

## **2008 Social Worker of the Year**

### **Dr. Elissa D. Giffords**



Dr. Elissa D. Giffords entered the field as a paraprofessional in 1983 as a counselor at Runaway Youth Coordinating Council, then worked as an outreach worker at Youth Environmental Services and later as a Nassau County Department of Social Services (DSS) Child Protective Caseworker. After graduating with her MSW and while working toward her DSW, she was a staunch advocate who assisted individuals to obtain health and human services through community-based coalitions and direct work with clients at the Interfaith Nutrition Network, Health and Welfare Council, and Family and Children's Association. Elissa began teaching at Long Island University, C.W. Post Campus in 2000 and is currently an Associate Professor in the Social Work Department. She possesses a blend of hands-on social work, advocacy and research experience, which she enthusiastically brings into the classroom.

Dr. Giffords is a regular presenter at the NASW-NYS Annual Power of Social Work Conference. She previously provided training for mental health providers as part of the NASW-NYS Chapter's Aging & Mental Health Grant Training Initiative.

Elissa serves on several community boards. She is a committed champion for the rights of those who have no access to healthcare services. She is a valued Executive Board member of the Long Island Health Access Monitoring Project (LIHAMP), a grassroots, initiative to improve healthcare for the uninsured and medically under-served population of Long Island and NY State. Elissa is also very dedicated to improving service delivery at Nassau County DSS in regard to public assistance, medical assistance and services. She is the current Executive Committee Chair of the Commissioner's Advisory Council and an active member of the Council's Income Supports sub-committee, where she enjoys working collaboratively with Council members and DSS Staff. Elissa regularly invites students to attend meetings with her and to participate in the change process.

Elissa is passionate about her work both on and off the campus. She tirelessly encourages her students to get involved on campus, and makes herself available to students outside the classroom. During her time at the university, Elissa has served in the formal role of faculty mentor to the BSW students, and currently as an informal mentor to the MSW students. She was the faculty liaison to the BSW Social Work Club and is currently the liaison for the MSW Graduate Student Association. Elissa was instrumental in bringing the Phi Alpha Social Work Honor Society to the undergraduate and graduate students on campus and works closely with NASW to get her students involved in their professional membership organization. With her guidance, the Clubs have achieved distinction on campus for fundraising for a variety of causes including homelessness, chronic illnesses and domestic violence. The group also sponsors

speakers on an array of subjects including diversity, HIV/AIDS, alcohol and substance abuse, awareness, and services for poor and disenfranchised populations.

The Nassau Division of NASW-NYS recognized Dr. Giffords in 2004 with their Social Worker of the Year Award. It is in honor of her continued outstanding contributions to the education of her students, support and enhancement of the social work profession, and efforts to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people in her community, that we present her with the NASW-NYS Chapter's 2008 Social Worker of the Year Award.

## **2008 Lifetime Achievement Award Robert Mackreth, LCSW-R, ACSW**

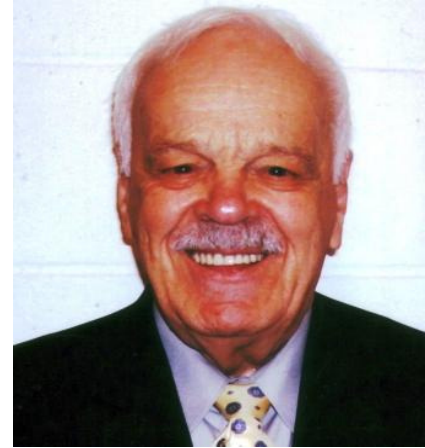
The NASW-New York State Chapter is pleased to honor **Robert Mackreth, LCSW-R, ACSW** with the NASW-NYS Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his infectious passion for the profession of social work throughout an extraordinary social work career that spans more than a half century.

Mackreth, who began as a paraprofessional at the Department of Public Welfare in 1949, received his social work degree in 1953. During his rich and diverse career, Mackreth has worked in many capacities ranging from caseworker to agency administrator, consultant, educator, author, mentor, researcher, and therapist. His experience includes service in the areas of mental health, child welfare, substance abuse, aging, crisis intervention, and community organization. Presently Bob is an Impartial Hearing Officer for the NYS Education Department and as well as a private practitioner.

Early in his career, Mackreth was a member of the American Association of Social Workers (AASW) serving as Program Committee Chairman. AASW was one of seven organizations that consolidated to become the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). As a subsequent member of the Nassau Division of NASW-NYS, he has served as its President (former title - now Division Director), Newsletter Editor and Chair of the Ethics Committee. Mackreth remains an active part of the NASW-NYS Nassau Division's Steering Committee where he is the longest serving member. He also volunteers to undertake several additional responsibilities as needed. For example, Mr. Mackreth visits local high schools and colleges to talk about the social work profession and the importance of our Code of Ethics and ethical practice. He also provides students with a historical account of the profession. His love of social work is evident in every word he shares.

