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FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
19th Judicial Circuit
Lake County
Waukegan, Illinois 60085-4359

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

LIBERTY BELL AWARD WINNERS HONORED

On Tuesday, April 16th, Deputy Chief Judge Patricia S. Fix welcomed guests during the Lake County Bar Association luncheon meeting while Circuit Judges Reginald C. Mathews and Jorge L. Ortiz presented the Liberty Bell Awards at the event held at Waukegan City Hall. Each year, the 19th Judicial Circuit presents Liberty Bell Awards to an individual and an organization for their outstanding service and dedication in furthering the administration of justice. In Lake County, the Liberty Bell Awards are presented in memory of Judge Thomas R. Smoker, a Lake County judge who passed away in 2004.

"On behalf of the 19th Judicial Circuit, I would like to thank and congratulate Ms. Pamela Foster-King and Mano a Mano. They each have provided exemplary service, giving time and energy to strengthen the effectiveness of the American court system in the spirit of our Constitution. The Liberty Bell Awards honor those who help foster a better understanding of the rule of law, encourage a greater respect for the law and courts, stimulate a sense of civic responsibility, and contribute to good government in the community. This year's winners demonstrate these qualities, and we are pleased to honor them," said Deputy Chief Judge Fix.

The 2024 Liberty Bell Individual Award recipient is Pamela Foster-King of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. In 1993, Ms. Foster-King began an impressive 31-year career with DCFS. For approximately one year, she worked in Cook County in the intake division; in 1994, she transferred to the Lake Villa branch, where she not only worked in the child protection division but also was assigned for ten years to a task force at the Lake County Children's Advocacy Center. This team was comprised of law enforcement, special investigators, advocates, and prosecutors whose goal was to investigate reports of child abuse and neglect, which included victim-sensitive interviews of small children. Since 2006, Ms. Foster-King has served the Waukegan office of DCFS and the community as an area administrator for all of Lake County.

The 2024 Liberty Bell Organizational Award recipient is the Mano a Mano Family Resource Center. Mano a Mano was established in 2000 to provide services and resources to assist the increasing number of immigrant families in Round Lake Park and surrounding communities. Mano a Mano was housed in a one-room storefront, started a Volunteer Lawyers Program for those who could not afford a lawyer, providing healthcare, counseling, English classes, housing assistance, and many other services. The organization and its dedication to enhancing access to justice grew. Mano a Mano has conducted citizenship classes and co-hosted Naturalization Ceremonies for many years. Its Engaged Citizens Program provides reliable and affordable immigration legal services. Mano a Mano and its accredited representatives are recognized by the US Department of Justice Office of Legal Assistance Programs as an authorized provider of legal services. Mano a Mano has also assisted some of the most vulnerable members of our community, including victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

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