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**Social Workers Stand Up: March is National Social Work Month**  
***Chicago Social Worker Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award***

**Chicago, IL**—Social workers stand up for millions of people every day. These include people who are experiencing devastating illnesses and mental health crises, our veterans, children, families and communities. Yet many people still misunderstand who social workers are and the invaluable contributions they bring to society. This month we celebrate the contributions of outstanding Illinois social workers during National Social Work Month with this year's theme, "Social Workers Stand Up!"

In honor of Social Work Month, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Illinois Chapter is honoring the work of exceptional social workers and individuals whose work promotes social justice and social change with and on behalf of the people and clients they serve.

One such exemplary Illinois social worker being honored this year is Statewide Lifetime Achievement Awardee Gerda Schell. **Gerda J. Schell** (*AM, The University of Chicago; LCSW*) began her remarkable multifaceted sixty-three year career in the Chicago area. As therapist Gerda worked with individuals and families in private practice and a variety of institutional affiliations. She also served in a broad range of administrative appointments at state and private hospitals for children and adolescents. As consultant to fellow professionals and agencies and through her volunteer work with agencies empowering the most vulnerable populations, Gerda's contribution to the field speaks to her humanity and commitment to the welfare of others. As child specialist, she has also held appointments to the Office of the Governor of Illinois and the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She was also founding board member of the National Registry of Health Care Providers and has served on various NASW projects. Gerda continues to provide clinical and administrative consultation to multiple community social service agencies since resignation from the public sector in 1993.

Of the nomination of Gerda, colleague Joyce Weber wrote: "Ms. Schell is someone who represents the very best of the social work profession: a life-long commitment to learning, consistent commitment to ethical and compassionate service, and respect for the challenges of clients and systems."

The NASW-Illinois Chapter is proud of the work of Gerda and others like her who fight every day for the underserved and underprivileged in Illinois. Gerda is one of three individuals being honored during Social Work Month. To learn more about the other statewide awardees, please visit the NASW-Illinois Chapter website ([www.naswil.org](http://www.naswil.org)) or contact Joel L. Rubin, executive director, at [jlrubin@naswil.org](mailto:jlrubin@naswil.org).

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*The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with over 130,000 members. The NASW-Illinois Chapter is one of the association's largest chapters with over 6,000 members in Illinois alone. NASW strives to advance social work careers, grow social work businesses, and protect the profession.*