Blue Cross Celebrates Associates Who Serve Their Community

BOSTON — May 4, 2016 — Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Blue Cross) honored the accomplishments of four employees at its 13th annual Excellence in Service Awards Reception. As part of the company's Corporate Citizenship program, employees are encouraged to serve and give back to the community, and award recipients have given back in big ways. Each year the ceremony celebrates the company's collective commitment to the communities where we work and live, as well as placing the spotlight on select associates who go above and beyond to make a positive impact in the lives of others.

"At Blue Cross, we recognize that our commitment to serve and lead in the community is reinforced by the efforts of our associates," said Jeff Bellows, Vice President of Corporate Citizenship and Public Affairs. "Our annual Excellence in Service Awards showcase the importance of social and environmental programs in our community, and how significant these programs are to our associates. Not only does community involvement connect directly to our overall business strategy, it's an integral part of our business success."

This year's award winners include:

Excellence in Service Award – Maureen Gillis
Our signature award recognizes an associate who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to community service and has made a sustained and tangible impact on an organization. The volunteer's partner organization receives a $2,500 contribution.

This year's winner is Maureen Gillis, a Hull resident and member of Blue Cross' dental department. Maureen is an active participant with Hull Lifesaving Museum, a relationship she began in 2006 when she enrolled her daughter in their South Shore Rowing Program. Over the years, her relationship with the nonprofit deepened, and in 2008 she volunteered to chair the first fundraising event the organization ever had, and was awarded museum's Volunteer of the Year Award. In 2015, after many years the nonprofit's Chair of Special Events, Maureen continued to grow her community involvement by working with museum staff, consultants, and Blue Cross associates to create a "Team Building" program that is offered in Hull and the Boston Rowing Center in downtown Boston. Through her dedication, Maureen has helped raise over $200,000 to make rowing accessible to underserved youth in Boston and the South Shore, and for the restoration of the Museum's historic building in Hull.

To many in the Hull community, Maureen is a "connecter" because of her personality and thoughtfulness. Her personal story of being a single mother and the impact the youth rowing program has had on her daughter's life touches many in the community.

In addition to her personal involvement, Maureen has helped cultivate Blue Cross' relationship with the museum by engaging BlueCrew Teams at events and serving as a 2013 and 2014 Service Day Site Coordinator. Maureen is also instrumental in organizing the Dental team's partnership with Special Olympics.

William C. Van Faasen Community Service Sabbatical Program – Elizabeth Collins
In 2006, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts' Board of Directors created a sabbatical program to honor our former CEO, Bill Van Faasen. Through this program the company offers one associate per year a six month full-time sabbatical leave with a nonprofit organization.

Elizabeth Collins, a Network Performance Improvement associate, is currently halfway through her Sabbatical with BOKS, an acronym for Building Our Kids' Success. BOKS offers free before-school physical activity programs designed to get elementary school kids moving in the morning. What started here in Massachusetts has grown to more than 1,200 schools nationally and internationally. During her Sabbatical, Elizabeth is working on a data analysis and strategic planning project to help the organization deepen their impact and meet their expansion goals in Massachusetts. In addition to her project work, Elizabeth has also had the opportunity to serve as a BOKS' volunteer in her daughter's school.

Distinguished Leadership Award – Stephanie Lovell
Established in 2010, this award is presented to an outstanding Blue Cross leader who has championed volunteerism internally and fostered the civic engagement of his or her teams and colleagues.

Stephanie Lovell, Blue Cross' EVP of Medicare and Chief Legal Officer, currently serves on the Boards of both Community Servings and Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries, and she has helped to strengthen our company's partnerships with these two organizations. She is also on the Board of the Boston Bar Foundation and is committed to the local legal community.

Stephanie was recently named as one of Get Konnected Boston's Top 100 Most Influential People of Color and was also recognized by Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law and Justice with the Good Apple Award. This award was presented for her "unwavering commitment to social justice, dedication to public service, and generosity of spirit."

Sustainability Award – Frank Lowe
This award acknowledges an associate whose efforts have contributed to a more environmentally sustainable company or community.

This year's winner is Frank Lowe from Blue Cross' Corporate Real Estate and Services department. Frank saved the company

300,000 gallons of water by creating a system that captures excess from the air handling machine in order to supply water for the HVAC system used to cool the building. In essence, Frank realized that the company used to pull water from the Hingham water supply on one side of the roof while we were simultaneously pumping hundreds of thousands of water into the sewer only 100 yards away. Frank has also been a tremendous help to our Hingham garden program and other local sustainability initiatives.

Blue Cross encourages volunteer time for all employees, allowing paid time off during work hours as part of a coordinated effort. In 2015, Blue Cross associates contributed more than 30,000 volunteer service hours valued at $1.4 million, and the company donated $6 million in contributions to more than 497 nonprofit organizations that address the health and wellbeing of children and families facing economic hardship. To learn more about BCBSMA's Corporate Citizenship efforts, view the annual Corporate Citizenship Report.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (www.bluecrossma.com) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We are the trusted health plan for more than 30,000 Massachusetts employers and are committed to working with others in a spirit of shared responsibility to make quality health care affordable. Consistent with our corporate promise to always put our 2.8 million members first, we are rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

For further information: CONTACT: Shirley J. Knowles 617-246-2373 shirley.knowles@bcbsma.com

---

Additional assets available online: Photos (4)