

Award: Henrietta De Boer Volunteer of the Year Award
Recipient: Nicole Landeck
Presenter: Nick Quealy-Gainer

I have the great honor to present tonight's first 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 placard 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 Nicole Landeck. Nicole you can come on up now.

Nicole came to CCHCC as an undergraduate intern from the U of I Community Health Program. I had the pleasure of being one of Nicole's supervisors, so I got to witness everyday the ways in which Nicole was both fearless and diligent with the projects that we assigned to her. The quality of her work was outstanding, and it was clear that her passion and her interests are motivated by a strong sense of justice and commitment to quality health care for all. We quickly began to consider Nicole a trusted member of the CCHCC team.

One major project in which Nicole took an active leadership role was our Health Care Voter Education Campaign and Candidate Surveys leading up to the critical elections just last November. I think we are all aware how vital the outcome to last year's election was to the future of health care, the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, Medicaid, and countless other social programs that were constantly under fire from candidates running for all offices. The work we are doing now would be very, VERY different had the election turned out differently. Rather than preparing to help enroll millions in the expanded Medicaid and affordable health insurance through the new Exchange, or Marketplace, in Illinois, we would be spending nearly all of our energy and resources fighting to protect the Affordable Care Act and all the progress the law has already made from being repealed. PHEW...I don't even want to think about it.

Nicole was instrumental in our campaign locally to educate voters on the importance of voting in the election. Nicole was involved in developing voter registration outreach materials to educate the community about who could register to vote and how. She helped register hundreds of voters at events around town, including on the U of I campus, as a trained deputy registrar. Nicole was also responsible for carrying out CCHCC's candidate surveys by following up with candidates, sometimes aggressively, to get their responses. She did a tremendous amount of research to develop the Health Care Voter Guide that informed voters, by Congressional and state district, who the various candidates were and what their positions were on issues related to health care.

In addition to her outstanding work on the voter education campaign, Nicole supported our fundraising efforts by helping with direct mails to our members as well as volunteering for just about every evening and daytime calling event during our annual Phone-a-Thon, which focused on getting out the vote. Nicole demonstrated leadership, initiative, and integrity in all her work with CCHCC, which is why I am delighted to have had the opportunity to work with her...I only wish it could've been longer.

But for all of her hard work, passion, and dedication, I am very proud to present Nicole Landeck with the Henrietta De Boer Volunteer of the Year Award.