

# How to Write a Compelling Nomination

## **Who deserves an honor or an award?**

For thirteen years the SCCMHA has celebrated Everyday Heroes by honoring consumers and their families for success, personal growth, and participation and leadership skills as well as community volunteers and organizations who contribute to the mission and vision of our organization.

SCCMHA strives to acknowledge outstanding achievements in consumer recovery; improved quality of life; commitment to community partnerships; advancement in evidence-based practices; facilitation of independence through freedom of choice & independence; and commitment to leadership, advocacy & family support.

Sadly there are always fewer honors and awards than people who deserve them. Because receiving honors and awards are so rare, they are reserved for:

**Everyday Hero** - Consumer receiving services from SCCMHA network that has attained personal success and accomplishment worthy of recognition.

**Special Hero** - Individual or organization that has attained success and accomplishment worthy of recognition.

**Agnes Rambo Quality of Life** - SCCMHA network provider that has demonstrated commitment to improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities living in residential setting in Saginaw County.

**Bernice Barlow Community Partnership** - Individual that has shown commitment to the power of partnerships with SCCMHA, which in turn, has improved services to Saginaw County citizens.

**Eileen & Lou Vescio Leadership, Advocacy & Family Support** - Individual that has shown commitment to leadership, advocacy and family support, which in turn, has improved services to Saginaw County citizens.

**Improving Practices Champion** - SCCMHA staff member or provider that has advanced the challenge of implementing Evidence-Based Mental Health Practices or Promising Practices in our community.

**Rapson Living the American Dream** - Individual that has shown commitment to the vision of freedom, choice and independence and have helped turn dreams into realities for persons with disabilities in Saginaw community.

If you think your nominee demonstrates these criteria and that their contribution stands out, please consider nominating them for one of these awards.

## **How do I write a compelling nomination?**

In order for your nomination to stand out against the many others we receive, you must explain and include evidence and clear examples of what makes your nominee so exceptional.

## **Don't just say your nominee is outstanding – prove it!**

It's important to use specific and concrete examples to illustrate how your nominee meets each of the eligibility and award criteria. Provide examples of how your nominee has demonstrated outstanding character and is a deserving candidate for the honor or

award.

Show how they have:

- encouraged and exemplified the virtue of good citizenship;
- touched or enriched the lives of others, particularly those who are vulnerable or less able to help themselves;
- shown ongoing recovery, initiative, leadership and dedication;
- devoted themselves to sustained and selfless service;
- earned the respect of their peers and become a role model in their field;

A compelling nomination should also describe as vividly and precisely as possible the difference your nominee's contribution has made and show why it has been important. Include details such as:

- how were things before the achievement;
- what knowledge your nominee had of the situation and what actions they choose to take;
- the scale of the recovery / achievement and whether it is completed or ongoing;
- the achievement's sustainability and impact on the community or province and how it has enriched the lives of others;
- what made this an outstanding achievement – indicate any extraordinary circumstances or challenges the nominee faced (include statistics or historical background if applicable);
- what makes your nominee different from others doing the same thing?

Here is an actual citation that illustrates how a nominee has demonstrated outstanding character and meets many of the criteria mentioned above:

"He has made a measurable impact over the past 10 years as a passionate advocate for all those afflicted with mental illness and developmental disability. His volunteer activities are as varied as his skills, and they include: working with new consumers to help them understand and overcome the fear of their diagnoses; assisting new patients with understanding the administrative nuances of the healthcare system in Michigan; and simply acting like a friend to those who are most in need of one... He participates in an annual cycling event that helps raise funds for First Choice of Saginaw. He has also frequently been asked to speak at presentations to the Saginaw business community as well as to appear as the subject of a variety of media-related fundraising material – each of which has encouraged thousands and thousands of other financial contributions to advocacy in Saginaw... His contribution to others becomes all the more impressive when you consider the many personal health challenges that he himself has endured over the years."

It is achievements and effects of this kind and scale that deserve an honor or award and that will convince a selection panel to consider your nominee. For more examples of strong citations, visit the last section of this guide.

## **Keep it simple.**

Remember that longer doesn't necessarily mean better. When presenting your nominee, keep your explanations clear and to the point while ensuring there is enough information for the selection panel to make their decision.

## **How do I find the right words to present my nominee?**

Strong nominations will often include persuasive nouns such as:

- determination
- drive
- innovation
- impact
- visionary
- pioneer
- commitment
- sustainability
- creativity
- mentor
- teamwork
- everyday hero
- respect
- recognition
- selflessness
- performance
- leadership
- role model

### **adjectives such as:**

- trusted
- dedicated
- persuasive
- resourceful
- persevering
- unflustered
- positive
- generous
- inspirational
- passionate
- enthusiastic
- sympathetic
- supportive
- articulate
- conscientious
- incomparable
- exemplary
- fair
- admired
- vibrant
- diligent

### **and phrases such as:**

- making a difference
- succeeding against the odds
- going over and above
- mentor and role model
- overcoming obstacles.

## **What shouldn't I do?**

The EH Selection Committee evaluates nominees' merits based on the information provided to them. That is why only the strongest and most compelling nominations often result in an honor or an award.

There must be enough convincing information in the nomination package to make a good case. Therefore your nomination should not be:

Because weaker nominations often list these things, a regular complaint from selection panels is that the nominee was "simply doing their job" or "nothing exceptional was demonstrated".

Instead, you should describe what is outstanding about your nominee's achievements and show memorably and persuasively how and where they have made a difference.

## **Ready to nominate?**

We hope that you have found this guide useful. If you are now ready to nominate someone:

- Go to <https://www.sccmha.org/success-stories/everyday-heroes.html> to download the 2017 Everyday Heroes Nomination Form.
- Carefully read the eligibility criteria on the left side of the form and select the one that makes the most sense.
- Complete form and submit back to Ryan Mulder by Friday, March 17 at 5:00pm
- Remember that nominations are accepted all year, so if you miss the current deadline, eligible nominations will be considered in the following year.