



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Announcing the 2024 National Ceca Award Recipients

National Nonprofit Honors Outstanding Care Professionals for Exceptional Work

WASHINGTON, D.C. May 6, 2025 – Ceca Foundation (Ceca), a national nonprofit dedicated to recognizing and supporting healthcare workers and senior living professionals, proudly announces the recipients of the 11th Annual National Ceca Awards. The 2024 National Ceca Awards are sponsored by MemoryFox, Ohio Health Care Association, RB Health Partners Inc., and Smartlinx.

This prestigious honor celebrates four extraordinary caregivers from across the country, selected from Ceca's network of care partners and nominations submitted by the public. This year's National Ceca Award Honorees have demonstrated exceptional acts of care promoting well-being and quality of life for those in their care. The 2024 recipients are:

- **Eva Ebner**, a Resident Caregiver at Generations Senior Living of Strongsville, OH, was recognized for her resilience, love, and unwavering dedication. She has won the hearts of residents, families, and staff and become more like family than just a care worker. Residents speak of her kindness, attentiveness, and the joy she brings to their lives. Whether it's remembering how a resident likes their eggs, holding their hand through difficult moments, or creating personalized artwork for them, Eva goes above and beyond every day. Eva came to Generations Senior Living with very little healthcare experience but with a heart full of compassion. Born and raised in Venezuela, Eva faced immense hardships and relocated to the United States seeking a better life. Her positivity and genuine love for the residents shines through in everything she does, and her commitment is unwavering, even purchasing a scooter to get to and from work. Eva's story is a testament to her strength and the profound impact she has on the Generations community.
- **Shannon Gronniger**, in Environmental Services at Colonial Springs Healthcare Center, part of Citizens Memorial Hospital, in Buffalo, MO, was recognized for her selfless acts of kindness and devotion, embodying the true spirit of caregiving through compassion that extends far beyond the responsibilities of her job role in environmental services. Family members of a resident shared they are comforted knowing Shannon treats their loved one like her own. She regularly plans special celebrations and often spends her own money on gifts and supplies and ensures that each resident feels valued and loved. Even during inclement weather, she has chosen to remain at the facility rather than go home, putting residents' safety and comfort first. Shannon is described by coworkers as a "diamond in the rough" and a "true blessing" to all who know her.

- **Roberta Kuhl**, a Hospice Social Worker at West Virginia Caring in Arthurdale, WV, was recognized by her team members and families for exceptional compassion and dedication to her hospice patients. Roberta is more than just a professional—she treats her patients like family, ensuring they feel seen, valued, and cared for, even in their most vulnerable moments. During the holidays this past year, she took time away from her own family to personally deliver meals to patients who would have otherwise spent the holidays alone. More than just food, she provides companionship, warmth, and kindness throughout the year. This exemplifies the countless ways she goes above and beyond, walking alongside patients and their families through their hardest times. Roberta's work embodies the essence of hospice care, reminding everyone that social work extends far beyond paperwork—it's about making a meaningful difference, one heart at a time.
- **Richard Williams**, a Physical Therapy Assistant at Brookwood Gardens Nursing and Rehabilitation in Homestead, FL, was recognized for an unyielding dedication to residents and skillful enthusiasm in his work. Known for his exceptional people skills and positive attitude, Richard consistently goes out of his way for residents and their families. His impact is evident in the heartfelt testimonials from residents. One resident expressed deep gratitude, saying Richard's care and encouragement helped him regain strength and confidence in his own abilities again. Another resident, a former professor, praised his patience and ability to explain therapy in a way that made her feel comfortable and hopeful for the future. Richard's reputation extends beyond his direct work, with family members eagerly requesting his assistance for their loved ones at Brookwood. His kindness, expertise, and dedication make all the difference in the lives of those he serves, as he continues to thrive in his role.

Nate Hamme, President and Executive Director of Ceca, said, "Every year the staff and board at Ceca are overcome with emotions as we read through the amazing stories of the caregivers we are recognizing, making it a difficult decision to determine the National Award Recipients. Eva, Shannon, Roberta and Richard's stories highlight the exemplary care professionals they are and how they positively impact the lives of those in their care communities." He continued, "We are proud to honor them for the dedication, compassion and skill they exhibit in practicing their craft."

National Ceca Award Honorees receive a cash award of \$2,500 along with an engraved commemorative trophy. Awards are presented in-person by Hamme, leadership from their organization, team members they work with and those they care for.

Recognizing Outstanding Finalists

In addition to the National Ceca Award recipients, fifteen finalists were also acknowledged for their significant contributions to their communities:

- **Geraldine Bataille**, Registered Nurse Supervisor (RN) at Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads, Falls Church, VA
- **Daren Campbell**, Environmental Services Team Leader at Goodwin House Alexandria, VA
- **Reggie Coleman**, Dietary Staff at Knollwood Life Plan Community, Washinton, DC
- **Kelly Delaney**, Home Health RN at Goodwin Home and Community-Based Services, Alexandria, VA
- **Dr. Brian Griffith**, ICU Doctor at Meriter Hospital, part of UnityPoint Health, Madison, WI

- **Neachelle Hawkins**, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at The Virginia Home, Richmond, VA
- **James Jackson**, Cook at Edenwald Senior Living, Towson, MD
- **Rambjet Kamara**, Activities Assistant at The View Alexandria, VA
- **Nadine Krause**, Resident Life Associate at Providence Place Senior Living of Lancaster, PA
- **Rajaa Muhammad**, Lead Qualified Mental Health Professional at CRi, Chantilly, VA
- **Tony Rhodes**, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at Berkshire Place Rehab and Healthcare Center, Providence, RI
- **Amberlee Robinson**, Connections Club Coordinator at Providence Place Senior Living of Chambersburg, PA
- **Joyce Tickner**, Community Connector at Open Door, Columbus, OH
- **Marsha Tyhurst**, Direct Support Professional at Echoing Hills, Warsaw, OH
- **Taylor Ulichny**, Resident Life Associate at Providence Place Senior Living of Drums, PA

A Lasting Impact on Healthcare

Throughout the year, Ceca works with care organizations across the country to provide meaningful engagement, recognition and rewards. As a result, the Ceca Award program has had a transformative impact on care professionals and lasting business impact. Data from Ceca Partner communities indicates that employees recognized through the program have significantly higher retention rates—improving by 20-120% across various care settings—helping to combat workforce shortages in the industry.

Hamme affirmed, “It is incredibly rewarding to see how meaningful recognition can reconnect people with the work they do each day. Ceca’s partners have made a commitment to a culture of gratitude that celebrates individuals and their efforts, and they continue to reap the benefits of improved employee retention and engagement inside their care communities. In an era where staffing shortages continue to challenge healthcare providers, Ceca is proud to play a role in supporting and celebrating the dedicated individuals who make a real difference in people’s lives.”

For more information about the Ceca Foundation and its recognition programs, visit www.cecafoundation.org.

About Ceca

Ceca is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, 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 to healthcare providers, using its innovative software, network, managed services, and cash awards. Founded by Matthew and Rosemary Lawlor, Ceca has publicly recognized more than 51,000 exceptional acts of care and has awarded over \$550,000 to deserving caregivers. For more information, [watch a brief video](#). To schedule an interview with one of our award recipients, contact Michelle Stewart.

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