

News Release

Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers, Inc.

PO Box 496, Painesville, OH 44077

(440) 354-2148 carried@lclifeline.org

**Lifeline, Inc. honors Lake County residents, organizations for 2009
February 25, 2009**

PAINESVILLE, Ohio— Lifeline, Inc., Lake County's Community Action Agency, is pleased to announce its 2009 award winners and to recognize agency volunteers, community partners and outstanding program participants for their commitment to Lake County's low-income citizens.

"We're giving out four different awards this year," said Carrie Dotson, Executive Director of Lifeline. "We are so excited to be able to recognize those who support Lifeline and its programs, as well as the participants who excel in those programs."

The 6th Annual Mildred P. Wilson Award will be presented to Bob Zaluski who has demonstrated outstanding service and dedication to Lifeline. The Mildred P. Wilson Award is named for the late Mildred Wilson, a dedicated Lifeline employee for many years. Mildred's commitment and service to both Lifeline and Lake County's low-income community were remarkable. This award was established in 2004 to honor an individual who goes above and beyond the call of duty in working to benefit Lifeline and the individuals we serve. Previous recipients have included Bill Margalis, Barb Crabtree, Janet Gockel, Rita C. McMahon and Donna Zabarsky.

Bob Zaluski was appointed to the Lifeline Board in 2002 as a representative of the City of Mentor and served through December 2008 when his term expired. Zaluski served as Board President in 2005 and as Board Secretary in 2006, in addition to chairing several Board committees during his tenure. Bob's commitment to Lifeline has been highly visible as he helped

lead the agency through challenging times and because he has remained engaged post-membership.

“Bob has been a very valued member of our Board,” said Linda Child, Lifeline Board President. “Bob was always willing to take the time to fulfill his responsibilities to the agency. He served in so many different capacities and he consistently contributed ideas and enthusiasm to help Lifeline reestablish itself a few years ago.”

An Outstanding Community Spirit Award was given to Bikers Aiding Local Diabetics, B.A.L.D., for their dedication to improving the quality of life for Lake County’s low-income families suffering with diabetes. The Community Spirit Award is bestowed upon a local business or organization who displays outstanding dedication and service to improving the quality of life for Lake County’s low-income families.

B.A.L.D. works to improve the lives of its neighbors affected with diabetes by assisting them in the management and cure of their disease. B.A.L.D established the BALD Run in 2006 and will host their fourth annual BALD Run this June. In 2007 B.A.L.D. began contributing funds to Lifeline to help launch our Diabetic Assistance Program. This program is designed to help local diabetics manage their disease by increasing access to necessary testing supplies through financial assistance and education.

Gloria Johnson was honored for her Outstanding Achievement as a program participant. The Outstanding Achievement Award recognizes a customer of Lifeline who has made significant progress in achieving family self-sufficiency.

Gloria Johnson is not your typical Family Development graduate. Johnson began her undergraduate education in 1973 and then stopped taking classes when she got married and had her children. It was not until her divorce that Johnson picked up where she left off. Attending Cleveland State University, she was able to earn her Bachelors Degree in Business Administration a month before her youngest child graduated from high school in 2008.

“What an amazing accomplishment and demonstration of her strong character” says Michelle Mezaris, Gloria’s Family Advocate.

Having completed her education, Gloria has more employment options and choices for her life. Today, she is working at an engineering firm in Chardon and is also the Assistant Treasurer for the NAACP Chapter in Lake County.

“Lifeline helped me on my journey towards self sufficiency by encouraging me to stay in school and congratulating me when I accomplished my goals” states Johnson.

The Outstanding Community Partnership Award was awarded to Fair Housing Resource Center for their continued collaboration with Lifeline to increase the quality and affordability of housing in Lake County and to help keep Lake County’s homeowners in their homes. The Outstanding Community Partnership Award recognizes a program or collaboration that shows both innovation and results in helping low-income families achieve self-sufficiency.

The mission of FHRC is to promote equal housing opportunities for all persons and to advocate for fair housing and diversity in Lake and surrounding counties through the education and involvement of the public, the governments, and the business community. FHRC operates a Landlord/Tenant hotline service for county residents to assist them with their housing rights, as well as a fair housing intake complaint service for victims of housing discrimination.

FHRC is a Housing Counseling agency certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and to provide homeowner counseling in areas such as foreclosure prevention, predatory lending, home financing and repairs.

In 2008, FHRC contracted with Lifeline to provide budget counseling to victims of foreclosure who are applying for assistance through FHRC. This collaboration is truly impacting Lake County’s families by providing access to financial education, as well as loss mitigation.

“We are very much a community-based organization. Last year we served 850 residents of nearly every community in Lake County,” said Dotson. “We’ve strived to continue that effort

by recognizing local individuals, entities and program participants who have been successful in the past year.”

Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers was founded in 1973 with the mission of helping Lake County residents by providing them assistance and life skills programming that is designed to increase self-sufficiency. In 1980 Lifeline became a participating agency of the United Way of Lake County, UWLC, and in 1987 was designated a community action agency by the Ohio Department of Development, ODOD.

Today Lifeline continues with the same mission of helping Lake County’s low-income residents break the cycle of poverty and make the transition from agency-dependency to self-sufficiency. Lifeline’s current programming includes services in the health, housing and family development areas. Our motto is ‘first to help, then to teach.’ Lifeline is currently funded by the UWLC and by grants through the ODOD, the City of Mentor, the Lake County Board of Commissioners, the Western Reserve Junior Service League, the CVS Foundation, the Ohio Housing Trust Fund, the Bikers Aiding Local Diabetics and through private donors.