

## **Ceca Foundation Announces Caregiver of the Year Awards**

*Healthcare Workers Honored Nationally for Acts of Exceptional Care*

**WASHINGTON, DC March 2, 2022** – Ceca Foundation is pleased to recognize three extraordinary health caregivers with its eighth annual *Ceca Caregiver of the Year Award*. They are:

- **April Eckman**, a Patient and Guest Representative at Baptist Health Medical Center-Conway in AR. She was honored for going out of her way for an elderly couple who arrived a day early for a procedure. With nowhere to stay, April found them a hotel and led them there that evening, since they were unfamiliar with the area and uncomfortable driving. She then showed up the next morning to get them back to the hospital and even took time to print directions to make it back home. April personifies Baptist Health’s mission of treating everyone with integrity, respect, and compassion.
- **Don Okusaga**, a Licensed Practical Nurse at Stoddard Baptist Nursing Home in Washington, DC. He was honored for all the special acts he performs for residents everyday – from getting snacks after hours; to serving food; to encouraging reluctant residents to go to bed on time. Call lights seem to turn on after Don has clocked out for the day, but he doesn’t hesitate and does all of it with a smile. He has a great sense of humor and even sings and dances for the residents, participating in fashion and talent shows. He says yes to pretty much everything – as long as “it’s for the residents!”
- **Rick Price**, a Chaplain at West Virginia Caring in Elkins, WV. He was recognized for his peaceful demeanor and comfort provided to hospice patients, families, and the staff who work with him. He can be counted on for support, any time of the day or night. He even volunteered to extend his service area to cover for another chaplain with travel distances up to 200 miles away. Yet, he makes time for his patients, even sometimes texting spiritual verses so an RN can read to a patient needing comfort. He often sends emails and texts from the road to bring peace to staff and family members. He does all this with good humor, selflessness, and a gracious attitude.

Each *Caregiver of the Year* Awardee receives an engraved commemorative trophy and a cash award of \$2,500. Most importantly, all are celebrated by their fellow team members, patients, families, and the Ceca team at their respective healthcare communities and nationally.

“Each of these caregivers has made a profound impact on those they serve,” said Nate Hamme, President of Ceca Foundation. “Often the ‘small’ acts of care make a big difference. For April, Don, and Rick, the simple act of personally connecting with those in their community is inspiring and transforms people’s lives.”



Ceca's *Caregiver of the Year* Award Recipients are selected for this highest honor from the pool of Ceca Award Honorees over the prior year from its entire network of healthcare partners. From this elite group, the Foundation also recognized nine finalists:

- **Modupe Akinola**, LPN/Vocational Nurse at Stoddard Baptist Global Care, Washington, DC
- **Kenesha Beckford**, Caregiver at Arosa-Chicagoland, IL
- **George Bridges**, Maintenance Technician at Goodwin House, Alexandria, VA
- **Casey Caradine**, Office Representative at Baptist Health Medical Center-Hot Spring County, AR
- **Devante Foreman**, Housekeeping and Resident Life Associate at Providence Place Senior Living, Chambersburg, PA
- **Stephanie Hartwick**, Office Nurse LPN at Baptist Health Medical Center-Heber Springs, AR
- **Penny Isaac**, Caregiver at Arosa, Houston, TX
- **Michelle Stull**, Housekeeping Manager at Providence Place Senior Living, Chambersburg, PA
- **Charita Wells**, Activities Assistant at Carroll Manor Nursing Home, Washington, DC

#### **About Ceca Foundation**

[Ceca Foundation](#) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit based in Washington, DC, which partners with healthcare communities nationally of all sizes to recognize their exceptional caregivers. Ceca's mission is to improve the patient experience by providing a highly affordable, turnkey recognition solution tailored to healthcare providers, using its innovative software, network and managed services, and cash awards. Founded by Matthew and Rosemary Lawlor in 2013, Ceca has publicly recognized nearly 35,000 exceptional acts of care and over 1,000 caregivers who have received a Ceca Award. For more information, [watch a brief introductory video](#) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). To schedule an interview with one of our award recipients, contact Michelle Stewart.

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