caregiver Award for Network Partner** recognizes an exceptional, top-performing site that has excelled in implementing the program and supporting impact for families. Chosen by the National Service Office, the award recognizes a partner who pursues collaboration in their community, is a leader in innovation and stands as an example across the Nurse-Family Partnership network. This year's recipient of the Tenacious Caregiver Award for Network Partner was awarded to **Nurse-Family Partnership of Houston County** in Georgia.

The Houston County team has been implementing NFP in Georgia for 13 years. They have been a consistent and high-achieving partner – maintaining high operating performance,

fidelity to the model and delivering life-changing outcomes for Georgia families. Despite the challenges that come with serving a rural population, the Houston County team consistently maintains full caseloads and their nursing team is truly dedicated to ensuring that families have the resources and support they need to thrive.

All award winner recipients receive an engraved award to proudly display in recognition. Award winners also will be featured on the National Service Office's Tenacious Caregiver Wall of Fame in the education center in Denver, Colorado and highlighted in the NSO's quarterly magazine, [NewsLink](#).

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About the National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child

First

The National Service Office (NSO) is the central, unified operational structure for two evidence-based programs: [Nurse-Family Partnership](#) and [Child First](#). In 2020, what was formerly the NSO solely for Nurse-Family Partnership joined forces with Child First, a merger empowering two proven, evidence-based models to share complementary expertise, infrastructure and integrated support services. The resulting unified entity works to ensure that health care, early childhood development and the mental health of the entire family are delivered in proven ways to achieve long-term positive outcomes.