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Caregivers provide \$8 million in service to loved ones

Nominations now being accepted for Governor's Caregiver Recognition Award

Richmond, Va. — An estimated 700,000 Virginians selflessly care for loved ones, receiving no compensation while providing 793 million caregiving hours each year. To honor these caregivers, nominations are now being accepted for the 2009 Governor's Caregiver Recognition Award (GCRA).

“The award serves as a reminder of the invaluable acts of compassion and care made by so many family members and friends throughout the Commonwealth. Consider nominating someone you know to recognize their unselfish deeds,” said Governor Timothy Kaine.

Nomination forms are available at www.dss.virginia.gov/community/council_women or by e-mailing council.women@dss.virginia.gov. The nomination period runs June 1 through July 3. Nominations are open to unpaid caregivers who give of themselves to improve the quality of life for others.

In Virginia, caregiving hours add up to an uncompensated value of \$8 million per year. “The sacrifices made by caregivers are immense, as is the value of the service they provide,” said Virginia Department of Social Services Commissioner Anthony Conyers Jr. The Commonwealth ranks 12th in the nation in the number of unpaid family caregivers, according to a report issued by the [National Family Caregivers Association](http://www.nfcacares.org) (www.nfcacares.org.)

According to the U.S. Administration on Aging, 65 percent of older persons with long-term care needs rely exclusively on family and friends for assistance. Fifty percent of the elderly who have long-term care needs, but no family available to care for them, are in nursing homes.

The GCRA, in its fourth year, is sponsored by the Virginia Council on the Status of Women. In celebration of National Family Caregiver's Month in November, this year's winners will be honored at a special ceremony Nov. 17 at the Science Museum of Virginia in Richmond. Recipients will be notified in early fall.

Last year's winners included a Farmville woman who has cared for her 30-year-old son since an accident as a teenager left him paralyzed and a Suffolk man who provides care for his wife, who has suffered serious illness for nearly 30 years.

All nominations must be postmarked, received via fax, mail or e-mail no later than close of business Friday, July 3. Mail forms to Council on the Status of Women, 7 N. Eighth Street, 6th floor, Richmond, VA 23219. Fax forms to (804) 726-7015 or e-mail to

council.women@dss.virginia.gov. Incomplete nomination forms and nominations postmarked or delivered after the deadline cannot be considered. For more information, call Karin Clark at (804) 726-7017 or visit www.dss.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Social Services administers social services programs, consistent with federal and state law and policy of the State Board of Social Services, through 120 local departments of social services throughout the state and its home office in Richmond. The VDSS mission is “People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse, and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities.”

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Editor’s note: Interviews are available upon request. For additional story ideas and information, contact Carla Harris, VDSS, (804) 726-7107 or carla.harris@dss.virginia.gov.