

IL-D200

DAILY NEWSPAPER

DAILY SOUTHTOWN

Tinley Park, IL

Sunday Circulation - 53,551
Daily

JULY 23, 2006



5021

Community news

United Cerebral Palsy awards

Ten area residents using assistive technology to promote independent living for people with disabilities received honors from Infinitec Southwest, part of United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Chicago. The group's 21st annual din-

ner, held at Gaelic Park in Oak Forest, highlighted the remarkable applications of technology by students and adults with disabilities, as well as the dedication of those supporting their efforts.

In the Student Technology Award category, seven recipients were recognized for mastering assistive technology that has enabled them to make outstanding achievements in school and in the community. Honors went to D.J. Hoff of Crete Elementary School, Jennifer Piasecki of Homer Junior High School, Jarrin Bray of Hickory Hills Early Learning Center in Park Forest, Jose Lopez of the Developmental Learning Program at Spaulding School in Midlothian, Tyler Woodworth of Kelvin Grove Elementary School in Lockport, Johnny Gerard of Steuben Elementary School in Kankakee, and Chris McKinney of Eisenhower High School in Blue Island.

An Adult Technology Award was presented to Loletha Lyons, of Brookfield. This year, after many trials, Lyons is able to program her assistive technology device, the Dynavox, by herself. Using a switch behind her head, she can select letters and create messages. She also can go on to the Internet by herself. Lyons is now an independent communicator and uses technology to state her opinions and be an advocate.

Dr. Paul Dulle, CEO and president of UCP Chicago, presented the awards.

The Assistive Technology Professional Achievement Award went to Catherine Kushner, a physical therapy assistant recently named assistive technology coordinator for the Eisenhower Cooperative in Oak Lawn. Kushner was recognized as "a tireless advocate for staff and parents, and exhibits a genuine desire to maximize the educational experience for students with special needs."

The Heart of a Hero Award, given to a mother who per-

forms ordinary tasks in extraordinary ways to support special-needs children, was given to Lorraine Pfifer, of Chicago. Pfifer, 76, has raised six children, two of whom were born with disabilities during a time in which many opportunities were not available for people with disabilities. Her son Billy, who is a client of UCP, has cerebral palsy, and her daughter Anita was born blind. Pfifer continues to care for Billy and Anita at home along with caring for her 93 year old mother.