



News Release

For Immediate Release
May 10, 2011

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Michelle R. B. Saddler to Receive 2011 'Paul Simon Courage in Public Service Award'

Lutheran groups honor Michelle R.B. Saddler, Secretary of the Department of Human Services, for her deep commitment to individuals in need

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – On May 11, **Michelle R. B. Saddler**, secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), will receive the annual *Paul Simon Courage in Public Service Award* during Lutheran Day activities at the State Capitol, in the Rotunda, at 4:20 p.m. The award will be presented by a coalition of Lutheran-affiliated social service, health care and advocacy groups. The award was created in 2004 by several Lutheran organizations, along with Patti Simon, widow of the late senator, to recognize Illinois public officials who demonstrate a commitment to just, compassionate and responsible public policy.

“We are honored to present the Paul Simon Courage in Public Service Award to Secretary Saddler,” says Daniel Schwick, vice president of church and community services at Des Plaines-based [Lutheran Social Services of Illinois](#) (LSSI). “It is incredibly refreshing to know that Michelle Saddler holds the reins at DHS, because she has shown time and time again that she is far more than just a good administrator. She is also someone who has demonstrated a deep commitment to improving the lives of the people in Illinois who, for one reason or another, need assistance from our state government. Her passion for people in need and for the common good absolutely shines through her work.”

“I am honored to receive this award from many fine agencies, including Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, one of the most respected community service providers in our state,” says Saddler. “Though budget issues cloud

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our outlook in human services, it continues to be my mission to provide a safety net of basic services and work supports to our state's most vulnerable families, help people with disabilities to achieve their maximum independence, and offer resiliency and recovery for Illinoisans with substance abuse and mental illness.”

Throughout her career, Saddler has shown a deep commitment to people in need. She was named Secretary of DHS on October 11, 2009. As Illinois' largest and most diverse State agency, DHS serves as many as two million people every day (one in every five Illinois families) through its wide range of services for low-income families, persons with disabilities, and for those needing assistance with issues of mental illness and substance abuse. In 2010, she became Governor Quinn's Chief of Staff for four months and then requested a return to her role as the Secretary of Human Services, where she has served since December 2010.

Prior to that, she held a number of policy and management positions in both the public and private sectors, including serving for more than five years as president of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. She also led Illinois' largest international adoption agency, Lifelink, in Bensenville, Ill. Saddler previously served as Director of Investments for the State of Illinois, and she later managed one of the nation's top performing investment pools for nearly 200 Illinois municipalities.

Throughout her tenure as head of DHS, Saddler has been a voice for people desperately needing care, and who face both potential and actual elimination of services. In addition, she has worked to create an office that is open to input, which attempts to break down the walls between the state government, providers and citizens seeking care. Saddler also currently serves as co-chair of Protestants for the Common Good, an Illinois social justice organization.

Lutheran agencies involved in Lutheran Day 2011 include Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI); Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois (LCFS); Advocate Health Care; Mosaic; Bethesda Lutheran Communities; Concordia Place; Saint Luke Ministries; Bethel New Life; and Holy Ministry Ministries. Lutheran Advocacy-Illinois, a grassroots justice advocacy organization, also sponsors Lutheran Day. For more information on Lutheran Day, visit www.LutheranDay.org.

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About Lutheran Day:

Lutheran Day was created in 2004 when two Lutheran human service provider organizations — [Lutheran Social Services of Illinois \(LSSI\)](#) and [Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois \(LCFS\)](#) — recognized that they had common concerns relating to their partnerships with state government, specifically with inadequate state funding for human services and the larger issue of inadequate and unsustainable state revenue to cover the cost of all state programs. As a result of those meetings, the two organizations resolved to reach out to other Lutheran human service provider organizations in Illinois to combine and organize their voices and constituencies to support the strengthening of the public-private human services safety net in Illinois.