In addition to Bob's involvement with the division's steering committee, he remains active and committed to his community, volunteering his time for several advocacy groups such as the Family and Children's subcommittee of the Nassau County DSS Advisory Council. Mackreth is the Past President of the Board of Education, Plainedge, NY; Past Vice President of the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association; Former Chair of the Professional Advisory Committee, Home Care Program for the Nassau County Dept. of Health; and previous member of the Bioethics Committee at Nassau University Medical Center. Mr. Mackreth is also an avid letter writer and tireless advocate regarding a range of issues that impact our clients and the profession.

Mr. Mackreth has received much recognition through the years from the social work profession and beyond. His honors include the George M. Estabrook Distinguished Service Award, from Hofstra University's Alumni Association for graduates who have achieved outstanding career accomplishments or who have continuously devoted their time and efforts in service to their college community. He also was given the Hofstra University Alumni Achievement Award; Bishop's Parochial Medal from St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church. Other honors include The Humanitarian of the Year Award from the Helping to End Eating Disorders (HEED)



Foundation; Special Recognition Award from NASW-NYS Nassau Division, and a Commendation from the City of New York from Mayor John V. Lindsay.

Mr. Mackreth is committed to sharing his knowledge with others through professional publications. He has authored seven publications, one of which won the 2001 Optima Award! This award gives national recognition to innovative, outcome-oriented staff teamwork in long-term care facilities that contributes to optimum functioning and well-being of residents.

It is with great pride that the NASW-NYS Chapter bestows the lifetime achievement award to Robert Mackreth, LCSW-R, ACSW, for his distinguished service and dedication to the field of social work and those we serve.

## 2008 Public Citizen of the Year HARVEY ROSENTHAL



NASW-NYS has selected Harvey Rosenthal as the NASW-NYS 2008 Public Citizen of the Year. With thirty years of professional experience in New York State's public mental health system, Harvey has served in a variety of capacities ranging from state hospital therapy aide, to clubhouse rehabilitation program director, to nationally recognized mental health advocate and trainer in his current role as executive director of the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS).

Karin Moran, NASW-NYS' Director of Policy said of Rosenthal, "Harvey is one of the most dedicated and altruistic advocates I know. He is committed to securing access to mental health treatment, strengthening the mental health delivery systems, and fighting against

discriminatory policies and societal beliefs about psychiatric diagnoses and those whom are afflicted. NASW-NYS has been proud to work beside Harvey on a number of initiatives such as the Timothy's Law Campaign, the Medicaid Buy-in campaign and 'Boot the SHU'."

In addition to duties as executive director of the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, he currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law and has previously served as co-chair of the state's Mental Health Action Network and the Medicaid Buy-in Coalition for NYS. He has also served on the boards of the United States Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (formerly the International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services), the National Association for Rights Protection Advocacy, the NYS Independent Living Council, the Mental Health Empowerment Project and Hands Across Long Island.

In 2004, was appointed to be a member of the legislatively mandated Most Integrated Setting Coordinated Council. In 2002, served as a member of the Governor's Adult Home Work Group, member of one of the Department of Health's Medicaid Buy-In outreach and education task forces, slated to serve on Advisory Board for State Office for the Aging's Ombudsman program.

He regularly speaks throughout New York State and across the country promoting the recovery, rehabilitation and rights of people with psychiatric disabilities and, more recently, the importance of broader cross-disability policies, collaborations and advocacy.

Over the past decade, Harvey has been recognized by resolutions and awards from the NYS Senate, NYS Assembly, the NYC Department of Public Health, the National Alliance for the Mentally III, the Mental Health Association of NYS, the Association for Community Living, the Mental Health Empowerment Project, the Coalition of Voluntary Mental Health Services, Morningside Westside Community Action Committee and the Chemung County Department of Mental Health. Rosenthal was the 2001 recipient of the prestigious John Beard Award for 'exemplary contributions to the field of psychiatric rehabilitation' from USPRA.

NYAPRS Deputy Director Mat Mathai states, “Harvey has energized and united people receiving services in the mental health system and people providing mental health services to build a powerful community voice that would lead an unprecedented number of successful statewide legislative and budget campaigns. Through his active and tireless citizenship and advocacy, thousands of lives have been transformed.”

The accomplishments and unwavering dedication demonstrated by Harvey Rosenthal is in the true spirit of the social work mission and it is with great respect that we present him with the Public Citizen of the Year Award.