



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NOTE TO EDITOR: PHOTO ATTACHED

Central Annex/Union Court Resident Service Coordinator receives 2009 Berkshire Red Cross Centennial Award

The Berkshire Red Cross awarded a 2009 Centennial Award to Theresa Smith, Resident Service Coordinator at Central Annex and Union Court Apartments in Pittsfield, at the organization's 114th Annual Meeting on Oct. 6.

The Centennial Award was established in 1995 to celebrate the chapter's 100th annual meeting and a century of service to the people of Berkshire County. Smith received the award for spearheading the "Toys for Tots" program for children in families affected by HIV/AIDS. "The program had more than a dozen very happy kids and very grateful parents. Terri – sort of like Disney – keeps the magic alive every year," said Executive Director Kathleen Phillips in presenting Smith with the award.

Smith works with residents in the two housing developments to help them identify and access community services that will help them live successfully in the complex. She provides crisis intervention services, mediates disputes between residents, coordinates educational workshops, and community building activities that encourage residents to step up as volunteers and leaders in the housing and in the Pittsfield community.

As a result of her efforts, residents now participate in community events such as the annual AIDS walk and “Toys for Tots” as well as organizing their own building-specific activities such as pot luck dinners and cultural field trips.

Central Annex and Union Court Apartments were purchased and renovated in 1980 by Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), a national non-profit organization that buys affordable housing around the country to preserve its long-term affordability for families, seniors and the disabled. POAH owns nine affordable properties with a total of 1,800 units in 12 Massachusetts communities across the state including the Berkshires.

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Photo credit: Margaret Apkin of the Red Cross

Caption: Leaders of the Berkshire County Chapter of the American Red Cross present the 2009 Berkshire Red Cross Centennial Award to Theresa Smith, Resident Service Coordinator at Central Annex and Union Court Apartments. Left to right: Sally Douglas, Chairman of the Board, Theresa Smith, Ryan Peterson, News9 Anchor, guest speaker