

Award: Henrietta De Boer Volunteer of the Year
Recipient: Amanda Hwu
Presenter: Crissy Turino

First I will present the Henrietta De Boer Volunteer of the Year Award. This is a special recognition awarded to a CCHCC volunteer who has been selected by CCHCC staff on the basis of their continued outstanding work and commitment to the struggles and efforts of the organization. This evening I am proud to present the Henrietta De Boer Volunteer of the Year Award to our very dedicated and talented volunteer, Amanda Hwu.

Amanda is currently earning her BSW at the University of Illinois and is just finishing up her junior year. Apart from her social justice and health care justice work at CCHCC, she has also been an advocate for change to our current prison system. She is the President of the Prison Justice Project at the U of I, now a program of the University YMCA.

Amanda began volunteering at CCHCC in the 2013 spring semester, but I feel like we really got to know her during last summer when she did a part-time internship working as an Advocate on the Hotline.

Amanda is special. When she sees a client experience an injustice or a barrier, she is unrelenting in her search to find a solution to the problem. One example is last summer when a client reached out to us to receive assistance to get dentures. Finding access to dentures is particularly difficult since there are no local programs that provide free or very low cost dentures.

This client had no income and had been losing weight because he was not able to properly chew his food. Amanda spent several weeks pulling together the financial assistance from local agencies and working with the dentist's office to accept this form of payment. Finally, this gentleman was able to pick up his dentures! Shortly after, he dropped by our office with a huge smile to say thanks to Amanda and sang her praises. He called several times after that just to say thank you and how much Amanda had changed his life.

Amanda attacks every problem in this way and takes on every new challenge with impressive enthusiasm and perseverance. As well as working on the Hotline, Amanda helped us with our organizing around the Affordable Care Act, she has tabled at numerous outreach events and health fairs, and has gone to provide our services to community members at the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen. Amanda is compassionate, she is a problem solver, and she is a dedicated advocate for the medically underserved in Champaign County.

I am lucky to work with her. Now, on behalf of the Board and staff at CCHCC, I am honored to present the Volunteer of the Year Award to Amanda Hwu!