

Community Service Award
2011 Individual Honoree

Louise Knott Ahern and the *Lansing State Journal*

During the past year, Louise Knott Ahern has been responsible for an ongoing series of articles in the *Lansing State Journal* dealing with obesity and healthy lifestyles in the greater Capital Area community. In order to assemble those articles, she has interviewed hundreds of community residents and attended dozens of community events (including the Alliance's *Choosing Health!*[®] event) as well as researched the essential issues associated with obesity and healthy lifestyle issues. Louise has a personal interest in this subject as she pays attention to the life of her child in school and the lives of her neighbors. The lifestyle articles written by Louise and published by the *Lansing State Journal* have been insightful, exploratory and non-judgmental. They have been written to capture the nature of the problem and describe how this community is addressing that problem. Articles such as "Obesity: What You Eat and Where You Live Matters" are thoughtful descriptions of the issues involved in the obesity epidemic that extend beyond diet and exercise. The articles written and the interest shown by Louise are an asset to the Alliance's *Choosing Health!*[®] movement and any other effort in this community to address Healthy Lifestyles.

Louise Ahern's articles about Healthy Lifestyles in the Capital Area have addressed:

- Can Michigan Win the Battle Against Obesity July 17, 2011
- Living Large July 17, 2011
- Accident Fund Finds Ways to Help Employees Improve Their Health July 27, 2011
- Obesity: What You Eat and Where You Live Matters August 21, 2011
- Childhood Obesity, a Key Concern for Michigan September 25, 2011
- What Can be Done to Address Childhood Obesity September 25, 2011
- Choose Health: Lansing Rally Touts Benefits of Better Eating, Exercise October 19, 2011
(article about CAHA's *Choosing Health!*[®] event)
- Planning Out Meals for the Week Can Help Cut Out Processed Foods November 22, 2011

Louise Knott Ahern began her journalism career at the *Lansing State Journal* after graduating from Michigan State University in 1996. She went on to reporting jobs at the *Detroit News* and the *Press-Enterprise* (Riverside, Calif.) before making her way home to Lansing and back to the LSJ in 2010. Her work has been honored by the Society of Professional Journalists, the Michigan Press Association, the Michigan Bar Association and the Gannett Corporation.

The *Lansing State Journal* not only supported Louise in the process of assembling this series of healthy living articles, but also made significant commitment to publish the series in installments over a six-month period, with substantial print space devoted to the series. Since 1855, the *Lansing State Journal* has worked to serve the public interest by encouraging dialog on complex issues. The *Lansing State Journal* is

committed to being a positive force for change in the Capital Area community. Louise Knott Ahern's six-month project is one example of *Lansing State Journal's* commitment to public service and journalism. Louise Knott Ahern and the *Lansing State Journal* are commendable recipients of the Capital Area Health Alliance Community Service Award.