

Mental Health CHAMPIONS



***Celebrating the Outstanding Achievements of Missourians
with Mental Health Challenges.***

2010 Mental Health Champions

The Department of Mental Health provides services to about 170,000 Missourians each year, many of whom are making major progress in overcoming the challenges of mental illnesses, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities. Unfortunately, few of their personal stories are known. To address this, the department is recognizing the accomplishments of some of these individuals with the Mental Health Champions recognition.

Three persons are selected from statewide referrals as Mental Health Champions. They are representative of individuals with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, and persons in recovery from substance or gambling addictions. They are persons who have overcome their personal challenges to make life better for others and for their communities.

To become a sponsor of the Mental Health Champions' banquet or to make your reservations click on the link for [Mental Health Champions Banquet Sponsorship and Reservation form](#).

For more information contact Debra Walker at 573-751-1647 or 573-635-9201 or by e-mail at debra.walker@dmh.mo.gov or mmhf@compassinfo.org.

MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS 2010

Recognizing Mental Health Champions

Three remarkable Missourians who have overcome mental health challenges to make life better for others and their communities have been chosen as 2010 Mental Health Champions by the Missouri Mental Health Foundation. The Champions are Gary Stevens of Rolla; Earl Cobbins Sr., of Lee's Summit; and Jim Pace of St. Louis.

🏆 **Award Presentation:** These champions will be honored on April 7, 2010, at the Third Annual Mental Health Champions Banquet to be held in Jefferson City. The Missouri Mental Health Foundation will host each Champion and one guest at the dinner and at the hotel for a one-night stay. Winners will receive a \$1,000 cash prize.

Gary Stevens has been a strong advocate for all people with developmental disabilities for many years. He has been an integral part of numerous boards, commissions, work groups, and committees locally and statewide. During his time as a member of the Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, Gary helped move forward initiatives that increase self determination; help people reduce or eliminate guardianship; find a home of their own; and live, work and play in the community of their choice.

Earl Cobbins, Sr. has come a long way in his journey of battling substance abuse as well as his mental illness to get where he is today. After receiving help for recovery at Swope Health Services, Earl was able to find a new home and became strong enough to regain the support and commitment of his family and friends. He realized that one of the most critical elements to his recovery was housing. He has since formed a not-for-profit organization called Sober 1 House of Hope. Sober 1 provides not only supported housing but job training, and employment opportunities at Earl's car dealership and repair shop.

Jim Pace has demonstrated exemplary courage and commitment to overcoming the challenges of his mental illness and making life better for others in his community. Through his recovery and participation at the Independence Center, Jim now works in a permanent, full-time job, and has moved up to a supervisor position. He no longer lives on disability payments, but rather finds great pride in being able to live on his own and even contribute financially to his church and other charitable organizations. He volunteers to speak at various occupational therapy classes at Washington University and is a regular panelist in the Crisis Intervention Training course for local law enforcement officers. Jim has provided valuable insight into mental illness to thousands. He is an inspiration to many.

Lasting Legacies for 2010

In addition to recognizing the Mental Health Champions, we celebrate the accomplishments of individuals whose life work brought about positive change to the mental health field and its consumers. The Lasting Legacy Awards for 2010 are Mr. Gerald Zafft and Mrs. Carole Roper Park Vaughan

Gerald J. Zafft, parent of a child with a disability, is a tireless advocate for persons with disabilities. He was the driving force behind the creation of the Missouri Family Trust, now known as the Midwest Special Needs Trust, which helps parents plan and save for the care of their children with disabilities after the family is no longer able to do so. A former member of the Missouri Mental Health Commission, Zafft is a member of the Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP law firm in St. Louis.

Carole Roper Park Vaughan is a former state representative from Jackson County, serving in the Legislature from 1977 to 1995. She was the first chair of the House Appropriation Committee for Mental Health. In that role she helped to identify the critical needs of the mental health system and championed those needs through the legislative and appropriations process.

More information about tickets and sponsorship opportunities for the Champions Banquet will be provided soon. The MMHF is dedicated to helping Missourians understand the importance of mental health and building hope for persons who experience the impact of addiction disorders, developmental disabilities and mental illness.