

## 2009 Jayne Thomas Grassroots Volunteer Recognition Award

### **HELEN STANTON**

*Nominated by:  
Eastern Idaho Community Action Partnership  
Idaho Falls, Idaho  
Russell Spain, Executive Director*



Helen Stanton is an inspiring example of volunteerism and leadership. In January 2004, Helen Stanton, an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer, came to the Area Agency on Aging, part of the Eastern Idaho Community Action Partnership to develop and implement a Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. The Ombudsman program provides advocacy services by investigating complaints made by or on behalf of elders receiving long-term care services. Helen immediately took up the cause of the Promise of Community Action by trying to improve the lives of those in the skilled nursing facilities and assisted living centers.

When Helen started there was only one Regional Ombudsman serving more than 1,320 residents in 34 facilities covering an area of about 22,000 square miles. Facilities were visited only 4 times per year. Helen began a media push to recruit dedicated volunteers to go through training. She negotiated with a public relations professional to volunteer time to develop promotional materials; she recruited high visibility people to help publicize the program and the need for volunteers. With Helen's hard work and perseverance, the Volunteer Ombudsman Program was selected as the pilot program for the State of Idaho.

After five years and more than 10,000 VISTA hours, Helen's term at VISTA was over. EICAP decided that it was vitally important to continue the program and found the dollars to hire Helen as Ombudsman Program Coordinator.

Helen is truly dedicated to helping people in the community. Community Action Partnership is honored to present Helen Stanton with the 2009 Jayne Thomas Grassroots Volunteer Recognition Award. We offer our warmest congratulations to her, her family, and to the staff and board of Eastern Idaho Community Action Partnership.