

Award: Special Recognition Award

Recipient: Allison Jones

Presenter: Claudia Lennhoff

Good evening. My name is Claudia Lennhoff, and I'm the Executive Director of Champaign County Health Care Consumers.

It gives me great pleasure this evening to present our friend and former co-worker, Allison Jones, with the Special Recognition Award.

Many of you know and love Allie because she had been on staff with Health Care Consumers for about nine years. I first hired Allie in 2003 as a Federal Work Study when she was an undergraduate at the U of I. Allie graduated and accepted a position with us as a community organizer in 2005, and stayed on staff with us until May of last year.

If you remember last year's Dinner, Allie was quite pregnant at that time. Now, here she is, with her beautiful daughter Ava!

Allie literally kept us together for many years. She managed our database and mailing list, our e-mail listserv, our website, organized our Phonathons and our Annual Dinners. She made our flyers, wrote our press releases, and developed our handouts. She helped train and support other staff and volunteers, and helped organize many of our task forces and campaigns, including the Women's Health Task Force, the Health Care Access Task Force, the 5th & Hill Neighborhood Rights Campaign, our legislative advocacy work, and our numerous health reform workshops.

Allie also contributed her creativity to our work. For example, when we were doing a press conference on how the health insurance industry used gender discrimination in setting premiums for women, compared to men, it was Allie's idea to make price tags for our own staff members, showing the costs of our premiums for our female staff, frequently over 200% greater than those of our male staff. This really helped the media to understand, and see with their own eyes, what gender discrimination in insurance premiums looked like.

Beyond her skills and her talents and creativity, Allie also brought to CCHCC her enthusiasm and humor. Allie is truly one of the funniest people I know. I mean, you really can't tell right now, but she is.

As a staff member, Allie was always deeply devoted to Health Care Consumers and dedicated to advancing our work and building our organization. I credit Allie and her hard work with helping advance us to a new level – she truly left us better than she found us.

When Allie left two weeks earlier than she had planned because Ada was not going to wait any longer, Allie continued to help us as we transitioned her responsibilities to the very

capable Jen Tayabji. And today, Allie continues to support us and help out where she can, and she delights us by bringing her daughter Ava on visits to the office with us.

Health Care Consumers does not typically present awards to current or former staff members, because we are already honored to work at Health Care Consumers and we expect great things from staff.

However, in her nine years of work for us, Allie really distinguished herself and made us better, and it is out of gratitude, respect and tremendous affection, that we want to recognize Allie and her great work tonight. Congratulations and thank you, Allie!