



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Tiffany Devon
tdevon@comlivserv.com
734.722.7185

The Unsung Heroes of our Community

WAYNE, MI – March 10, 2009 – “If I can reach one person, have one victory then that overshadows the 10,000 defeats,” said Community Living Services Deputy Operations Director and social worker Veryl Williams. “One success story is enough to keep me reaching and believing.”



Deputy Director of Operations Veryl Williams,
Coach-Supervisor Sylvia Brooks and
Director of Customer Service Helen Long-Eady

Williams, along with many of her colleagues believe social workers are the “safety net” of society, providing vital resources and support when they are needed the most.

“I used to live in an institution,” said Westland resident Ray Schuholz. “If it weren’t for a social worker, I might still be living in one of those awful places today.”

Community Living Services is a non-profit organization providing supports and services to over 2,800 people with developmental disabilities in Wayne County. CLS employs over 200 people and almost half of them are licensed social workers.

“Our team of professional social workers is on the front lines everyday, helping people build a meaningful and productive lives and trying to put families back together,” said Vice-President of Operations and social worker, Paul Newman. “They are truly the unsung heroes. They work very hard, often in a support role behind the scenes so they don’t always get recognized. They could be considered the fabric of the community.”

According to the website of the National Association of Social Workers, (www.socialworkers.org) professional social workers are the nation's largest group of clinically trained mental health specialists. They provide more mental health services than psychologists, psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses combined.

“I wanted to be a social worker at a young age and work with families,” said Coach Sylvia Brooks. “There is a lot of stress in this job but there is also a great sense of satisfaction when you see families reunited and people living their lives with choices and opportunities like all of us have.”

The profession of social work is one that is on the rise and that’s good news in these difficult economic times. Employment is expected to increase by 22% during the 2006-2016 decade, which is much faster than the average for all occupations. Entry level salaries begin around \$35,000.

“None of us do it for the money, we’re not looking for monetary gain,” said Director of Customer Service Helen Long-Eady. “It’s about personal growth, cultivating relationships and seeing people’s lives change for the better.”

Sure there are challenges in this field, as in any other profession and working for people with disabilities or those who have mental issues provides a whole new set of challenges.

“People with disabilities face obstacles just like we do, add to that the fact they have a disability, then it becomes much harder for them to get a job, find reliable transportation and find good direct care staff,” said Eady. “We have to be the eyes and ears of the community and be resourceful advocates. At the end of the day, we know we have contributed to making society a better place for people to live.”

CLS is funded through the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency. For more information, visit our web site at www.comliveserv.com

