

**September 30, 2008**

**Riverbend Celebrates Champions for Mental Health**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Gayle Kimball  
(603) 226-7505, ext. 3283  
gkimball@riverbendcmhc.org

**Page Cannon, Ann McLane Kuster and James R. “Jim” MacKay proclaimed Champions for Mental Health at Third Annual Rainbow Awards**

CONCORD, N.H. – On Wednesday, September 24, with family, friends and members of the mental health community looking on, Page Cannon, Ann McLane Kuster and Representative James R. “Jim” MacKay were honored for their significant contributions to making the community a better place for people and families living with mental illness. The occasion was the Third Annual Rainbow Awards celebrating Champions for Mental Health presented by Riverbend Community Mental Health. Ronald L. Magoon, Chair of the Board of Directors, stated “We are gathered together to celebrate the contributions of these three outstanding individuals to Riverbend and to improving the lives of the many children, families and adults in our community who struggle to achieve health and recovery.”

Page Cannon, Executive Director of Fellowship Housing Opportunities, received the Community Service Award, for her role in developing affordable housing for adults with mental health issues.

Louis Josephson, President and CEO of Riverbend presented Cannon with her award, stating “There can be no sustainable recovery from mental illness if people don’t have a home.” He cited Cannon for being an expert in the intricate details of federal and state financing for affordable housing. “She is a champion,” he added, “for having services in place enabling adults with mental illness to live independently in the community.”

Ann McLane Kuster, a shareholder in the law firm of Rath, Young and Pignatelli, PC, was celebrated for her role in the development of the Susan McLane Memory Wellness Center, providing treatment and support for individuals living with dementia and their families which opened earlier this year.

In presenting Kuster with her award as 2008 Champion, Lucy Hodder, who serves on the Riverbend board and is also a shareholder at Rath, Young and Pignatelli, cited Kuster’s passion and commitment in advocating for those struggling with dementia as she traveled across the state to share her family’s story of facing the challenges of caring for a loved one as they ‘slip away, one day at a time.’ Kuster authored [The Last Dance: Facing Alzheimer’s with Love and Laughter](#), a chronicle of her mother’s and family’s final months together.

MacKay, a long time legislator from Merrimack County, District 11 -- where Riverbend is headquartered -- is well known for his advocacy efforts. Most recently MacKay, who has served

## **Riverbend CEO announces the 2008 Champions for Mental Health, page 2**

in local and state government since 1980, chaired The Commission to Develop a Comprehensive State Mental Health Plan which released its final report Fulfilling the Promise: Transforming New Hampshire's Mental Health System.

In presenting MacKay with a Lifetime Achievement Award, Susan Fox, Vice Chair of the Riverbend Board and Real Choice program director with the UNH Institute for Disability said that MacKay “has been visionary in his life-long commitment, leadership and advocacy to ensure that everyone has access to needed support within their community.”

In celebrating all three Champions, Josephson said, “The stigma attached to mental illness is still very much with us, and we are enormously grateful to these three champions for speaking out and for building awareness for the fundamental truth we all know that there is no health without mental health.”

Riverbend Community Mental Health is the region's largest non profit provider of outpatient, residential and emergency mental health services for over 7,400 children, families, adults and seniors every year. Governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, Riverbend's team of skilled psychiatrists, nurses, psychologists, social workers and staff partner with clients and consumers to ensure that the best clinical and social outcomes are achieved.

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