

2002 Family of Distinction Awards

Agency Nomination Form

(Continued)

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## Family Profile

**Name of Family Nominated:**

Karen Smith and her son Tyler

**Why was this family chosen?**

Over the years, Karen has worked diligently to improve her life situation. She has found safe permanent housing for her family and has obtained an Associates degree from Kishwaukee Community College. She has become an active member of our community. She is very involved in her son's education and recreational endeavors.

**When did the family first come to your organization?**

May of 1997

**How did they need assistance/describe their obstacle(s):**

This family needed help to find stable housing. Karen and her son were sharing an apartment with a roommate. She had held several jobs as a CNA and was dissatisfied with her work experience. She was having a hard time paying rent and needed help budgeting.

**What services did your organization provide?**

Our agency provided on going case management through the Family Development Program. We gave her access to parent training, scholarship funds, financial assistance to pay for car insurance, rental assistance, energy assistance and referrals to appropriate agencies for help with other needs.

**What impact do you think these services had on the family?**

Our case management helped Karen to prioritize her needs and set goals to meet them. Our scholarship funds prompted her on her way to continue her education. Our financial assistance gave her a chance to get back on her feet in a time of crisis.

**In your own words, tell us this family's success story:**

When Karen first came to our agency for help, she had yet to meet her basic needs of housing, employment, transportation and subsistence. She worked with our case manager on a weekly basis for a while and was able to eventually obtain a permanent, affordable place to live. She also found full time employment with insurance benefits.

In September of 1997, after just a few months of involvement in our Family Development Program, Karen enrolled herself at Kishwaukee Community College. She

received a \$1000 scholarship from our agency to help her on her way. In December of 2001, she completed the requirements for her Associates Degree. She is currently enrolled full time in the second semester of her junior year at Northern Illinois University where she hopes to complete a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology. This summer she will begin an internship at a social service agency to fulfill a requirement for her degree and also to give back to the community she lives in.

Karen has shown a great deal of personal growth in the years that she has been involved with us. She has displayed a great deal of strength in the struggle to get ahead as a single mom and is also a dedicated student. She has a wonderful ability to seek out resources when she has a need for them and has been known to refer others to places where she knows they will get help.

Karen works hard to stay involved with what is happening at her son's school and day care. She and her son regularly participate in recreational activities such as scouts, baseball and soccer.

Karen started out needing help from our agency and now is on her way to being a great resource to others.