

“2003 Winner Are Magnificent”

By Jacqueline Stearns

On Tuesday November 25, 2003, DIAL held its annual Magnificent Seven Award Ceremony. Our very own Frances Grant served as mistress of the ceremony, and began the evening by giving a brief history of each person's background and accomplishments.

DIAL Inc., which encourages independent living and positive thought, honored seven special people in the disability community for their positive outlook and individual accomplishments. The ceremony was simple yet eloquent, as the winners gave a brief synopsis about who they were and how far they have come. Previous winners presented the awards from 2002 along with DIAL's Executive Director John Petix Jr., former board president Pat Rhein, and Drew Horn from the Turn a Frown Around Foundation.

The first to receive an award was Sue Sindle, who is a member of DIAL as well as a member of the Passaic County Peer Group. She gets around with the aid of a wheelchair or walker. She was taking care of her ill mother for several years until recently when her mother passed away. She sold the family house, and moved into a garden apartment where she now lives independently. She was very lucky to find next door neighbors who have adopted her into their hearts. They make her feel like she has parents again.

DIAL member Mayra Rivera who is also active in the Passaic County Peer Group, recently graduated from the Cerebral Palsy High School in Clifton. She is now going on to further her education at Montclair State University, where she plans to major in computer science.

DIAL member Lisa Brown was awarded for successfully completing the Partners in Policymaking Program. Partners in Policymaking is an innovative leadership training opportunity to involve and empower people with developmental disabilities. The primary goals of this program are to provide information, build competencies, and build partnerships.

Bernard Cook, a long time member of DIAL, was honored for his steady contributions to the organizations over the years, which

includes taking part in activities and maintaining a positive attitude. He was awarded for completing Project Take Charge through NJ Developmental Disability Council.

Jeanne Picariello has been living with Multiple Sclerosis. She uses a wheelchair for mobility, however that does not stand in the way of her getting around. She moved from New Jersey to Florida and then to North Carolina before returning back to her home in New Jersey to care of sick relatives. "I had to take care of flight arrangements shipping my furniture, and when I first arrived I didn't know anyone. But if the opportunity arises again I will go for it." She was awarded for her successful journey.

Rose Pizzo was awarded for becoming a successful author. She was able to overcome her hearing loss to achieve her dreams. Rose wrote a biography called "Growing Up Deaf". In this book she shares her inspiring story that portrays her life triumphs as a person who is deaf.

Dashon Porter who is the host of the Dashon Porter Show (cable TV) is a budding actor/singer among many other things. He has appeared on The Ricky Lake Show and Maury Povich. Dashon recently auditioned for American Idol, and has formed a business merger with 2002 winner and friend Tyrone Jackson. They founded a production company called Uplifted Production 4 Christ. They are known in the Christian entertainment world as Bad Boys 4 Christ. Dashon has put two CD's out, which are now available for purchase.