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**Neal Edgar of Clintonville Receives Ohio Department
of Rehabilitation and Correction's Highest Honor**

COLUMBUS, Ohio - COLUMBUS, Ohio - On rare occasion, individuals or organizations outside the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (DRC) receive the External Gold Star Award for exemplary effort or service in the field of corrections. Only the Director can present the External Gold Star Award to a non-Department person, group, organization or agency that has provided support and contributed to the mission of the Department.

Neal Edgar is the Ombudsman for Mental Health America of Franklin County, a private, not-for-profit organization that helps people navigate the mental health system and advocate on their behalf. Neal was awarded the External Gold Star Award for his commitment to the mission of DRC through assisting offenders with mental illness into a successful reentry into the community.

As part of his work, Neal reaches out to the ex-offender population and works with the Adult Parole Authority (APA) staff during reentry trainings. He has continuously served on the region's Community Reentry Management Team, meeting with numerous clients and their families to provide information and resources. He works tirelessly with APA offenders facilitating treatment referrals, assisting with pressing medication issues and resolving conflicts between clients and treatment providers.

“While it's an honor to receive this award, it has also been an honor to work with the Adult Parole Authority staff and former offenders trying to re-start their lives. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections puts a high value on linking offenders who have a mental illness with the appropriate resources and treatment.” said Neal Edgar.

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Mental Health America of Franklin County is a private, not-for-profit organization, established in 1956. We are dedicated to promoting mental health in Franklin County through advocacy, education, and support services. Our programs include: information and referral to community mental health and alcohol/drug services; support groups for people with mental illness and their families; an Ombudsman program that assists clients in navigating the mental health and alcohol/drug system; mental health screenings in English and Spanish; community and professional mental health education and a newsletter for first-time parents available in both English and Spanish. We receive funding from the Franklin County ADAMH Board and United Way of Central Ohio. To become a member or find out more information, please visit us online at www.mhafc.org.

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