

Blair County's Charmayne Raia Awarded the Louis J. Presentza Distinguished Service Award at the 2014 PADCP Annual Conference

Charmayne Raia was awarded the 2014 Louis J. Presentza Distinguished Service Award at this year's annual Pennsylvania Association of Drug Court Professionals (PADCP) conference.

The Louis J. Presentza Distinguished Service Award is intended to recognize an individual who has shown extraordinary leadership and support of those in the problem solving court field in Pennsylvania.

Charmayne began her work in the drug and alcohol field back in 1990, the same year an inpatient treatment program began in the Blair County Prison where she spearheaded an assessment team to help develop the new program. When the Blair County Drug Court developed, this assessment team graciously took on the added responsibility of assessing individuals for entry into the problem-solving court. Charmayne charted the protocol by navigating the system of providers and multiple roles in the criminal justices system for both the Drug Court and prison inpatient treatment program, both in full swing and operation today due to her pioneer efforts.

As the criminal court liaison for the drug and alcohol interests of Blair County, Charmayne has always tackled challenges with professionalism and strong principles to keep the county's primary focus on the participants and not the comfort of those working in the system. She has earned the respect of all for this mission-center leadership.

Additionally, Charmayne serves as the DUI Coordinator and gives countless hours to DUI Checkpoints, DUI State Association membership, Blair Countians for a Drug Free Community subcommittee "Committee to prevent DUIs and Underage Drinking" and through that work has created and operates an alternative Magisterial District program for underage drinking for several years.

Over the years, she has tirelessly searched for grant money, writing many, most of which have had successful outcomes. Through her efforts along with the aid of a small staff, Charmayne has delivered several million dollars for drug and alcohol treatment to Blair County, affecting more lives than anyone can count.

Despite many years of service in the field of drug and alcohol, she keeps relevant and continues to enjoy working at the cutting edge of the field. Today, she participates on the PA Drug Court conferences planning committee, the National Drug Court as a professional member, the original PCCD Dashboard planning committee, and serves on the statewide committee to review and evaluate Drug Courts through AOPC. She serves as the treatment liaison on the Blair

County DUI Court and leads the Criminal Justice Specialty Court Committee for Blair County and its CJAB. She has also undertaken facilitating the local accreditation process of the Blair County Adult Drug Court.

In summary, Charmayne's colleagues nominated her not just for all of her outstanding achievements, but more importantly, for who she is when she works. She has unchallenged integrity, highly developed people skills, a strong work ethic, a warm humor, and easy laugh that draw everyone to her. Her colleagues noted that even after 20 years in the field and witnessing the pain and suffering of addiction, she has maintained strong compassion for those suffering from addiction and all those who work with them in the many different fields. In addition, they feel blessed to have the gifts of Charmayne Raia in Blair County and nominated her for the award so that the larger field of statewide professionals can join them in celebrating her work and the love and mission she brings to the field which inspires all of them.