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Central Annex/Union Court Resident Service Coordinator receives 2009 Berkshire Red Cross Centennial Award

The Berkshire Red Cross awarded a 2009 Centennial Award to Theresa Smith, Resident Service Coordinator at Central Annex and Union Court Apartments in Pittsfield, MA at the organization's 114th Annual Meeting on Oct. 6.

The Centennial Award was established in 1995 to celebrate the chapter's 100th annual meeting and a century of service to the people of Berkshire County. Smith received the award for spearheading the "Toys for Tots" program for children in families affected by HIV/AIDS in the greater community. Smith reached out to the Red Cross five years ago to ask if the organization could connect her with these families in need. "We jumped on Terri's bandwagon and gave her a list and Terri performed magic!" said Executive Director Kathleen Phillips in presenting Smith with the award. "The program served more than a dozen very happy kids and very grateful parents. Though her luck on delivery days has not been the best – complete with ice storms, blizzards and disabled vehicles – she never fails to make us her first stop on return. Terri – sort of like Disney – keeps the magic alive every year."

Smith works with residents in the two housing developments to help them identify and access community services that will help them live successfully in the complex. She

also coordinates community building activities that encourage residents to step up as volunteers and leaders within the housing community and in the greater Pittsfield community. As a result of her efforts, residents now participate in community service efforts such as the annual AIDS Walk and “Toys for Tots.”

Central Annex and Union Court Apartments were purchased in 2007 by Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), a national non-profit organization that buys affordable housing around the country to preserve its long-term affordability for families, seniors and the disabled. POAH owns nine affordable properties with a total of 1,800 units in 12 Massachusetts communities across the state including the Berkshires. It recently upgraded the Pittsfield apartments.