



**For Immediate Release  
June 15, 2018**

**Contact: Jeanne Gattegno  
401-304-4977**

### **Saint Elizabeth Community Observes World Elder Abuse Awareness Day**

**Warwick**> June 15, 2018 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD.), which was launched in 2006 by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse with the World Health Organization at the United Nations. The purpose of WEAAD is to raise awareness of the elder abuse and the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect with a goal of ending elder abuse. Saint Elizabeth Community is a member of the SPRING ALLIANCE (a national alliance of safe haven providers) and the founder of Saint Elizabeth Haven, a safe haven program for elderly victims of abuse in RI. Saint Elizabeth Haven has provided over 500 days of shelter since the safe haven program's inception in 2009.

This morning, Saint Elizabeth Community hosted a special program at the Crowne Plaza in recognition of WEAAD. At the event, Roberta Merkle, Saint Elizabeth Community, Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives welcomed guests and introduced dignitaries, Peter Kilmartin, Attorney General, and Charles Fogarty, (retired) Director of the RI Division of Elderly Affairs.

Director Fogarty presented the 2017 RI Annual Report on Elder Abuse, and spoke on the DEA's efforts to identify elder abuse. Jeanne Gattegno, Saint Elizabeth Haven, Program Director shared information on the progress of the national shelter movement and the efforts to keep elders safe in RI. Over the past 15 months, 5 elders were sheltered and an additional 34 elders received case management, safety planning, advocacy and crisis intervention services through Saint Elizabeth Haven.

Steven J.Horowitz, Saint Elizabeth Community President and CEO, presented 7 individuals with the 2017 Elder Justice Hero Award in special recognition of their work in RI on behalf of elderly victims of abuse. The 2017 Award recipients are:

**Catherine Harrington**, Protective Services Investigator, RI Dept. of Elderly Affairs  
**Lt.Raymond Blinn**, and **Sgt. Mark Bourget**, East Providence Police Department,  
**Mickaela Driscoll**, Elder Abuse Investigator, RI Office of the Attorney General,  
**Robin Covington**, Supervisor of Elder Case Mgmt., East Bay Community Action Program,  
**Jane Palumbo**, Public Housing Coordinator, Bristol Housing Authority  
**Lori N. DiPersio**, Executive Director, Women's Resource Ctr., Newport & Bristol Counties.

Saint Elizabeth Community is a not for profit, 501 (c) (3) charitable organization with 11 Rhode Island locations, providing a full spectrum of care to seniors. Learn more about Saint Elizabeth Community and the Saint Elizabeth Haven Program at [www.stelizabethcommunity.org](http://www.stelizabethcommunity.org)