

Media Release

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Little Rock woman regains eyesight, earns achievement award



Louise McKoy of Little Rock, a Call Center Specialist with Verizon Wireless, has been named the area's outstanding Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind (DSB).

DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Terry Ross nominated her for the award because of her determination to overcome adversity, and succeed at work.

McKoy said she had cataracts and diabetes mellitus.

“Eye surgery restored my vision. It was a great blessing. It (loss of the ability to see) was very stressful. After my surgery, I could see again. It felt like the heavens opened up.”

“Ms. McKoy’s employment status was in doubt before services from DSB, as she is required to read a screen to do her job and was increasingly unable to do so. With assistance from DSB, Ms. McKoy has received the surgeries and other services that she needs and has been able to maintain her employment,” said Ross. Ms. McKoy has worked at Verizon since 2006.

McKoy’s employer, Verizon Wireless, received an award as an outstanding business partner for its commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment.

The awards were presented at the noon meeting of the Little Rock Founders Lions Club held at World Services for the Blind on August 27.

McKoy is one of only 13 people in Arkansas to receive an area award and was chosen from the area that includes Lonoke, Prairie, Grant, part of Saline, and north Pulaski Counties.

McKoy said she was “so grateful for DSB services. I couldn’t afford surgery, even with insurance (which had very limited coverage for eyes).” DSB paid for costs not covered by her insurance.

At first Ms. McKoy thought her vision problems were due to high blood sugar, but finally she saw an eye doctor who diagnosed her cataracts. She advises other people to see an eye specialist “as soon as possible when you start having trouble” and to go for regular eye exams.

This is the seventh year that DSB has given Consumer of the Year awards to recognize individuals who have managed their rehabilitation plans, gained marketable skills, secured good jobs, and become role models for others. An overall state winner will be selected at the end of the year.

DSB provides vocational rehabilitation services to adults who are blind or severely visually impaired and whose goal is successful employment. The division also serves youth and older blind individuals. For information about DSB’s programs and services, visit the DSB website at <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dsb/Pages/default.aspx> or call 1-800-960-9270, 501-682-5463, or TDD 501-682-0093.

Photo Caption:

From the left, Jacob D. Cannon, Verizon Wireless Associate Director of Customer Service Operations; Louise McKoy, a Call Center Specialist with Verizon Wireless; Kamille Hairston, Verizon Wireless Associate Director of Technical Customer Services; and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Terry Ross. McKoy was named the area’s outstanding Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind. Verizon Wireless received the area Employer of the Year award as an outstanding business partner for its commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment.