

Celebrating success

Throughout 2011, NCMA members have made some remarkable achievements in childcare that have, quite literally, been award-winning. We hear from four award-winning members, who have contributed overwhelmingly to the childcare sector and demonstrated a real commitment to the childminding profession.

Jackie Millerchip

ITV1's Lorraine Inspirational Woman of the Year Award

Jackie has dedicated her life to caring for children and young people with disabilities and in recognition of this, won Inspirational Woman of the Year

2011 in October. Over the past two years, Jackie has transformed her home to cater for a variety of children's needs, so that children with disabilities and non-disabled children can be cared for together; her garden now features a specially built sensory cabin, which has allowed her to provide diverse and unique care from her setting.

Jackie said, "I don't do what I do to get gratitude... the children I look after are my life. However, I feel overwhelmed and privileged that so many people voted for me – it's an honour!"

The additions to Jackie's home have been hugely successful, as children thrive on the sensory experiences they find there. The sensory equipment available includes feeling materials, solar lighting, a ball pool, soft play and bubbled tubes, all of which help children to develop and progress.

Jackie sees herself as challenging a divide with her care, "There is a desperate need for disabled children to be cared for and accepted in mainstream society... I have experienced a lot of discrimination against children with disabilities and hope my integrated care will go some way to bridging this unnecessary gap."



Women of the Year 2011. Back row, left to right – Surgeon Commander Sarah Stapley, Gez Watson, Victoria Mulleady, Debby Edwards, Sarah Winters, Jackie Millerchip. Front row, left to right – Katie Piper, Fiona Storer, Dr Nawal El Saadawi and Lulu

PHOTO: JANIE AIREY

Lynda Milton

Nursery World Childminder of the Year Award

Lynda won Childminder of the Year 2011 in October for her unwavering commitment to the highest standards in children's development. Lynda said, "I'm absolutely amazed – I think my award is wonderful! The only thing I ever wanted was to work successfully with the families and children in my care, however to be recognised in this way is a true honour and I'm thrilled."

Lynda was nominated by parent, Helen Haglethorn for always going the extra mile to support both the children in her care and their families. Helen said, "I can honestly say that

Lynda loves my children as if they were her own. The stimulating daily routine that she lays on for them to allow them to learn and develop in all areas is incredible and is carried out with such enthusiasm – she really does bring the perfect combination of motherly love and energetic professionalism to all that she does."

For Lynda, the best part of childminding is ensuring she creates holistic, interesting routines that develop children creatively, academically and socially. She said, "I find it fascinating to work with children so closely. I love watching the way each child continually changes and develops on a daily basis and feel really lucky to watch their individual journeys. And I also love the challenge of evolving with them as they develop; I have to work quickly to achieve

stimulating routines that ensure every child in my care reaches their next step – there is never a dull moment in childminding!"



Gaby Roslin presents the Childminder of the Year Award to Lynda Milton

PHOTO: LEO WILKINSON

Helen Wynne

4Children and Take a Break Heroes Award and a finalist Tesco Mum of the Year

Helen Wynne received the 4Children Family Heroes Award 2011 for going above and beyond the call of duty to support families through tough times.

Helen provides extraordinary care for children and their families through her childminding services. Helen began childminding after the birth of her son, Dyfan, who has complex needs, including physical and learning disabilities and visual and hearing impairments. The experience of caring for her son, combined with her extensive training means that that Helen has been able to support families in Wrexham by caring for severely disabled children.

As well as running a large childminding setting, Helen regularly attends support groups and delivers courses for the local Family Information Service, sharing her strengths, advice and practical information with parents and people training to be childminders.

Helen also helps single parent families, supports vulnerable children who are on the at risk register, and helps those who have experienced domestic and alcohol abuse.

Helen's most recent award nomination is from her daughter, Megan. The 11-year-old wants to share how special her mum is and has nominated Helen for Tesco's Mum of the Year Awards, to be

held in March 2012. "With all Mummy's love, effort and encouragement, Dyfan is starting to come on in leaps and bounds and is such a chatterbox now! Fantastic, when doctors said he would never walk or talk."

Helen Wynne with her husband Dean at the Nursery World Awards



PHOTO: LEO WILKINSON

Katie Jones

Real Radio Wales, Carer of the Year in the Real Radio Real People Awards

Katie Jones received the Carer of the Year Award 2011 for her excellent childcare and support to working parents. Single parent and full-time nurse, Helen Chapman, nominated

Katie for being an outstanding childminder and for providing her with the help she needs to balance working full-time with running a family. Through Katie's flexible childcare hours, Helen has been able to continue to work shifts as a children's nurse. Helen said, "Some people may say that it's a job, but Katie continually goes above and beyond what she needs to do; I really don't know what I'd do without her."

Just a few examples of Katie's support are "saving the day" by planning Helen's children's birthday party when Helen had to take her other child to hospital, and providing round-the-clock care when Helen has to work night shifts.

Katie said, "I don't see my job as work and didn't feel worthy of this award – the children in my care are absolutely fantastic and make my job a pleasure to do. I hope my award gives them a little recognition as without them, this would never would have happened!"

Katie Jones with the Real Radio Wales team and sponsor, receiving her award



Have you received, or been nominated for a childcare award? Tell us your stories and we will print a selection in the next issue of Who Minds? Write to: whominds@ncma.org.uk
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