

## **The 317 Board Advocacy Awards**

### **The Rita Gillick Mental Health Advocacy Award**

The Rita Gillick Mental Health Advocacy Award was established in 1986 in honor and memory of Rita Gillick, an early advocate for those with mental illnesses. Rita was hospitalized for over 25 years of her life and upon discharge became a founding member of The Gathering Place. She was known statewide as an advocate for client's rights and consumer directed services and served on the Athens-Hocking-Vinton Community Mental Health Board for six years. The award is presented annually to a person who demonstrates the overwhelming will power of Rita Gillick to never stop in their advocacy efforts for those with mental illnesses.

### **The Valeria "Taffy" Marks Substance Abuse Prevention Advocacy Award**

The Valeria "Taffy" Marks Substance Abuse Prevention Advocacy Award was established in 1991 in memory of Valeria "Taffy" Marks, RN, who was a tenacious advocate for support and treatment for those battling personal addictions. An early supporter of substance abuse treatment, Taffy advocated before the Ohio Nurses Association's House of Delegates in 1978 for the creation of the Peer Assistance Program to help nurses addicted to alcohol and other drugs. Many nurses around the state owe their survival to her efforts. The award is presented annually to a person who demonstrates the strength and courage of Taffy Marks in their advocacy for those struggling with addictions.

### **Mental Health Advocacy Awards and Substance Abuse Prevention Advocacy Awards for Athens, Hocking and Vinton Counties**

Each year, the Board presents awards to individuals in each of the three counties for "going the extra mile" to advocate and serve their fellow citizens who need a helping hand. Since 1984, three Mental Health Advocacy awards have been given annually and starting in 1990, three Substance Abuse Prevention Advocacy awards are also presented.