

news release

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MARY “DOLLY” SWEET RECEIVES 2009 GOLDEN HOOSIER AWARD

Area 9 In-Home and Community Services Agency is pleased to announce that Mary “Dolly” Sweet of Cambridge City received the 2009 Golden Hoosier Award at a special ceremony held at Fort Harrison State Park in Indianapolis on September 3rd. This award is the highest honor bestowed upon a senior citizen by the State of Indiana. The Golden Hoosier Award is a collaboration between the Lt. Governor’s Office and Family & Social Services Administration to acknowledge one senior from each of the 16 regions within Indiana who serve other Hoosiers in an exemplary manner, and dedicate their lives to bettering the community in which they live.

“Recipients of the Golden Hoosier Award are outstanding examples of the Hoosier spirit, helping neighbors whenever needed,” said Lt. Governor Becky Skillman who presented the awards. “[I] thank [them] for building stronger communities and a better Indiana.”

Dolly spends many hours volunteering her time and efforts improving the quality of life for others as she has for many years. From securing funding for the football field and exercise equipment for boys and girls in the Western Wayne area, to organizing the collection and distribution of home canned goods for victims of tornados, to founding and operating the Western Wayne Meals on Wheels program for several years, her service is widespread.

Dolly volunteers as a counselor for cancer patients, knowing that they will listen to someone who has gone through the problems they face. Two years ago she counseled 73 cancer patients while she herself was being treated for lung cancer and having had a double mastectomy. She purchased and maintains a lending library for cancer patients. Dolly organized a group of women to make turbans for those who have lost their hair due to treatment and to sew arm pillows for those who have had a mastectomy. She works with several hair stylists to provide wigs for patients and helped develop the “I Can Cope” series of cancer seminars and brochures that has been a part of Reid Hospital’s cancer outreach.

She worked with Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for the rights of children, helping secure adoptions in many cases. She co-founded Exodus Home, a sanctuary for unwed mothers. She continues to visit those who were her adversaries when they are sick or suffering from the loss of a loved one.

Dolly has served on the St. Elizabeth’s Parish Council, served several terms as president of Psi Iota Xi sorority, and represented the Catholic Community on the FEMA Board.

She is an avid communicator, sending hundreds of cards to those who are ill, have suffered a loss, are celebrating a special day, or just need a “lift” in life.

Dolly has received recognition as Kiwanis Citizen of the Year (the first woman to receive the award) as well as the 2009 Area 9 Hoosier Lifetime Award recipient.

Dolly was accompanied by her husband, James Sweet, son Dan Sweet, and Tony Shepherd, Executive Director of Area 9 In-Home and Community Services Agency.