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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Community Counseling Center Honors
Community Volunteer's Legacy of Service
and 7 Local First Responders with
*Heroes with Heart Awards***

Awards to be presented at 4th Annual Heroes with Heart Awards Dinner & Auction

PORTLAND, Maine –On behalf of its Trauma Intervention Program (TIP), Community Counseling Center is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2009 *Heroes with Heart* awards. Awards will be given to police officers, fire fighters, paramedics and medical personnel from Portland, South Portland, and Gorham who have been nominated by their chiefs, supervisors and TIP volunteers. The late Rita Willis, a dedicated community volunteer, retired social worker and philanthropist will be honored with the prestigious *Heart of Gold* award. Awards will be presented at the 4th Annual Heroes with Heart Awards Dinner & Auction, to be held Friday, February 27th at the Holiday Inn by the Bay.

"Heroes with Heart," hosted by WMTW-8 news anchor Shannon Moss and featuring special guest, former Maine Attorney General Steve Rowe, is a celebration of everyday heroes in our community. A cocktail hour, including a silent auction to benefit TIP, will begin at 5:30pm, followed by dinner and an awards presentation at 7:30pm. Tickets cost \$55/person, \$100/couple or \$500/table of 10, and can be purchased online at www.commcc.org/heroes or by calling Nicole Holt at (207) 874-1030, ext 336. The RSVP deadline is Friday, February 20th.

Heroes with Heart awards will be presented to first responders who have shown exceptional compassion and kindness to people who have experienced a traumatic event. This year's honorees are:

- **Heart of Gold Award:** in memory of **Rita Willis**

- **Eric L. Gunnoe, M.D.** of **Maine Medical Center**
- **Carrie Walker, R.N.** of **Maine Medical Center**
- **Lt. Michael Sauschuck** of the **Portland Police Department**
- **Firefighter/ Paramedic Tiffany Bombard** of the **Portland Fire Department**
- **Officer Kevin Battle** of the **South Portland Police Department**
- **Firefighter/ Paramedic Joshua Pobrislo** of the **South Portland Fire Department**
- **Reverend Phil Shearman** of the **Gorham Fire Department**

The *Heart of Gold Award* is presented to an individual, organization or group that has been instrumental to the success of the Trauma Intervention Program in this community. The late Rita Willis was nominated for this award in recognition of her years of volunteerism at Community Counseling Center, in the community, and her support of the Trauma Intervention Program of Portland, Maine.

“As a volunteer since 1937, Rita has made innumerable contributions to Community Counseling Center, the community and the field of social work. Rita’s life was a shining example of the difference that one person can make. While Rita was involved in many programs at Community Counseling Center, she was a strong advocate for the creation of TIP. For these and so many more reasons, Rita is a most worth recipient of the *Heart of Gold* award,” said Leslie Clark Brancato, President & CEO of Community Counseling Center.

The *Heroes with Heart Award* is presented to police officers, fire fighters, paramedics and medical personnel who have shown exceptional compassion and kindness to people who have experienced a tragedy.

Trauma Intervention Program of Portland, Maine trains citizen volunteers to provide emotional and practical support to victims of traumatic events and their families in the first few hours following a tragedy. TIP, a community program of Community Counseling Center, was established in 2004 in partnership with the Junior League of Portland, Maine. TIP works in cooperation with TIP National. the Portland, South Portland, Gorham, Westbrook, Falmouth, Windham and Scarborough police and fire departments, Maine State Police and Maine Medical Center. Volunteers are available to first responders 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. TIP provides intensive training to volunteers, and will hold a **Volunteer Training Academy to train new TIP**

volunteers beginning March 19th. For more information or to register for the academy, please call Avery Jenkins at (207) 874-1030 x 509 or email tip@commcc.org.

Community Counseling Center is Maine's leading family service agency, makes a difference in the lives of nearly 6,000 children, teens, adults, elders and families each year through counseling, education, prevention, and wellness programs. For more information, call (207) 874-1030 or visit www.commcc.org.

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