

## 2009 JAY AND ROSE PHILLIPS AWARD RECIPIENTS

### WORK CATEGORY

#### **Barbara Barr, Edina, Minn.**

*Commercial Lines Underwriter*

*Employers Mutual Companies, Minnetonka, Minn.*

These days, not many employees can say they've been with a company for 46 years. Barbara Barr can. But, when she first arrived in Minneapolis from Breckinridge, Minn., in the early 1960s, people with disabilities were considered 'unemployable.' "Business after business turned me down until I applied at Employers Mutual Companies," said Barbara. In her current job she works with a safety dividend program for bulk oil dealers providing loss control measures. Her loyalty is also demonstrated in her community involvement as a 25-year volunteer for Sister Kenny Institute and a long-time member of the Minneapolis League of Women Voters. Barbara attended Concordia College in Moorhead and graduated from the University of Minnesota with a BA in History and Political Science. As her nominator says, "Barbara neither asks [for] nor wants special consideration – she only asks for a chance to show her competency. Barbara advocated for people with disabilities at a time when such a thing was unheard of. She is exactly the kind of unsung heroine and role model that young people with disabilities can benefit from knowing. Disability definitely does not define Barbara Barr."

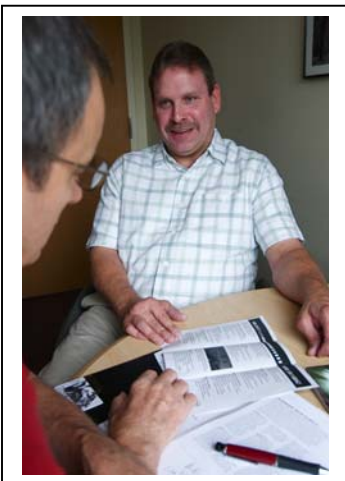


#### **James Hegstrom, River Falls, Wis.**

*Placement Coordinator-Rehabilitation Services*

*Minn. Dept. of Employment & Economic Development, Blaine, Minn.*

James is a true role model for the people with disabilities with which he works. As a placement coordinator with the State of Minnesota DEED, he matches people's skills with job openings. In addition to this one-to-one job placement, James works to create relationships with businesses to in to help people with disabilities compete and interview for employment. He has also worked in a variety of roles with REM Wisconsin and Ramsey for 16 years. He also volunteered and worked with Cars for Courage for several years. James, who was born with cerebral palsy, earned a double major in Marketing and Business Communications from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. He is active in his church including assisting in a ministry for recovering addicts and inmates. He has also volunteered for Courage Center's alpine ski program for many years. To sum it up, a coworker says it best: "It is a delight to work with James. He brings passion to his work. It is evident that he cares about each of the people he serves and truly wants each of them to succeed."

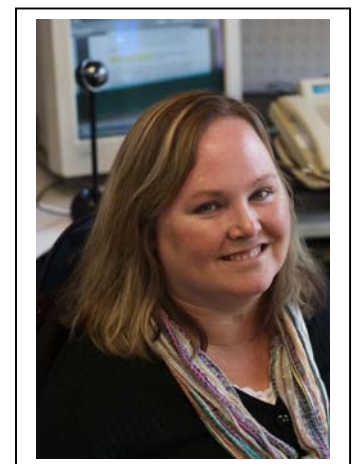


#### **Susan Maus, Burnsville, Minn.**

*IT Solutions Strategist*

*Fairview Health Services, Minneapolis*

In June 2000, Susan was involved in a car crash, which resulted in a spinal cord injury. During her rehabilitation, she worked hard and learned what tools would provide her the greatest independence. Prior to her injury, she worked for Fairview Health Services. Following rehabilitation she returned to Fairview part-time as a lead business analyst for information technology solutions. In 2008, she was promoted to her current, full-time position. In 2005, Susan co-founded Unite 2 Fight Paralysis, a nonprofit agency dedicated to advancing paralysis cures and treatments. She is in the midst of organizing the group's Working 2 Walk education session in Chicago in August. She also serves as vice chair and has volunteered countless hours on behalf of Minnesota Works! during their start-up year. The organization's mission is to develop and implement business and marketing initiatives to provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Sue has a B.S. degree in Business Administration from Winona State University and a Supervisory Certificate from the Carlson School of Management. As a nominator says: "Sue is a role model for others with disabilities, both personally and professionally. She is a real hero."



## CAREGIVER AWARD

### **Claire and Warren Braun**

*Mounds View, Minn.*

Those who know Claire and Warren Braun marvel at how they manage their household and lives. Through competence, compassion, perseverance and phenomenal scheduling feats, they keep their large family immersed in church and community events as well as school and extra-curricular activities.

The couple made a choice to care for special needs children after the birth of their first child. Their goals were simple: provide a family who loves them, meet all their physical needs, provide education and advocate for each so they can become productive and well-adjusted adults. Over the past 30 plus years, they have had

three biological children, 73 foster children and adopted six. Soon, two more will be adopted by the Brauns. Currently, 12 family members live at the Braun home while four more children are adult, living independently.

Claire and Warren make sure each child is treated as an individual. As a former teacher, Claire advocates with the schools ensuring that each child has an individualized education plan (IEP). They also make sure the kids participate in counseling, art therapy classes and sports and recreation programs according to their interests and needs. Five of the Braun children are active in Courage Center youth sports programs and three family members are active volunteers for various Courage Center programs.

As a nominator sums it up: “Not only do they care for the [kids’] physical needs which can be great, but the sense of family, responsibility and community instilled in each child is lovingly administered. For many of these children, the Brauns are the last stop after many failed placements, frustrations and loss of hope. Those concepts don’t exist in the Braun house.”

