

## **Judy Berry, Lakeview Ranch**

Judy Berry has been a leader of innovative services for people with dementia, within Meeker County and statewide.

As a county commissioner, I have appreciated Judy's service on our county Council on Aging and other cross-jurisdictional groups dedicated to improving service for older county residents. She was an early adopter of senior day care and has worked with our social services agency to assure access to care for people with dementia, regardless of their living arrangement or ability to pay. Her two residences, one in Darwin and the other in Dassel, are islands of tranquility in the restless sea which surrounds people with dementia and their families.

Judy began her work when normal practice was to restrain and medicate residents into submission. By contrast, her homes offer a more free and normal lifestyle, including interactive projects, familiar objects and possessions, and contact with farm animals. The homes maintain a safe environment through high staff ratios and fenced outdoor environments.

When Judy saw people with dementia "outliving" their assets, she created a foundation to provide care not funded by Medical Assistance or insurance. Judy has assisted in addressing the health care career shortfall by working diligently with St. Cloud State University on internships and research. She has obtained grants to fund some research. She has also attracted a variety of community volunteers who spend time with the residents and assist with foundation fundraising.

None of this came easily. Skeptics have challenged Judy's vision. A few neighbors objected to the presence of people with disabilities within their community and tried to halt the construction of her first home. By the time the second home was constructed, however, area residents had been won over by the quality of her operations. She dealt with zoning restrictions and expenses, overcoming them with grace and determination. Judy was also challenged by long-term care traditionalists, and by Medical Assistance, Medicare and insurance company regulations and policies. To assure her residents quality care, she risked her own home and sometimes went without a personal salary until financing arrangements could be developed. Her personal dedication has inspired her staff, who assist with fundraising and volunteer on their own time.

Judy's vision and hard work have helped us realize that, even when people lose contact with present day reality due to dementia, they can still live happy and fulfilling lives.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy P. Wilde". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.

# COMMUNITY LEADER REFERENCE REQUEST FORM

This letter is written by an acknowledged **community leader** who is personally well-acquainted with the nominee (e.g. civic or religious leader or elected official), who is not directly affiliated with the nominee's organization and who is not the nominator.

Thank you for serving as a community leader reference for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Community Health Leaders Program. We would appreciate a letter from you, **no longer than 400 words**, that gives us a fuller understanding of the nominee.

- We'd like to know what you consider to be her or his greatest contributions to the community.
- We'd like some insight into how this nominee has handled adversity and what risks she or he has taken to accomplish her or his goals.
- Above all, we hope that you can characterize what makes this person stand out for you and how she or he **inspires** you.

Please be as specific as possible. Anecdotes and examples are encouraged and you may also include additional pertinent information, if brief.

Amy P. Wilde  
Your Name

Judy Berry  
Nominee

Commissioner  
Title

Title

Meeker County  
Organization

Lakeview Ranch  
Organization

PO Box 384  
Street

Dassel      MN      55325  
City                      State                      Zip

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Please return the reference letter to the nominator who must send the completed nomination packet to the National Program Office by **January 8, 2010**.