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CPD'S SUE DUBOIS RECEIVES PROFESSIONAL ADVOCATE AWARD

October 13, 2009 by Jo Lynne Lyon

Sue Dubois received the Professional Advocate Award from the Brain Injury Association of Utah.

The Brain Injury Association of Utah gave Sue Dubois its 2009 Professional Advocate Award for her work to bolster services for Utahns who have sustained traumatic brain injury.

BIAU Executive Director Ron Roskos said Dubois was nominated not only by the Utah Brain Injury Council, but also by attendees at the 2008 Annual Family and Professional Conference. They filled out a form in the back of the conference booklet that asked for nominees for the next year's award.

Dubois is the community TBI coordinator for the Utah Traumatic Brain Injury Partnership Grant at the CPD. She worked with community members and a team of CPD staff to improve the access to services for people who have sustained a TBI. Dubois set up workgroups in Logan, Brigham City and St. George to discover the needs and concerns of people who have personal and professional experience with traumatic brain injury. From those efforts, communities have begun to address the needs they identified in rural Utah.

TBI is the leading cause of death and disability among children and adolescents in the United States, it is a signature injury experienced by veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. In Utah, an estimated 44,000 people have sustained a TBI and are living with its effects. These injuries do not always respond to typical treatments and may go undetected for years. Service providers who are unfamiliar with TBI may have a hard time diagnosing and treating people who have sustained a head injury.

Dubois and other team members have worked to train health, mental health and vocational rehabilitation professionals about TBI. Their work was directed by Judith Holt, the CPD's Interdisciplinary Training Division director.

Dubois credits Utah communities for the progress they have made in providing services to people with TBI. "It was because of the support of the different communities and their willingness to step up to the plate and voice their concerns and challenges, and to be part of the solution," she said. "It was nice to see how it grew."