

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Cumberland County, Pa. receives national award for volunteer program

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Cumberland County, Pa. was honored April 10 when it received an Acts of Caring Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) for its Service to Adult Readers (STAR) Program during a ceremony on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The awards, presented annually by NACo, recognize the top county volunteer programs in the country.

Founded in 1987, Service to Adult Readers (STAR) is a free program that brings the county library system and its materials to homebound individuals and nursing homes through trained volunteers. Any adult county resident who is unable to visit the library regularly due to age, illness and/or disability is eligible for STAR.

STAR benefits not only the homebound individual by having library materials regularly delivered and from having a volunteer actively interested in their lives, but also the volunteers in the relationships formed by their connection to the participants. The county also benefits because STAR helps seniors maintain their independence, thus relying less on additional public services.

Growing steadily since its inception, STAR now has 85 volunteers visiting 147 homebound individuals and 56 senior facilities delivering more than 11,000 books and audios. Working roughly 2.5 hours a month, STAR volunteers contributed a value of \$47,864 to the program in 2007 whose budget was approximately \$61,000. All STAR participants report that they were satisfied by the program's services and would recommend it to others.

The Acts of Caring Awards, sponsored by Freddie Mac, were presented during a breakfast ceremony April 10 in the Rayburn House Office Building as part of National County Government Week, April 6-12. The winners were selected by a distinguished, independent panel of judges. The Acts of Caring is part of Counties Serve America; a long-term project of NACo in partnership with Freddie Mac designed to raise public understanding and awareness about county government.

“As the voice of America's counties, NACo is pleased to honor this year's Acts of Caring Award winners for their outstanding volunteer programs,” said NACo President Eric Coleman, commissioner, Oakland County, Mich. “While counties are increasingly challenged each day to

provide essential services to residents, the counties being honored today have gone above and beyond and deserve our high praise and appreciation.”

Participating in the awards ceremony were NACo Immediate Past President Colleen Landkamer, commissioner, Blue Earth County, Minn.; Janet Creighton, special assistant to President Bush and director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, and several members of Congress.

The 2008 Acts of Caring Awards winners were as follows:

Pinellas County, Fla.’s Environmental Lands Division Volunteer Program; Arlington County, Va.’s Community Role Models; Georgetown County, S.C.’s Visions for the Future; Gila County, Ariz.’s Collaborative Community Fire Program; Pierce County, Wash.’s Citizen Corps Care Team Program; New Hanover County, N.C.’s RSVP Special Needs Registry Program; Union County, N.J.’s Westlake Junior Runnells Volunteer Program; Coconino County, Ariz.’s Community Services Volunteer Program; Haywood County, N.C.’s Haywood Community Connections; El Paso County, Colo.’s The Center on Fathering; Linn County, Iowa’s Sleep Out for Homelessness Awareness; Caldwell County, N.C.’s The Wig Bank; San Diego County, Calif.’s L.E.A.R.N./Laubach ESL Program; Cumberland County, Pa.’s Service to Adult Readers (STAR) Program; San Mateo County, Calif.’s San Mateo Youth Commission; Lycoming County, Pa.’s CAPPY Youth and Development Project, and Benton County, Ore.’s Benton-Linn Teen Idol.

Two special awards were presented as well. The Youth Service Award was presented to the Acts of Caring winning program that best identified a critical need in the youth community and addressed it, in part, by engaging young people in service. This award, which included a check for \$1,000, was presented to San Mateo County, Calif. for its San Mateo Youth Commission.

The event’s most prestigious award – the Legacy Award for Excellence and Innovation – was presented to the county program that most fully embodies the spirit of volunteerism in its community; whose work is creating a lasting impact on those it serves, and sets itself apart by providing a unique and unparalleled volunteer service. The 2008 Legacy Award, which included a check for \$1,500, was presented to El Paso County, Colo. for The Center on Fathering.

More information about NACo and the [Acts of Caring Awards](http://www.naco.org) is available at www.naco.org.

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation’s 3,066 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public’s understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit www.naco.org.