

FOR RELEASE

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Mike Dehart Presented Award for Work to Prevent Elder Abuse

Nebraska City – Mike Dehart of Nebraska City was presented the first annual Elder Abuse Prevention Advocate of the Year award in southeast Nebraska Wednesday (6/11) by the Department of Health and Human Services for his advocacy as a guardian for the elderly.

Don Davis, child/family services specialist with DHHS, made the presentation at the Otoe County United Against Violence meeting. The award was presented as a part of the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day observance on June 15.

Davis cited Dehart for his 15 years serving as a guardian for elderly adults.

“Mike is known to stay active and involved as guardian of the elderly he’s agreed to assist, attending meetings, court hearings, working with nursing homes and care facilities and submitting annual reports to the court,” he said. “He has always been attracted to working with vulnerable adults and the medical issues they face, as well as following their treatment needs closely.”

Bulldog Construction, which was formed by Dehart, specializes in working with vulnerable and elderly adults with hoarding issues, and he works well with the emotional, psychological and functional aspects of hoarding, Davis said.

“Mike is a humble man and he does not see his ‘hands-on efforts’ as anything special,” he said. “But to those of us who work with him, he has given of himself for the betterment of the elderly community.”

The Elder Abuse Prevention Advocate of the Year award recognizes Nebraskans across the state who work to protect the elderly.

“They are the standard that every citizen in the state should strive to emulate when it comes to how our elderly should be treated, protected and uplifted by those who know and love them,” Davis said.

He encouraged Nebraskans to keep an eye out for elder abuse and urged those who suspect it has occurred to call the Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-652-1999. Among the signs of elder abuse, are:

- Unexplained signs of injury such as bruises, welts, or scars, or broken bones, sprains, or dislocations.
- Bruises around breasts or genitals, or torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.
- Unusual weight loss, malnutrition, dehydration.
- Untreated physical problems, such as bed sores, and unsanitary living conditions like dirt, bugs, soiled bedding and clothes.
- Significant withdrawals from the elder's accounts, or sudden changes in the elder's financial condition.
- Items or cash missing from the senior's household.
- Problems with the care facility: poorly trained, poorly paid, or insufficient staff; crowding; inadequate responses to questions about care.
- Reports of drug overdose or apparent failure to take medication regularly (a prescription has more remaining than it should).

If abuse is suspected, call the Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-652-1999. The call may be anonymous.