



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Family Resources Community Action Elects Officers, Presents Service Awards at Annual Meeting**

Family Resources Community Action (FRCA) held its Annual Meeting on June 14th, during which the agency bestowed its highest commendation, the Paul Dempster Award, to a member of the community whose life exemplifies one of service and dedication to assisting people living in poverty. Paul Dempster was responsible for the development of the Woonsocket Emergency Shelter and worked with City Officials to reestablish a local Community Action Agency. This year the award was presented to Dee Henry, who has been a Board member of FRCA for 35 years. Ms Henry is currently the Director of Family Services at Woonsocket Head Start Child Development Association, Inc.

In addition to the Dempster award, the Doris L. O'Brien Award was presented to Elena Marchand, Development/Volunteer Coordinator, for her dedication and commitment to strengthening volunteer support for FRCA's programs.

On the occasion of its 118<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting over 120 people, including the Board of Directors, staff, local community members, organization representatives and volunteers were in attendance. The Board elected the following slate of officers for 2010-11: Nancy L. Benoit, Chair; Rev. Dorian Parker, Vice Chair; Dr. Julien Ayotte, Treasurer and Gerard Noel, Secretary. In addition, a new member Jannette Ortega, was elected to the low-income sector of the Board of Directors.

Keynote speaker Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts noted the connection of health and wellness to a strong network of social services, family support, behavioral health and housing in order for healthcare reform to be effective for vulnerable populations. Executive Director Ben Lessing noted the challenges the agency has faced due to the recession and level of poverty, and new initiatives begun in collaboration with other organizations to address these needs. Examples include employment transportation, job training, the community garden, the northern RI Visitation Center and early childhood screening and support services.

In addition, a Service Recognition Award was presented to Janet Jacobs for her over 25 years with FRCA's Early Intervention Program. Community and Volunteer Recognition Awards were presented to William Decesare, Martin McGeehan, Best Buy Distribution Center 726, Gail Ballou, Bob Gelinas, Donald Chamblee and The Rotary Club of Woonsocket. Sixteen FRCA staff received tenure awards for their years of service to the agency, including Darlene Magaw, Family Support Services Director, for her 25 years of service.

#####