

# PRESS RELEASE

## Executive Director of Hitz Home Receives Special Award for Exemplary Leadership

*Award given by The Council for Health and Human Service Ministries of the United Church of Christ for Director, Marcia Haslett's, dedication to creating a community of care, dignity, respect and freedom for the elderly.*

**Alhambra, IL, March 8, 2008:** The Council for Health and Human Service Ministries (CHHSM) presented the 2008 Special Award for Exemplary Leadership to Marcia Haslett, Executive Director of Hitz Home, for her transforming dedication to creating a community of care, dignity, respect and freedom. The award was presented to Ms. Haslett at the 70<sup>th</sup> Annual CHHSM Meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina on March 8, 2008.

Deaconess Foundation of St. Louis, MO, also a member of CHHSM, provided all of the arrangements for Marcia and her family to be at the annual meeting and awards ceremony.

Quoted on Marcia's award was the following:

**"My life. My choice. My home.** These affirmations, featured in the brochure of Hitz Memorial Home, reflect the pioneering culture change that has made Hitz Home an industry leader in providing care and services to the aging. Re-thinking its values and practices from top to bottom, inside and out, Hitz Home has created a humane environment supporting each resident's life, dignity, rights and freedom. Involving the entire nursing home community –staff, management, residents, families, volunteers, donors and community advocates –Hitz Home has de-institutionalized services and individualized care.

The culture change at Hitz Memorial Home has been inspired and enabled by the vision and boundless energy of Executive Director Marcia Haslett. Marcia joined the Hitz Home staff as social services director in March 1997 and became executive director in June 1998. She assumed her new responsibilities at a particularly challenging time in Hitz Home's history. In addition to

addressing a multi-million dollar deficit, Marcia has established resident participation in goal setting and care; enabled resident choice; reorganized, empowered and refocused staff; and created resident/staff decision-making committees on food, welcome, death and dying, and marketing. She has designed and implemented resident-centered in-service training; led "learning circles" to tap the wisdom of staff, residents, and family members; taught and modeled communication and staff listening skills; welcomed residents' families as part of the community and care team; created a work environment for staff characterized by mutual support and respect; enabled multi-tasking among staff to increase interaction with residents; and utilized the potential of all aspects of the home environment—physical, organizational and psycho/social/spiritual well-being for residents.

Marcia Haslett's exemplary service has been acclaimed by the Southwestern Illinois Pioneer Coalition for Culture Change, the Area Agency on Aging of Southwestern Illinois, and the Illinois Foundation for Quality Healthcare. Recently, WSIU of Carbondale produced a two-part feature story on the culture change at Hitz Home; DVDs of those programs have been sent to every nursing home in Illinois.

Marcia Haslett is a true heroine among Hitz Home residents and staff, professional colleagues, and families that have placed loved ones in her care. With skill and true humility, she has moved through the many difficulties of transitioning from the old to the new, keeping foremost in mind the empowerment of Hitz Home residents. Marcia's commitment, grace, good humor and warth continually inspire others.

For these reasons and more, CHHSM gratefully honors the faithful service of Marcia Haslett and is pleased to present to her this Special Award for Exemplary Leadership."

Marcia Haslett is an inspirational leader of the Southwestern Illinois Pioneer Coalition for Culture Change and has set an example for other nursing homes in the area to follow. She is instrumental in promoting the quality of life for every elder.

For more information regarding this award and/or Hitz Home you may contact Marcia Haslett, Executive Director at (618) 488-2355 or Erica Gilbert, Director of Marketing and Public Relations at (618) 363-0206. The two-part feature story on culture change at Hitz Home produced by WSIU is linked to the news section of Hitz Home's website at <http://www.hitzmemorial.com/news.htm>.