

## **House of Hope Faith Partners Receives National Award for Service**

House of Hope Faith Partners ministry was the recipient of a national honor when the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. held its 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Minneapolis this past July. The David Hancock Award was given to Faith Partners for its work in addiction and recovery education. This award is sponsored by the Presbyterian Health, Educational and Welfare Association (PHEWA), a program of the PCUSA.

“Today, our Presbyterian Churches are pretty open to all forms of AA groups ...that is in our basements,” said Rev. Nancy K. Troy who presented the award to Susan Koll, chair of House of Hope Faith Partners. “Very active church members can go for decades without ever running into a member of AA because church members don’t usually go in through the basement door. And because of the confidentiality of the groups, we may never understand just how many of our families are affected by the whole range of additions.

“At the House of Hope Presbyterian Church, they have opened all these doors ....They have created a compassionate, holistic ministry that makes their congregation a safe and hospitable place for persons and families seeking health and wholeness,” Rev. Troy continued.

“It shouldn’t take an epiphany for our churches to understand the importance of opening up all their doors. After all...we are in the business of changing lives.”

In accepting the award for House of Hope, Susan Koll explained Faith Partners’ inception: “Our journey began in 2002 when a family in crisis came to our newly-arrived senior pastor (Rev. Linda Loving) desperate for help. A family member was in serious trouble because of his alcohol addiction and they didn’t know where to turn. Our pastor discovered that addiction was not a subject our congregation felt safe talking about...and yet there were members in need of help.”

Faith Partners at House of Hope started as a result of a congregational survey conducted in 2002. “Our team of 14 founding volunteers resolved to take action to remove the culture of secrecy and shame around addiction and move the issue from the church basement into our church sanctuary,” Koll explained at the awards ceremony.

Since then, Faith partners has planned an annual Recovery Sunday (please see p. 11), educational enrichment programs, created a library on addiction and recovery, and team members write personal essays on addiction and recovery from a Christian point of view for *The Anchor* newsletter.

“We know we have had an impact because our programs are well attended, often to overflowing, and we hear positive feedback from our congregation,” Koll said. “Our pastoral staff receive more calls for help concerning addiction issues. Also, our pastors are now better prepared, thanks to customized training and support from our Faith Partners volunteers.

“I accept this award on behalf of my Faith Partners Team who serve with passion, courage and devotion,” Koll concluded. “It is a labor of love and joy for us.”



*Susan Koll and Carol Pine pictured with the 2010 David Hancock Award*