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**For Immediate Release:** May 28, 2008  
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## **CAHSA Names *Quality First* Winners at Annual State Conference** *Winners singled out for excellence in aging services*

**VAIL, Colo.—May 28, 2008**—Laura Landwirth, executive director of the Colorado Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, named seven winners for the association's fourth annual Quality First Awards. Quality First is a voluntary program that senior living communities nationwide are undertaking to build excellence in aging services. CAHSA, the leading organization in Colorado for senior housing and care, has signed up the highest percentage of senior care communities in the nation for this unique initiative.

Quality First was introduced almost five years ago by the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, the American Health Care Association and the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care, the largest and most influential aging service organizations in the country.

The Quality First initiative is a commitment by senior care organizations to continuously review and improve services and programs. It involves senior living and care communities signing a Covenant to participate in the program and then work on 10 areas, including developing staff and consumer-driven programs; research and development; community involvement; outstanding care programs; and education. The first step for all organizations that sign the Quality First Covenant is to conduct a self-evaluation that will lead to a plan for improving areas that most require change.

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**Quality First Awards**

“Quality First is a philosophy of quality and a framework for earning public trust in aging services. It is a renewal of our commitment as aging services providers to help older adults and their loved ones live their lives to their fullest potential,” said Landwirth. “As an association, we are proud our members have embraced this initiative. Creating and continuing this award annually will help us spotlight the best of the best.”

Landwirth and Chair of the Quality First Task Force John Torres, Executive Director of Golden West, announced the winners at CAHSA’s annual conference held at the Vail Cascade Resort in Vail. A committee of six CAHSA members evaluated and voted on the selections.

This year’s CAHSA Quality First winners include:

- **The Academy at Bella Vista, Boulder, for “Blending the Best of Large and Small.”** Co-managers Gary Berg and Karen McMurry received the QF award in the category of Leading-Edge Care and Services for taking on the challenge of combining the benefits of small, family-style group care homes and the conveniences and services offered by large facilities, resulting in a 10-person secure memory care home.
- **Seniors’ Resource Center, Denver, for “Senior Reach.”** Rob Wingate received the QF award in the category of Leading-Edge Care and Services for work with the Senior Reach program, a collaborative community education, referral and assertive outreach/treatment program that provides a wealth of information to assist older adults with case management and mental health concerns.
- **Grand Villa, a Bethesda Adult Community, Grand Junction, for “Building Relationships Through Worker Integration Projects.”** Judy Shue received the QF award in the category of Community Involvement for providing professional and social skills, and an opportunity-rich environment for both human interaction and work life experience training to individuals with severe developmental disabilities.

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**Quality First Awards**

- **Total Longterm Care, Denver, for “Enterprise Risk Management System.”** Vice President of Quality Initiatives Lori Rothwell received the QF award in the category of Continuous Quality Improvement after spending several months studying and consulting with TLC officers, who then selected an “Enterprise Risk Management” system, which is a process designed to identify potential events that may affect the organization and manage risk in order to provide reasonable assurance of achievement of the organization’s objectives.
- **Christian Living Communities, Denver, for “Strategic Health Insurance Management.”** Jan Roth received a QF award in the category of Human Resources Development for her efforts in a planned strategy to address problems with the spiraling cost of health insurance, the difficulty in obtaining carriers’ bids, the inconsistency in benefit compliance practices and complacency/consumer naivety regarding the real cost of health care.
- **Frasier Meadows Retirement Community, Boulder, for “Green Smart Recycling.”** Residents Marilyn Thomas Lesit and Helen Winsted received a QF award in the category of Consumer Participation for integrating a Recycling Committee into the community. Comprised solely of residents, the committee has given lectures in recycling and made colorful signs for the collection bins in the recycling rooms located on every floor.
- **Libby Bortz Assisted Living Center, Littleton, for “Community Outreach Alliances.”** Rachel Huskey received a QF award in the category of Public Trust and Consumer Confidence. The Libby Bortz Assisted Living Center has been voted “Best of the Best” for two years in a row by Colorado Community Newspapers subscribers in Englewood, Highlands Ranch and Littleton.

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**About CAHSA** ([www.cahsa.org](http://www.cahsa.org))

Established in 1968, the Colorado Association of Homes and Services for the Aging is the state’s largest non-profit organization representing a spectrum of providers that

deliver services to the elderly. More than 200 member organizations belong to CAHSA, including nursing facilities, retirement communities, independent living housing and community-based services. CAHSA advocates public policy initiatives that support individual rights, quality care, equitable access and reimbursement for seniors. CAHSA is the state affiliate for two national organizations, the Assisted Living Federation of America and the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging.

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