

## A Community Partnership

*April 2006*

The Colonie Senior Network (CSN) has been recognized by the New York State Coalition for the Aging (NYSCA) with their **2006 Senior Service Award in Community Partnerships**. The statewide award was presented to Supervisor Mary E. Brizzell at NYSCA's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Reception on Monday, February 13, 2006 at the Hampton Inn.



Ed Neary (standing right) listens as Supervisor Mary E. Brizzell (at podium) accepts the award.

Candidates for the award are nominated by NYSCA members. A longtime NYSCA member, Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. was proud to nominate the Network. CSN is as much a concept as an organization . . . beginning with Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc., the Town of Colonie Senior Resources Department and the Town's incorporated senior clubs working together to reach out to the community. Together they identified and met with formal and informal seniors groups, community leaders, service providers, civic and faith-based organizations to raise awareness of issues affecting seniors in our community. Today, there are more than 30 organizations with over 100 individuals, volunteers and staff members of different organizations all working together as the Colonie Senior Network.

In 2003 the Town of Colonie recognized the value of the Network, creating the CSN Advisory Board as a compliment to the Colonie Senior Network by a resolution of the Colonie Town Board on January 23, 2003. The CSN Advisory Board is a citizen committee that assists and advises the Senior Resources Department, Colonie Senior Service Centers, and the senior clubs in carrying out their programs and services to the senior residents of the Town of Colonie and their families as well as providing a resource to the Colonie Town Board on senior-related matters. As part of this process, the Board also solicits and considers input from the senior community on issues of concern to them. Among the accomplishments of the Colonie Senior Network are:

- Selection of Colonie by the White House Conference on Aging as one of the official sites where ideas, strategies and plans for meeting the challenges of a growing senior population were discussed. Colonie's recommendations were forwarded to the Conference for consideration in the plan for aging concerns over the next 10 years.
- Recognizing Colonie's effort to work together as a community prompted U.S. Health & Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt to select Colonie as one of only two sites in New York State where he kicked off the federal government's campaign to sign seniors up for the new Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefit.
- Through Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc., the CSN has implemented a \$15,000 State Pharmaceutical Assistance Program Transition Grant for Community Based

Organizations to assist Medicare Beneficiaries with the new Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefit.

- The Network has brought together over 30 different organizations, including stakeholders from the community such as EMS, Police, schools, churches, housing, nursing and senior volunteers to ensure that there is a seamless network of services for our senior citizens.
- The CSN Advisory Board has developed a strong committee structure that has focused on several major areas of concern: working with developers regarding senior housing needs (Housing Committee); conducting a comprehensive survey, including focus groups to understand the current and future needs of our aging population (Programs and Services Committee); bringing together a “network” all of the formal and informal providers of services to seniors in our community, to demonstrate the benefits of working together (Community Development Committee); and improving communication between service providers to seniors and caregivers, and developing educational programs that help stakeholders understand and deal with issues unique to the aging population (Public Relations, Marketing and Education Committee).

This award is a well-deserved recognition of Colonie’s place as one of the most senior-friendly communities in New York State!

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