

RESOLUTION 2006 - 106

A RESOLUTION COMMENDING JO HELLER FOR HER DEDICATION TO THE COMMUNITY AND HER ADVOCACY FOR THE RIGHTS OF RESIDENTS OF NASSAU COUNTY WHO LIVE EACH DAY OF THEIR LIVES DIAGNOSED WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS.

WHEREAS, Nassau County is fortunate to have a determined and persistent advocate, for residents of Nassau County who have been diagnosed with mental illness, that has never taken "no" for an answer. Her name is Jo Heller.

WHEREAS, Jo has worked very hard for the last eight years advocating for a crisis respite facility for Nassau County; and

WHEREAS, Jo's grass roots advocacy has included all who chose to participate; and

WHEREAS, Jo is an unpaid community and mental health advocate who chooses to light candles, instead of cursing the darkness; change things, instead of accepting the status quo; and

WHEREAS, Jo is a consensus builder and team builder with a positive attitude; a gatherer of like minds to pursue a common goal for the improvement of our community; and

WHEREAS, Jo was a member of the Jacksonville 2010 Plan Committee, founding member of the original Self-Directed Care Task Force, past president of the Florida Self-Directed Care Board and presently services as a Co-Chair of The National Foundation for Self Directed Care; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, Jo volunteered with the Nassau National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) and was voted Co-President shortly afterwards; and

WHEREAS, Jo established a NAMI hotline phone in her home for 2 years, and provided a Post Office Box, so families, consumers, and the community could reach NAMI for information, education and support; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, as an alternative to a class action law suit being considered by other NAMI groups in Florida, Jo and Helen Walter (Co-Chairs of Nassau NAMI) met to discuss the possibilities of "the money following the consumer" now know as Self-Directed Care; and

WHEREAS, thanks to the efforts of both Representative Aaron Bean, who believes in the wellness and potential of people living with mental illnesses, who filed his first bill entitled "District 4 Florida Self Directed Care Pilot," as a new legislator, and to Senator Richard Mitchell who co-sponsored the bill, Self Directed Care is now the national model adopted by the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration as a major component in the transformation of the mental health system; and

WHEREAS, Florida Self Directed Care is a fiscal program based on self determination, choice and self direction, with clinical outcomes directed toward recovery.

WHEREAS, the Florida Self-Directed Care program won the 2003 Eli Lilly Reintegration award in social support; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, Jo invited Governor Bush's Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse to come to a meeting to discuss the urgent mental health needs in District 4. It was at that meeting that Self Directed Care and the need for a Crisis Respite Home for emergency care in Nassau County was presented; and

WHEREAS, Jo also worked on the Fernandina Beach Vision 2000, where she continued her advocacy for Crisis Respite Care; and

WHEREAS, Jo also participated in the planning of the National "2004 Mental Wellness: A Journey of Self-Determination and Choice through Medical, Educational and Legal Partnerships," conference held in Orlando, Florida,

accepting the "Advocacy" award on behalf of NAMI Nassau;
and

WHEREAS, Jo has served on numerous boards, committees and task forces as an advocate for mental health, providing a voice to the needs of consumers, family members, professionals, providers and their staff and the community, to the Governor, Legislators, State, District and local officials, and law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, Jo has also received numerous prestigious awards such as the Rayonier Industries "Involved Good Citizen Award", has won two separate Volunteer of the Year Awards from the City of Fernandina, and has won the Northeast Mental Health Association and NAMI Florida Advocacy awards among many others; and

WHEREAS, Jo is acknowledged, respected and remembered for her passion, persistence and protection of the rights and the needs of people who are living with mental illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Jo is committed to seeing those with mental illnesses treated with dignity and respect, provided quality care, recognized as people with potential, and having the right to seek their own destiny.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED this 21st day of June, 2006, by the Board of County Commissioners of Nassau County, Florida, as follows:

The Board of County Commissioners gratefully acknowledges and commends Jo Heller for her dedication to the Community and in particular, for her tireless advocacy for the rights of the residents of Nassau County who live each day of their lives diagnosed with a mental illness.

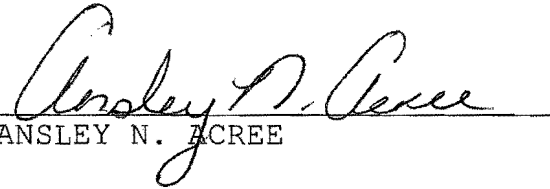
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
NASSAU COUNTY, FLORIDA



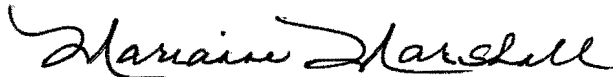
THOMAS D. BRANAN, JR.
Its: Chairman



JIM B. HIGGINBOTHAM
Its: Vice Chairman



ANSLEY N. ACREE

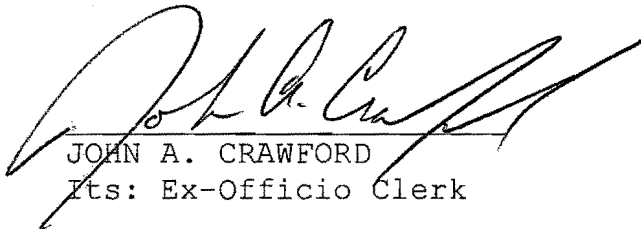


MARIANNE MARSHALL



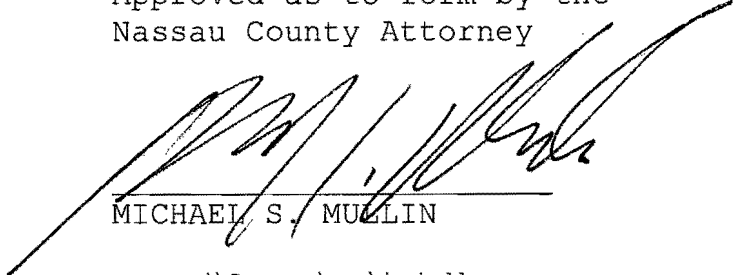
FLOYD L. VANZANT

ATTEST:



JOHN A. CRAWFORD
Its: Ex-Officio Clerk

Approved as to form by the
Nassau County Attorney

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael S. Mullin', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

MICHAEL S. MULLIN

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