

**News Release: May 9, 2011**

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**Committed Volunteer and Local Pharmacy Honored by Liberty**

AMSTERDAM – Liberty, the Montgomery County Chapter of NYSARC, Individuals and staff presented Dave Anderson and his Golden Retriever, Dakota the 2011 Good Neighbor award and the staff of Palmer Pharmacy the 2011 Community Partner award at the organization’s annual dinner, conducted at Crystal Ristorante, May 5.

Liberty CEO-elect, Mike Decker, introduced presenters Melissa Johnson of Liberty’s Day Habilitation Program, Marcia Oddy, Residential RN, and Individuals at Liberty’s Cochrane Avenue residence.

Johnson stated in her nomination of Anderson and Dakota that since 2008, Dave and his dog have been voluntarily visiting Liberty’s Day Habilitation sites and began building relationships with individuals in program through pet therapy. His and Dakota’s weekly visits to Liberty’s Day Supports building is an event not only individuals in program look forward to every week, but Dakota and Dave as well. Anderson who accepted the award with his Golden Retriever by his side has logged almost 450 pet therapy visits with Dakota – all of which have taken place at Liberty’s Day Habilitation programs throughout the city of Amsterdam.

Anderson stated, “When Dakota and I first started visiting Liberty, I didn’t think I was cut out for it. But then, you see the bond that develops between Dakota and the people we are visiting, and it’s touching.” He laughed and said, “Now when we visit, everyone knows Dakota by name, but I don’t think they’d know mine even if I asked... I’m just holding the leash!”

In her nomination for Palmer Pharmacy, Marcia Oddy, Liberty staff member, commended Tom Friello and his team for their professionalism and respect towards the individuals residing at two different homes within the community.

She stated that with help from Palmer Pharmacy the individuals have been able to work towards gaining more independence in ordering their prescriptions and picking them up at the pharmacy. She said every employee at the pharmacy knows each person by first name and makes everyone feel welcome and comfortable.

Tom Friello of Palmer Pharmacy said, “We are very thankful to be here. Palmer Pharmacy has come to this dinner before as a nominee and we are so happy to be recognized by Liberty tonight. Thank you to those who nominated us, and continue to support our pharmacy.”

Other nominees for the 2011 Good Neighbor and Community Partner awards included GAVAC for their supportive and respectful nature towards the individuals we support and their families; Lydia McEwan

of St. Mary's Clinic for helping to make patients as comfortable as possible in every situation; Charlie's restaurant for catering to individual needs and ensuring an excellent dining experience; and Paul Jordan of Amsterdam for being a great friend and neighbor to an individual at the Stratton apartments.

Liberty also honored the Salsa Picante group with the first annual Community Commitment Award. The group was recognized for their dedication to volunteerism and making their community a better place. The award was chosen and presented by members of Liberty's Self Advocates group. Salsa Picante is most known for their authentic Spanish cuisine they serve at events and fundraisers. In 2010 the group raised nearly \$5,000 for local not-for-profit organizations.

Tiffany Macan of Liberty's Self Advocates group said, "This year and for the first time we have chosen the Salsa Picante group to receive the Community Commitment award – a group that is dedicated to helping their community and has cooked their way into all of our hearts."

The Good Neighbor awards program was established in 1998 to recognize local individuals who have gone above and beyond in their support of people in Liberty programs. The Community Partner award began a decade later in 2008 and the Community Commitment award was new to the dinner this year. Each recipient receives a plaque commemorating their efforts and their names go on a permanent listing in the lobby of Liberty Enterprises.

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**Caption:** Liberty awarded Palmer's Pharmacy of Johnstown the 2011 Community Partner award for their professionalism and support. Pictured here with individuals and staff who nominated the local business are (left to right) Bob Sullivan of Palmer's Pharmacy, Tiffany Carpenter and Jamie Frederick of Liberty's Cochrane residence, Marcia Oddy of Liberty's nursing department, Debbie Hull of Liberty's Cochrane residence and Tom Friello and Matt Ramos of Palmer's Pharmacy