

NEWS For Immediate Release

Ceca Foundation Announces Annual DC Regional Caregiver Award Honorees

Caregivers Recognized from Stoddard Baptist, Doctors Community Hospital and Capital Caring

Washington, DC, April 11, 2017 -- Ceca Foundation is pleased to honor three remarkable health caregivers with its annual DC Regional Ceca Caregiver Award. Each honoree – Solomon Ihejirika of Stoddard Baptist Nursing Home (Washington DC), Herbert Gaines, Jr. of Doctors Community Hospital (Lanham, MD) and Martha Perea of Capital Caring (hospice, Falls Church, VA) – will receive a \$2,500 award to be presented at individual ceremonies held at their respective healthcare organizations.

The annual regional awards are an extension of Ceca's monthly and quarterly awards granted to caregivers who exemplify qualities of empathy, humor, integrity, professionalism and teamwork in treating patients or residents. Caregivers honored in the metropolitan DC region during 2016 were automatically eligible for the regional award, and were selected by the Foundation's boards of directors and advisors.

In 2016, over 1,500 caregivers in the DC region were recognized by their peers, managers, patients, residents and loved-ones through Ceca's program. "We are very pleased to honor these three individuals who are outstanding examples of the spirit of caring that takes place in our partner healthcare organizations every day," said Matt Lawlor, CEO of Ceca Foundation.

Lawlor continued, "Some caregiver acts are truly heroic, but more often it's the simple act of connecting with the cared-for that lifts our humanity. Ceca is honored to partner with a wide variety of healthcare communities in recognizing their exceptional caregivers. We look forward to expanding the program to more organizations in 2017."

The Annual DC Regional Ceca Caregiver Award honorees are:

Solomon Ihejirika of Stoddard Baptist Nursing Home is a dedicated certified nursing assistant (CNA) whose commitment to caregiving shines through every day, as an advocate for Stoddard's residents and patients. Wrote one of his colleagues in making Solomon's Ceca Award nomination:

"One evening, a resident became extremely anxious, crying uncontrollably. The resident was not assigned to Solomon but he took it upon himself to stop what he was doing, sit with the resident and ask in a very comforting voice "How can I help you?" The resident responded, "I have not been able to talk to my only son for two days. I am very scared, he is my everything." Solomon transferred this resident from bed to chair, obtained the phone number for the son from a nurse on-duty, took the resident to the nurse's station and dialed the son's number. Solomon said in a very professional manner, "Your mother is very anxious today and would like to hear your voice." The resident and son spoke, and at the end of the conversation the resident was very, very grateful. She stopped crying and held Solomon's hand, saying "thank you, you are just an angel."

Herbert Gaines Jr. of Doctors Community Hospital was honored for heroically stepping outside his role in maintenance services, and selflessly contributing with small acts of care and teamwork that make a huge difference to the hospital's patient experience. In the words of his Ceca Award nominators:

"On Wednesday a visitor was observed choking in the Good Luck Cafe. The visitor was in distress getting for assistance - unable to speak. Another employee attempted to assist by patting the visitor on the back without success. Herbie quickly rushed over to the visitor and performed the Heimlich maneuver until a piece of fruit was dislodged, allowing her to breathe again. Herbie's quick actions potentially saved this person's life."

"I walked outside the Medical Office Building to shrieks. Alarmed, I looked to see a woman moving in to hug Herbie in relief and joy as Herbie finished unlocking a car with a coat hanger. The wind was blowing at 40mph and the rain was blowing sideways! Apparently, the woman pulled up in the vendor parking space at the entrance to pick up a patient, but locked her keys in the still-running car in the process. Herbie stood in the rain until he was able to get her car unlocked. He just acted like it was nothing special and all in a day's work. It really made my day, and I am sure the woman was extremely grateful also."

Martha Perea of Capital Caring was recognized for exceptional service in her hospice services work and for the cared-for community at large. In the words of her Ceca Award nominator:

"Recently Care Representative Martha Perea was visiting an outside nursing facility, Birmingham Green, when she walked past a young resident there. He asked her to buy a bag of popcorn because he was trying to raise money to go to a baseball game. It would have been so easy to walk past the resident, but in Martha's daily work she drives past the stadium of the Potomac Nationals and later that day wondered "what if?" She stopped at the team's offices and told the resident's story and the Nationals enthusiastically agreed to donate 30 tickets to Birmingham Green. She then arranged for Uncle Slam, the P-Nats mascot, to visit the facility to personally deliver the tickets. Michael and 29 other residents attended the game on September 2nd and a great time was had by all. The Nationals and Birmingham Green now have a relationship and have agreed to do this on a regular basis for the residents. Martha lives our mission of simply improving care for our patients everyday, but this time she took it even further and improved care for those she didn't even know."

###

About Ceca Foundation

Ceca Foundation is a 501(c)3 private operating foundation, based in Washington DC, which partners with hospitals and other healthcare communities to recognize their exceptional caregivers. For more information, visit www.cec.foundation.org. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and on [Facebook](#).

Media Contact:

Lori Stewart
Senior Advisor
202-258-8793
lstewart@cec.foundation.org

Operating Contact:

Nathan Hamme
Managing Director
202-719-8042
nhamme@cec.foundation.org