



Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health

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MACMH's 2008 Outstanding Service Award Recipients

Each year MACMH recognizes individuals who have shown extraordinary achievement and/or leadership in the field of children's mental health. This year the MACMH Board of Directors has chosen Dr. W. Brooks Donald, Rod Martel, and Gary Woodward to receive the 2008 MACMH Outstanding Service Awards. Presentation of the awards will take place at MACMH's first annual benefit, Expressions of the Mind through Art, November 7 at the College of Visual Arts in St. Paul, Minn.

MACMH's Board of Directors noted that this year's selections were especially difficult to make given the number of highly qualified nominations submitted. The Board was extremely pleased to see not only an increase in the number of applications received for this year's awards, but also was deeply inspired by the quality of the nominations. Said one Board member, "it's incredibly uplifting to learn about the many dedicated and talented people who are working on behalf of children with mental health disorders." After much discussion and deliberation, the MACMH Board of Directors chose the following three individuals to receive the MACMH 2008 Outstanding Service Awards:

Outstanding Service Award – Physician

Dr. W. Brooks Donald, a developmental behavioral pediatrician who currently works with HealthPartners, is considered an expert in addressing behavioral symptoms and needs associated with neurological and mental health disorders that affect children. Nominators praised Dr. Donald as someone who, despite a highly demanding schedule, has demonstrated a willingness to communicate and even meet with school staff to address the broad needs of a child with mental health needs. Though he carries a caseload that is largely focused on serving children with autism and AD/HD, Dr. Donald is recognized as someone who actively encourages discussion and exploration of a range of options. He respects the right to self-determination and does not hesitate to assist with referrals for concerns outside his areas of expertise. Dr. Donald maintains a professional yet open manner and involves parents and children (to the extent possible) as partners in the decisions about treatment options and care planning.

Outstanding Service Award Criteria

Physicians – Demonstrated leadership and/or achievement impacting the field of children's mental health and recognized in several of these areas:

- Effectively educating, training, motivating, and/or mentoring their peers in the health community
- Engaging in efforts that raise awareness about children's mental health
- Positively advocating on behalf of children who have mental health needs
- Developing and/or implementing innovative, successful methods of collaborating with those involved in the life of a child with mental health needs
- Promoting and/or engaging in research that addresses children's mental health.

Educator – Exceptional leadership and achievement in the field of children's mental health in the education field, including advocacy, direct service, and service innovation and recognized in several of these areas:

- Dedication to helping children with mental health disorders succeed academically and socially
- Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by effective instructional practices and student learning around mental health issues
- Extraordinary skill in building positive, productive relationships with students, parents, and administrators
- Engaging in efforts to educate, train and mentor peers regarding children's mental health



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A mother of a child with a mental health disorder, wrote the following about her son's experience with Dr. Donald: "It is not easy to gain the trust and faith of a struggling adolescent. Through his gentle, steady, kind, and respectful approach, Dr. Donald has achieved this and more with our son."

MACMH is delighted to honor Dr. W. Brooks Donald as the recipient of the 2008 MACMH Outstanding Service Award.

Outstanding Service Award – Educator

Rod Martel, currently a special education teacher at Washburn High School in Minneapolis, has a reputation for using innovative techniques to guide students, for teaming up with mental health professionals whenever it was in the best interest of his students, and for investing the time and energy necessary to fully understand the challenges faced by children with mental health disorders.

Martel's nomination was supported by his peers who see him as a trusted colleague and by the administrative staff who greatly value his articulate, calm manner, his professional dedication, and his focus on student success. One colleague said of Martel, "I repeatedly observed Rod assisting students in 'closing the deal' (graduating)." Another colleague wrote, "Rod's dedication to students with special needs extended beyond the classroom. He has extraordinary skills in guiding students to be more self-directed, to advocate for themselves in a responsible way, and to develop teamwork skills that will serve them well all their lives. . . . Martel created a classroom that was open, inviting, stimulating, and one which provided many different kinds of resources." Rod Martel is an especially deserving recipient because he knows that to be an effective advocate for children one must not only inspire the children, but one must follow through. Said one colleague, "His attention to detail in his paperwork ensured that students were receiving the services they needed."

MACMH is delighted to honor Rod Martel as the recipient of the 2008 MACMH Outstanding Service Award.

Outstanding Service Award – Educator

During the past 31 years, **Gary Woodward** has served youth, parents, families and educators with distinction as a teacher, school psychologist, and administrator in the public schools. As an educational leader, Woodward has initiated many programs that have specifically helped youth and families faced with the realities of dealing with severe mental health issues. Originally trained as a psychologist, Woodward became the Executive Director of Hiawatha Valley Education District (HVED) in 1988 and has served the district with distinction ever since. One of the largest education cooperatives in Minnesota, HVED has more than 20,000 students and provides services to approximately 1,700 students with special needs.

In the many letters sent in support of Woodward's nomination, writers explained in their own way how they have been inspired by Woodward's visionary leadership and his passion for improving systems that deliver mental health services to youth. Again and again his supporters cited Woodward's ability to establish interagency collaborations and his willingness to explore new ideas and alternative methods to make sure that students receive the best possible services. One specific example of this occurred in 2007 when Woodward spearheaded an effort to establish Interagency Youth Support Teams, which provided on-site access to diagnostic and mental health services within the school setting. Woodward's leadership was so instrumental in bringing this idea to fruition that one colleague wrote, "Even though they may not know who to thank, the children of HVED and their families are stronger due to the efforts of Gary Woodward."

MACMH is delighted to honor Gary Woodward as the recipient of the 2008 MACMH Outstanding Service Award.