

## 110 CNAs Honored at 5th Annual AANHR Banquet



Arkansas Advocates for Nursing Home Residents (AANHR) proudly honored the caring Certified Nursing Assistants who provide the primary care for residents in Arkansas nursing homes on June 8, 2009 at First Assembly of God Church in North Little Rock. Those honored have provided loving care for the infirm of our state in spite of low pay and few words of thanks, some for ten, fifteen, and even twenty years. One-hundred-ten men and women from across the entire state, representing sixty-three nursing facilities received personal thanks for their untiring service. Each received a framed Certificate of Merit, a pin, and a Wal-Mart gift certificate. AANHR was also honored to entertain facility DONs, Administrators, friends and family members as invited guests of the honorees to the tune of 220 total luncheon guests. Participants came great distances from the four corners of the state.

AANHR President Martha Deaver read a proclamation from Governor Mike Beebe. Kathie Gately, Arkansas' State Ombudsman, delivered inspirational remarks using an old/new gift bag example which illustrated that residents have accumulated many valuable life experiences and that one cannot judge a book by its cover. Two CNA honorees, Pamela Brewer (Stoneybrook- Benton) and Yoana Toxqui (Fayetteville Veterans Home), chose one of the two bags to both become winners of a nice cash gift enclosed in an old or new book.

Next, Ms. Carol Compas, Nursing Home Quality Initiative Project Manager for Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care spoke. Ms. Compas said that Culture Change, which is Person Directed Care, requires team building. She suggested having the CNA working with a resident in consistent assignments facilitates the CNA and the resident becoming family. In this way the resident is more likely to express likes and dislikes which the CNA can share with others and work out solutions to simple problems before they escalate to major problems. She asked the CNA luncheon guests what they personally enjoy doing each day and then asked them to imagine life without being able to do that thing. She pointed out to the CNAs that this is exactly what happens when one becomes a nursing home resident. One suddenly is on someone else's schedule, no longer directing personal daily activities. You share a room with a stranger and you bathe with the help of strangers at a time that is decided for you. No more sleeping in each morning because you like to watch the late news--no having late night snacks or brunch. With each CNA working to become part of a resident's family, adjustments in schedules can be made. The interesting result is that caregivers find they have more time for care because they are now dealing with congenial, cooperative residents.

Ms Compas completed her presentation with an interactive project to ferret out the “best listener” present. The winner, who drew the “plumpest pig with the largest ears”, received a cash award from Ms Compas.

AANHR greatly appreciates these two special ladies, Kathie & Carol, and all they do to promote good care in nursing homes. Special thanks are also in order for their substantial roles in making the 2009 luncheon the great success that it truly was.

Following the presentations, CNAs were recognized and rewarded. As a luncheon finale, Ms Compas drew Morrilton CNA Tracy Ann Meadors’ name as the winner of the one-hundred dollar AANHR door prize.