

NOMINATION OF KAAREN HAYES

For thirty years Kaaren Hayes has provided direct service to families and children with special needs. Kaaren gives profound meaning to the word *direct*. When families come to her with their unanswered questions she connects them with other families who may have the best answers to the same questions. Karen does not promote herself, she promotes and develops a network. "Relationship-building" she calls it, an invisible but unbreakable connection between families like none other in the High Country.

Some of us remember when Kaaren taught preschool, not because we had children there or even knew her at the time. We heard, however, expressions of joy from families we met because their children had managed to be accepted into Kaaren's class. The joy was expressed not only by the parents but also by the children. We've seen them greet her like a best friend during an incidental meeting on the street.

No wonder that now, some years later, Kaaren is Program Director of Parent to Parent/Family Support Network of the High Country, serving as lead trainer for over 70 families in the area. She develops workshops, collects data, documents service, trains interns, and collaborates with university and school faculty and community specialists to support training and research.

One of Kaaren's goals has been to provide services to families without charge. She will go out of her way to try to continue to provide the services even when at times it just doesn't seem possible without more funds. She will cut her own salary or deny herself a pay increase just so families can benefit. She works incessantly to raise money for PTP so families don't have to worry about that issue BUT she worries about the money issue year after year not knowing whether she will have enough funds to go around.

For all these reasons, and more we nominate Kaaren Hayes for the Great Friend to Families Award.

Susie Lyall

Allie Funk

Naomi Johnson

Alice Naylor