

Announcing the 2022 National Ceca Award Recipients

Ceca Foundation Honors Four Healthcare Workers Nationally for Exceptional Acts of Care

WASHINGTON, DC March 1, 2023 – Ceca Foundation is pleased to recognize four extraordinary caregivers from around the nation with its ninth annual National Ceca Awards. Honorees are selected annually for this highest honor from Ceca’s network of healthcare partners.

This year, for the first time ever, Ceca also sourced nominations from the public to broaden recognition efforts across the nation to honor more caregivers. Three National Ceca Award Honorees were chosen from Ceca Partners, and one Honoree was chosen from the open call. The recipients are:

- **Ashley Crawley**, a Professional Caregiver at Focus Healthcare Solutions in Kansas City, MO. Ashley was recognized for her professionalism and integrity, and, above all else, her ability to inspire people to be their best self. As an in-home caregiver, she cares for multiple clients that are aging, living with illness, or have physical, intellectual or developmental disabilities. Her care is a key reason her clients can thrive in their own homes. She assists with everything from meal prep to helping clients deal with hoarding behaviors, but her winning personality and ability to connect with people are profound. Through her innate ability to befriend her clients and give them purpose, Ashley makes a world of difference in the lives of those she cares for. One family member likened finding Ashley to winning a “Golden Ticket,” because she’s just that rare.
- **Jill Magjuka-Egan**, a Life Enrichment Assistant at Artis Senior Living located in Evesham, NJ outside Philadelphia. Jill was honored for going above and beyond to enrich the lives of residents. On Mother’s Day, she came in on her day off to support an event and ensure all residents participated. But it’s her caring nature and willingness to do the ‘small’ things that make such a difference. On one occasion, knowing that a particular resident becomes easily agitated, she started singing his favorite songs to calm him and ease the transition to another area of the community. And her compassion doesn’t stop at residents either. Multiple times she has recorded messages from the residents and dropped off goodies for sick team members. She truly embodies a caring spirit, and as one nominator put it, “Her heart is gold!”
- **Mesfin Desta**, an Environmental Services Team Leader at Goodwin House Alexandria in Alexandria, VA. Mesfin received the award for going outside of his role to connect with and help residents. He earned the nickname “Running Man” due to his characteristically quick response to residents’ calls, and he is often seen rushing to help residents with groceries, adjusting rooms, or simply providing companionship and conversation. With his calm and caring demeanor, Mesfin has earned the trust of many residents and their loved ones, who often request him by name to assist during transitions between levels of care. When a resident that he was very close to was hospitalized for an extended period, Mesfin visited him in the hospital and offered his support. It is evident that his warm smile and caring attitude have endeared him to every resident and team member he encounters.

- **Stephanie Banks**, Licensed Practical Nurse at Hattie Larlham in Northeast Ohio. Stephanie was honored for her selflessness, compassion, and positive attitude and for always putting residents' and co-workers' needs before her own. She excels beyond her normal duties at five Intermediate Care Facility group homes and covers extra shifts when needed. A team member at Hattie Larlham for over 19 years, her commitment has never wavered, even during the pandemic. She volunteers to work at every home with a Covid-positive resident, picks up many double shifts, and never forgets to bring favorite snacks and extra items she purchases to boost morale. Stephanie provides outstanding service and commitment to ensure the health, safety, and quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Each National Ceca Award Honoree receives an engraved commemorative trophy and a cash award of \$2,500. Most importantly, all are celebrated by those they care for, their fellow team members, and Ceca Foundation at in-person celebrations.

“Every year we are inspired by stories featuring hundreds of phenomenal caregivers and the profound impact they have on those they care for,” said Nate Hamme, President of Ceca Foundation. “It is not just heroic acts, but ‘small’ acts of care that can make a tremendous difference in people’s lives. Stephanie, Ashley, Mesfin, and Jill stand out as caregivers that have truly embraced their ability to make a difference, and their commitment to service rises above and beyond anything in a job description.”

The Foundation also recognized 14 finalists:

- **Amina Kanu**, CNA at Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads, Falls Church, VA
- **Deborah Barnett**, LPN-Long Term Care at Carroll Manor, Washington, DC
- **Jorge Castillo**, Private Caregiver, Menlo Park, CA
- **Julie Ehrlich**, Senior Care Manager at Arosa, Nashville, TN
- **Kevin Harris**, Caregiver at Arosa, Houston, TX
- **Kimberly Dalman**, CNA at Kingston at Dupont, Fort Wayne, IN
- **Lisa Hargrove**, GNA at Sterling Care Riverside, Belcamp, MD
- **Olivia Muro**, Physical Therapist at Goodwin House Home and Community-Based Services, VA
- **Teresa Stern**, Resident Life Associate at Providence Place Senior Living, Pottsville, PA
- **Tracy Blanding**, Activities Assistant at Edenwald Senior Living, Towson, MD
- **Troy Kelly**, Driver at Knollwood Life Plan Community, Washington, DC
- **Vandella Massenburg-Bey**, Social Services Director at Fayette Health & Rehabilitation, Baltimore, MD
- **Wendy Kyei**, LPN Supervisor at Heinzerling, Columbus, OH
- **Wendy Studtmann**, Physical Therapist at Anne Grady Services, Holland, OH

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 human experience in healthcare by providing a highly affordable, turnkey recognition solution tailored

Ceca Foundation

—A Network for Celebrating Caregivers—

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 more than 40,000 exceptional acts of care and almost 1,300 caregivers who have received a Ceca Award. For more information, [watch a brief 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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