

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD ANNOUNCES AWARDS

Caseworker Jeannine Benedetti, children's attorney Rubina Mustafa, Probate Judge Michael J. Anderegg receive top honors for leadership, advocacy on behalf of children

DETROIT, MI, November 30, 2009 – A caseworker, a children's attorney, and a probate judge have been recognized for their exceptional work on behalf of children by the [Foster Care Review Board](#).

Jim Novell, who serves as Program Manager of the FCRB, said that the awards are given for exemplary rendering of service on behalf of abused and neglected children and families served by our state child welfare system. "The recipients stand out not only for their professionalism and performance, but also for their dedication."

The FCRB presented its **Foster Care Caseworker Award** to **Jeannine Benedetti** of the Western Wayne County Branch of the Department of Human Services. Benedetti, who has served as a foster care caseworker for eight years, holds a master's degree in social work and works with very challenging cases including teenagers making the transition out of foster care. In naming Benedetti for the award, the FCRB cited her "tireless advocacy," noting that "she is a mentor, listening ear, and friend" who makes herself available outside of working hours to assist her young clients. The FCRB also mentioned Benedetti's expertise in "navigating the educational, medical and mental health systems to meet the needs of these children."

Attorney **Rubina Mustafa** of the Michigan Children's Law Center in Wayne County received the FCRB's **Lawyer-Guardian Ad Litem Award**. The FCRB praised Mustafa as a zealous advocate who "goes above and beyond the statutory responsibilities of a L-GAL, remaining accessible to her clients at all hours and always looking for ways to push them toward success." Mustafa represents abused and neglected children in the foster care system in Wayne County Juvenile Court, and has also defended children charged with crimes as juveniles. Citing her "huge heart and spirit," the FCRB noted that Mustafa "is in the trenches daily" and "does not give up on the goal of improving the lives of those she represents no matter what the obstacles."

The FCRB's **Jurist Award** goes to Marquette County Probate Judge Michael J. Anderegg. Anderegg, a 31-year veteran of the court, has served as presiding judge of his county's Family Division Court since 1998. Anderegg was cited for his leadership on the state and national level, including serving as past president of the Michigan Probate Judges Association and eight years as a trustee of the National Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The FCRB noted Anderegg's "efforts to ensure safe and timely permanency for the children who

come under his jurisdiction,” adding that the judge “has made significant contributions ... in caring for our state’s most vulnerable children and families.”

The FCRB, which was created by the Michigan legislature in 1981, serves as a statewide system of third-party review of the foster care system. The program is administered by the [State Court Administrative Office](#), the administrative agency of the [Michigan Supreme Court](#), and is comprised of citizen volunteers who serve on one of 30 local review boards throughout the state. Local boards review randomly chosen child abuse and neglect cases to assess the performance of courts, DHS, and private child welfare agencies. For more information about the FCRB, visit <http://www.courts.michigan.gov/SCAO/services/fcrb/fcrb.htm>.

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