

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mary Argo
Extension Educator, 4-H
856-2585 Ext. 559
maryargo@udel.edu

Joy Sparks Spirit of 4-H Award recipient announced.

Dr. Donald Sparks and Mark Manno, Delaware 4-H Interim State Coordinator presented the inaugural Joy Sparks Spirit of 4-H Award to Carlene Jones, organizational leader of the Lord Baltimore Helping Hands 4-H Club. The presentation took place Sept. 26 at the Sussex County 4-H Achievement and Recognition Night and its theme, "Celebrating the Sparks of 4-H".

The Joy Sparks Spirit of 4-H Award recognizes outstanding individuals who exhibit enthusiasm, dedication and exemplify 4-H spirit and values. The award is named in honor of 4-H state project leader, Joy Sparks, who passed away early in the year. The 2009 recipient, Jones, has been a Sussex 4-H Leader for 49 years. She and her family reside in Frankford, Del.

"My dream is and has always been to help that one 4-H'er," Jones said. This quote has been heard through the years by 4-H agents and Sussex 4-H family. Of course about 1000 young people have been helped at the local club level by Jones and countless other Sussex County 4-H members have benefited from her help.

Each year all her club members turn in a project record, said Mary Argo, Sussex County 4-H educator, who had nothing but praise Jones' dedication. The Lord Baltimore books and leader reports are always the first group to arrive in the 4-H office. "When demonstrations, public speaking contest arrive, if there is a club member participating, Ms. Carlene is there to cheer them on," Argo said. Through the years Jones has served as an officer of the Sussex Leaders' Association and served on many committees and helped with 4-H events and activities.

Each winter the Jones Family travel to Florida, nevertheless, Jones contacts the 4-H office and requests that the Sussex Connections newsletter and 4-H mail be sent to her in Florida. She does not want to miss any important 4-H happenings, Argo said. Her arrival back in Sussex County is always timed around the Clothing and Textile Judging Contest, where Jones serves as judging monitor for this contest for the past 14 years.

In Jones' 49 years as a volunteer 4-H leader, there have been many changes in Delaware 4-H. Jones can recall each of them- and she has embraced and accepted each change! She greets everyone with a smile, a hug for some, and will share a funny story or two.

Jones calls 4-H agents "Boss" and Joy Sparks was "*The Boss.*" Jones' great works have not gone unnoticed. Prior to receiving the Sparks Award, Jones was a nominee for the Governors Volunteer of the year Award, and Sussex County Salute to Excellence Lifetime 4-H Volunteer

Award. She is a member of the Sussex Order of Links, the alumni association for adult and graduate 4-H'ers and leaders. To be nominated as a Link is one of 4-H's highest honors. Carlene Jones 4-H spirit also flows out to her community and church, in keeping with the 4-H pledge which states in part to commit one's Head, Heart, Hands and Health to one's club, community, country and world.

4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills under the guidance of caring supportive adults. It is part of the Delaware Cooperative Extension Service. It is the policy of the Delaware Cooperative Extension System, University of Delaware, that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex, disability, age or national origin.

For more information about 4-H or to volunteer as an adult leader, please contact Mary Argo at (302) 856-2585 ext 559 or visit their Web site at www.rec.udel.edu

-30-

Cutline for photo Jones 1 (below and attached hi-res) Photo by Roseann Ferri

Interim 4-H State Project Leader Mark Manno looks on as Dr. Donald Sparks presents a surprised Jones as Sussex County's first recipient of the Joy Sparks Spirit of 4-H Award. Jones is beginning her 50th year of volunteering this September.

