

## 2015 Awareness Committee Holds Annual Awards Ceremony

The 2015 City-Parish President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities recognized community members who improved the lives of those living with disabilities. Honorees were recognized on Wednesday, October 21, 2015 at the eighth Annual Awards Ceremony held at Affiliated Blind of Louisiana in Lafayette. A total of ten awards were given in various categories.



## 2015 Youth of the Year - Meet Janie Girouard!

She's the 2015 recipient of the Youth of the Year award. Janie is a student at St. Thomas More Catholic High School and, as a young person with a disability, serves as an example of achievement, inspiration and encouragement to others. Janie was also recognized by the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs as a Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities (GOLD) Award recipient.



## 2015 Volunteer of the Year – Karen Juneau

In recognition for her extraordinary service as a volunteer who has substantially enhanced the opportunities for persons with disabilities to use their skills and develop their potential as members of society. Karen Juneau was nominated for the award by her peers on the City-Parish President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities.



## 2015 Outstanding Individual with a Disability – Liam Doyle

Described as "Evil Knieval" because of his brave maneuvers while navigating Downtown Lafayette in his electric wheelchair, Liam is known for his determination. The award is presented to a person with a disability who has provided encouragement and inspiration to others and has advanced opportunities for persons with disabilities in our community. Liam was also recognized by the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs as a Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities (GOLD) Award recipient. Annually the GOLD Awards ceremony is an opportunity for Louisiana to honor the achievements and dedication of individuals in the disability community. Liam received the Ken Vince Memorial Award in recognition of his leadership abilities and achievements as a disability advocate.



**2015 Educator of the Year - Vicki Foreman**

For her significant contributions in educating persons with disabilities.



## 2015 Distinguished Merit Award - Nicole Poiencot

Nicole received the honor in recognition of her extraordinary service working in the disability profession and substantially advancing the opportunities for persons with disabilities to utilize their capabilities in achieving full participation in society.



**2015 Outstanding Direct Support Professional - Lucille Dorsey**

For being at times the most important person in the life of an individual with severe disabilities.



## 2015 Employer of the Year – Paresh Patel with Discovery Inn and Suites

The hotel managers were recognized for their active recruitment, hire, and accommodation of employees with disabilities.



## 2015 Vickie Nettles Advocacy Award - Deborah Aymond

Deborah emulates the namesake of the award through advocacy and determination in making our community a better place for those living with disabilities.



## 2015 Service Animal of the Year – Dejah, service dog for Yvette Pourciau

"Dejah" was posthumously awarded the 2015 Service Animal of the Year award by the City-Parish President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities. Dejah was known for her outstanding assistance to her owner with a disability, without whom some functions and everyday tasks could not be performed.



All 2015 award recipients were nominated through a community-wide, open submission process and ultimately chosen for their outstanding work by a selections committee.

The honorees' families, friends, colleagues and those who nominated them attended the luncheon to celebrate the recipients and their contributions in bettering the lives of the disabled community. All winning nominations were submitted for the 2015 State Gold Awards presented by the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs.

The Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities was established in 2007 to give a greater voice to citizens living with disabilities in Lafayette Parish. The committee's purpose is to serve in an advisory capacity to Lafayette Consolidated Government, and works to: develop and channel information regarding disabled persons to the citizens of the community through the introduction of special activities; work with all aspects of community life so that persons with disabilities will realize the rights and responsibilities afforded to all citizens; receive recommendations, requests, and citizen complaints regarding problems affecting the disabled and; help increase opportunities for employment for persons with disabilities.

For more information on the committee visit [www.lafayettela.gov/dac](http://www.lafayettela.gov/dac) .

