

Award: Henrietta Da Boer Volunteer of the Year Award
Recipient: Daphne Erpelo
Presenter: Nick Quealy-Gainer

Hello, everyone. My name is Nick Quealy-Gainer and I am an organizer with CCHCC.

I have the great honor to present tonight's first official award, the Henrietta DeBoer Volunteer of the Year Award. You can find more information about Henrietta DeBoer and each of our honorary awards, tables, and funds in the handout on your tables, so you can read more about the history and namesakes of some of CCHCC's most distinguished staff, volunteers, and supporters that we pay tribute to at our awards dinner.

The Henrietta DeBoer Volunteer of the Year award is given to a Health Care Consumers volunteer who has really distinguished themselves over the past year by their outstanding work and commitment to the organization and its mission. This year, I am very pleased that we have chosen to honor Daphne Erpelo. Daphne you can come on up now.

Daphne began volunteering with us almost 2 years ago when Anne Gargano Ahmed was still coordinator of the Medicare 100/Plus Program and Daphne's supervisor. Daphne is studying to become a nurse and works at Carle Hospital and McKinley Health Center on campus, so she is a tremendous asset for the Medicare 100/Plus Program. The Medicare 100/Plus program is a collaboration between Provena Covenant Medical Center and Champaign County Health Care Consumers to provide discounted care for low-income Medicare beneficiaries in our community.

For those of you that don't know me yet, you can think of me as the new Anne. I came on staff with Health Care Consumers last July as the Coordinator of the Medicare 100/Plus Program. When I took over the program, Daphne was the first volunteer I supervised with CCHCC, and actually my first experience of supervising a volunteer in any professional capacity.

I was taking over a long-standing, successful program serving hundreds of Medicare beneficiaries each month that requires a good deal of administrative and client-based work, all new responsibilities for me. So as I struggled to understand the beast that is Medicare, the paperwork necessary to maintain the Medicare 100/Plus program, and how to effectively supervise a new team of volunteers, Daphne was the rock who I could depend on each week to help me keep the program running and make sure our clients continued to be served.

No matter how overwhelmed I felt those first few months, I quickly realized that when Daphne was in the office to volunteer I could feel completely comfortable letting her work on her own with just a few basic instructions. In fact, I often found myself learning from her methods and asking Daphne how she would address a client issue or properly fill out a particularly complicated application. She is also great on the phone, so if anyone here is a member of the Medicare 100/Plus Program, you may recognize Daphne's voice from her calls to tell you it's time to renew your application.

So, a big reason why I am so happy to honor Daphne as CCHCC's Volunteer of the Year is so I can thank her for sticking with me through that transition and not giving up on the program or our clients. I have no idea how I would have gotten through that time without Daphne's help, and I think she played a major role in making sure our clients didn't experience any gaps in their discount coverage or health care services.

Over the past 2 years, Daphne has been an incredibly reliable and hardworking volunteer for Medicare 100/Plus. But, on top of her weekly volunteer shifts with me, Daphne has taken time to support our fundraising efforts by helping make calls during our annual Phone-a-thon and trying to solicit ads for those lovely Programs you have at your tables.

Daphne found out this week that she was accepted to the University of Illinois College of Nursing, congratulations! And I'm super excited for her but also selfishly happy that she'll be able to stay around a little longer and continue volunteering with us. I know she'll make a fantastic nurse and patient advocate wherever she ends up.

So, for all of her hard work, compassion, and dedication, I am very proud to present Daphne Erpelo with the Henrietta De Boer Volunteer of the Year Award.