

## NJACCRRRA Honors Leaders in Early Care and Education

At the July 2013 NJACCRRRA Annual Retreat, the NJACCRRRA membership presented three awards to recognize leaders in the field of early care and education. NJACCRRRA created these awards in 2008 to formally recognize those who go above and beyond in furthering the field of early care and education. Each year since, the membership has nominated individuals and organizations that played a key role in driving innovative and effective solutions to some of the challenging early care and education issues facing New Jersey. These awards are designed to salute and applaud those individuals and/or organizations for significant accomplishments in the early care and education field, as well as their commitment and contribution to the community.

### The 2013 recipients include:

**Circle of Collaboration Award**- awarded to Dr. Lynette Fraga executive director of Child Care Aware America for her significant collaboration efforts on behalf of early care and education. Dr. Fraga joined Child Care Aware America in 2012 and immediately reached out to all members of the network for input on how Child Care Aware America could help to support state network activities, learn about current issues and trends, and to share with us her vision for moving forward early care and education issues. She visited New Jersey shortly after assuming her role to listen to our concerns and needs and to outline her plan for leveraging resources, forging new partnerships, and utilizing innovation, technology, and data to advance early care and education issues. Her enthusiasm for her work was contagious! Since meeting with the NJ membership Dr. Fraga has facilitated communication between NJACCRRRA and groups on the Federal level to bring new resources to New Jersey and has initiated steps to address many of our concerns. By working with NJACCRRRA and the local CCR&Rs on the national and state level, Dr Fraga is making a significant difference to our shared future.



**Leadership Award** - awarded to **Pat Mennuti** for her significant contributions to the field of child care resource and referral. Pat's work includes 40 years of dedication to the field of early child care. For the past 23 years, Pat has shared her expertise by working with Community Coordinated Child Care of Union County where she has been the executive director since 1990. In addition to her advocacy contributions and analysis, Pat has been in the forefront of the struggle for quality child care for all children, equitable reimbursement rates for providers, and suitable parent education. She was influential in retaining CDA funding statewide and was instrumental in obtaining a MOU between the CCR&R's and Professional Impact NJ (PINJ) for funded service delivery of the registry training. In addition, Pat has served as the NJACCRRRA treasurer, co- chaired the Internal Professional Development Committee and has represented NJACCRRRA on a number of child care committees. This award represents her unwavering commitment, contributions, and devotion to the industry.



**Emerging Leader Award**- awarded to Phyllis Strohmeier, director of the Bergen County Office of Children. Phyllis' commitment and dedication to ensuring NJACCRRRA's success and sustainability is inspiring. Since joining NJACCRRRA about three years ago, Phyllis has raised her hand for the good of the organization. She has taken detailed and accurate minutes of all full member and executive committee meetings. She volunteered to chair the ad-hoc Sanctions Committee. As a new member, Phyllis could have taken a back seat, letting more seasoned members take on leadership roles, but she chose to immerse herself in the work and help advance the work of child care resource and referral in New Jersey. We are a stronger organization because of her leadership.



**Congratulations to all of our award recipients!**