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**In tough times, a light shines on excellence in local nonprofits**  
*Six Minnesota nonprofits recognized for outstanding work*

St. Paul, MN (September 3, 2009) – In the face of some of the most challenging times in memory, Minnesota is blessed with nonprofits doing exceptional work. Six of the state's more than 7,000 charitable organizations have been selected to receive 2009 Nonprofit Mission and Excellence Awards.

Nonprofit organizations make outstanding contributions to Minnesota's high quality of life. The Minnesota Nonprofit Awards, sponsored by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) and MAP for Nonprofits, honor these contributions.

"It takes creativity, diligence and sound management practices for nonprofits to succeed toward their missions – especially in this economic climate," said Judy Alnes, executive director of MAP for Nonprofits. "These organizations all do just that." (

"These are challenging times for nonprofits across the country, including here in Minnesota. It's important to remember that these high quality organizations both need and deserve our support."

The six organizations will be honored before 1,400 of their peers during the Joint Annual Conference of MCN and the Minnesota Council on Foundations, November 5-6, in St. Paul. During the Awards Ceremony, the audience will be inspired by the stories of the awards recipients through video

presentations of their accomplishments and each organization will be honored with a glass art award and financial gift.

## 2009 Nonprofit Mission and Excellence Awards Recipients:

### Nonprofit Mission Awards

- **Caring Bridge**, Eagan, for Innovation
- **Carl and Eloise Pohlad Family Foundation**, Minneapolis, for Responsive Philanthropy
- **Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial**, Duluth, for Anti-Racism Initiative
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota (NAMI)**, St. Paul, for Advocacy

### Nonprofit Excellence Awards

- **Dakota Woodlands**, Eagan, for Excellence in a Small Organization
- **Simpson Housing Services**, Minneapolis for Excellence in a Large Organization

## ABOUT THE NONPROFIT MISSION AWARDS

The Nonprofit Mission Awards recipients are nominated by the nonprofit community. The field of nominees is narrowed to the three most exemplary candidates in each category and recipients are selected by vote of MCN members.

### Nonprofit Mission Award for Innovation:

#### CaringBridge

CaringBridge offers free personalized Web sites that allow people to stay in touch with family and friends during a serious health event, treatment or recovery. The web site provides a place where the user can post journal entries and photographs and also receive messages of hope and encouragement in their guest book. The sites allow patients and their families to keep in touch and lift one another's spirits. To provide a more user-friendly experience, CaringBridge now provides its services in English and



Spanish, as well as offering streamlined page designs and improved style templates, a new text editor that is compatible with multiple web browsers, "Quick Note" which allows authors to post a brief update or important message, and also enabling authors to upload photos and post them in journal entries. ([READ MORE](#))

**Nonprofit Mission Award for Responsive Philanthropy: Carl and Eloise Pohlad Family Foundation**

In the midst of the recent economic crisis, the Pohlad Family Foundation has stepped up in an unprecedented way, while most others are retrenching. Thus, they are providing much needed assistance to those who are most impacted by the economic downturn. The Foundation recognized that the economic downturn would seriously impact families, organizations and individuals, and so they responded with a long-term vision for the community. One of the steps they took was to pledge \$20 million in support of small businesses, improving neighborhoods and maintaining the nonprofit sector. This funding has enabled small businesses to retain employees and secure capital to continue their operations, as well as allowing nonprofit housing organizations to assist families who are at risk of foreclosure or are already homeless. The Foundation has committed \$5 million to local nonprofits to retain or add services to meet the growing demand for basic needs in the current economic downturn. ([READ MORE](#))

**Nonprofit Mission Award for Anti-Racism Initiative: Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial**

On June 15, 1920, three African American laborers from a traveling circus, Elias Clayton, Elmer Jackson and Isaac McGhie, were hanged by a mob of thousands after being falsely accused of raping a white woman in Duluth, Minnesota. For nearly 80 years these men were forgotten. In 2003 a group of citizens sought to recognize these murders and beginning the process of healing and reconciliation. The Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial was unveiled in 2003, at the site of the tragedy and is the only American monument of its size dedicated to victims of lynching. CJMM Inc. uses a number of outlets including public presentations, media statements and educational DVDs that they produce, to educate the community on systemic racism and white privilege. They also hold an annual Day of Remembrance at the Memorial and award a \$1,000 scholarship to an area student who is committed to their mission. CJMM, Inc. seeks racial justice via education, reconciliation and healing, and developing partnerships. ([READ MORE](#))

**Nonprofit Mission Award for Advocacy: National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota (NAMI)**

(NAMI is dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with mental illness, as well as their family members. Over the past five years, NAMI has begun to advocate on behalf of people with mental illnesses and also to encourage them to advocate for themselves. They have taught members about the legislative process, assisted their members in the voter registration process and encouraged them to vote, educated state legislature candidates on issues of importance to the mental health community, informed members with weekly legislative updates and had members at the state capitol every Thursday to lobby legislators on a variety of issues. ([READ MORE](#))

### **ABOUT THE NONPROFIT EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

The Minnesota Nonprofit Excellence Awards recognize excellent Minnesota nonprofit organizations as defined by the MCN Principles and Practices for Nonprofits Excellence. Nonprofits and their boards of directors apply for the award. Recipients are reviewed and selected by a blue ribbon panel of nonprofit leaders.

#### **Excellence Award for Small Organizations– Dakota Woodlands**

Located in Eagan, Dakota Woodlands is the only short term housing facility specifically for homeless women and children in that community. Families can stay at the Dakota Woodlands facility as long as necessary to move from homelessness to homes of their own. During this time, they are provided with a variety of supportive and educational services, which address the issues related to homelessness and help residents to successfully obtain and maintain permanent housing. ([READ MORE](#))

#### **Excellence Award for Large Organizations—Simpson Housing Services**

Simpson Housing Services provides shelter for single adults and affordable housing with support services for homeless families and single adults in Hennepin County. The mission of Simpson Housing is to house, support and advocate for people experiencing homelessness. Their commitment is to help participants gain housing stability using the Housing First philosophy: provide homeless people with housing quickly and then provide services as needed. ([READ MORE](#))

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### **ABOUT THE SPONSORS OF THE MINNESOTA NONPROFIT AWARDS**

**Minnesota Council of Nonprofits**

The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) is the statewide association of 2000 nonprofit organizations. Through its Web site, resource publications, workshops and events, cost-saving programs and advocacy, MCN continually works to inform, promote, connect and strengthen individual nonprofits and the nonprofit sector.

**MAP for NONPROFITS**

MAP for Nonprofits provides management consulting and services, as well as board recruitment, and board training to large, medium and small nonprofit organizations in the Twin Cities, to help nonprofit clients achieve their mission. MAP is a nonprofit and provides expertise to the nonprofit community on nonprofit management practices. [www.mapfornonprofits.org](http://www.mapfornonprofits.org).

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