



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 6, 2004

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FESTIVAL OF HOPE TO HONOR LEADERS IN WELLNESS

As part of *Festival of Hope 2004*, presented by CONTACT Crisis Helpline, An Evening of Acclamation and Admiration, September 9, will recognize contributions to physical, mental and spiritual wellness. The dinner, auction, and entertainment will take place at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club. "This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the progress being made in improving the lives of Oklahomans and to thank leaders who have dedicated their efforts to help so many people," says David B. Hooten, co-chair for the dinner.

Those being honored are the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance –Oklahoma, Karen R. Carothers, Rachel Clapper, Barbara and Jackie Cooper, Edith G. King, Ph.D. and Perry Klaassen, M.D.

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance – Oklahoma is a statewide organization started in 1985. DBSA OK currently consisting of over twenty-seven individual support groups whose mission is to improve the lives of those with mood disorders. The organization seeks to educate consumers, friends, families, as well as the general public, media, and professionals on the nature of mood disorders and to eliminate discrimination and stigma. Although mood disorders have no cure at this time, they can be controlled with proper diagnosis and treatment. The group's philosophy is that no one can tell another how to recover and each must find their own way with the help of their doctors, counselor and help from others who have been through similar experiences. DBSA OK

also advocates both on the state and national level for laws to treat the mentally ill and is a part of the national DBSA organization, which has over 1,000 independent chapters across the U.S.

Karen R. Carothers is a speech pathologist in the Oklahoma City Public Schools by day and a childbirth educator by night. She has promoted good diet, exercise, appreciation for the environment and empowerment through her personal lifestyle model and teachings. Carothers helped create the Central Oklahoma Childbirth Education Association that championed the cause of “fathers in the deliver room”, prepared childbirth classes and sibling classes. Carothers initiated the “early childbirth classes”, has taught in a variety of area hospitals and is currently working at Healthy Start providing classes to pregnant teens. She has written a cookbook entitled *Karen’s Cookbook for Wannabe Vegetarians*, is a long distance runner, works with the Sierra Club Inner City Outings Program and has trained students to compete in the Oklahoma Memorial Kids Marathon.

Rachel Clapper is a passionate service-learner, gifted student, powerful artist, graceful athlete, and genuinely caring recent graduate of Casady School. She is co-founder and grant writer for The Aikman End Zone Project, which strives to give children with long hospital stays back childhood moments that their illnesses have taken away. She also initiated a suicide prevention program for the Casady campus, which trained student advisors who in turn trained the entire Upper and Middle Division students about a very difficult subject. She also coordinated a “Walk for Awareness” on campus and has taken her presentation to an Enterprise School. Clapper has worked for Positive Tomorrows, helping children in crisis situations have engaging summer educational experiences. She has also coached Special Olympians. Oklahoma’s Teen Volunteer for the year for the National Prudential Leadership Award, Clapper was Casady’s representative to the Morehead Scholarship and will be attending DePaul University.

Barbara and Jackie Cooper are considered advocates for all people living with HIV/AIDS in Oklahoma. Tireless and incredible in their efforts, the Coopers genuine spirit and “make it happen” attitudes have made The Red Tie Night the single largest evening fundraiser in Oklahoma. The Coopers faced their son's HIV/AIDS illness with love and courage at a time when most Oklahomans thought HIV/AIDS would never impact anyone they loved. They sought the best treatment available and have worked tirelessly to

ensure that quality treatment and services are available throughout Oklahoma for men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS. Funds raised through Red Tie Night help address physical needs through medication assistance and research, mental health needs through counseling and support groups, and spiritual needs through friendship and emotional support. Their visible stand in support of quality care for people living with HIV/AIDS has changed attitudes and brought tremendous awareness to this issue.

Edith G. King, Ph.D., a licensed psychologist, has continued her commitment to the people of Oklahoma on several fronts after retiring from the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services in 1999. She has been active in the Oklahoma City Bombing recovery, Mental Health Court, and church and community service. Dr. King was one of the original volunteers at the Compassion Center, initially under the Red Cross, and later under Project Heartland, where she provided critical incident debriefing and counseling following the Oklahoma City Bombing. Dr. King increased her volunteer activities to include evaluations and therapy services and still maintains that commitment and service. A member of the Task Force to develop the first Mental Health Court in Oklahoma, Dr. King helped hammer out operations for the Court. She continues to contribute volunteer efforts to do psychological evaluations for applicants and to participate in weekly staffing of the Mental Health Court Team, the Psychological Evaluations and provides instruction to the Mental Health Court participants. Dr. King also volunteers at the County Jail as their Employee Assistance Program, responding to employees' needs. She also volunteers at her church as a member and Deacon, taking her turn working in the church's Thrift Store, and she serves meals at the homeless shelters and participates in mission trips. Her professional and personal life has been devoted to nurturing and nourishing the body, mind and spirit within our community.

Perry Klaassen, M.D., M.P.H., Clinical Director of Mary Mahoney Memorial Health Center for over thirty years, has nobly served our community as an outstanding primary medical care provider for many of our community's most challenging patients. Certified by the American Board of Preventive Medicine, Dr. Klaassen has served as Medical Officer of the Canal Zone Department of Public Health and as Medical Director for the Bengali Refugee Health Program, West Bengal, India through the Mennonite Central

Committee. As an advocate for the medically under-served and uninsured, he has also been instrumental in the development of Project Access. In 2003, he was selected from among 3,500 nominees to receive the National Association of Community Health Center's Samuel U. Rodgers Achievement Award for his outstanding achievements and contributions to community-based health care in Oklahoma.

Individual tickets for An Evening of Acclamation and Admiration are \$100 and reservations are due by August 27. For information and invitations, call the CONTACT business office at 840-9396.