



# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

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## **REPRESENTATIVE HONORED BY CHILDREN'S MUSEUM AT HOLYOKE CANDARAS NAMED "GREAT FRIEND TO CHILDREN"**

**HOLYOKE**—Citing her work on behalf of the juvenile court system, the Cherish Every Child Project and “innumerable other supports to the area's youth,” the Children's Museum at Holyoke honored State Representative Gale D. Candaras (D-Wilbraham) Wednesday evening as one of two recipients of the “Great Friend to Children” during an event at The Delaney House in Holyoke. Also recognized was Dr. Robert M. Abrams of Holyoke Pediatrics.

“Throughout my career in the legislature children have been a top priority,” said Candaras. “I'm thrilled to have received this award and look forward to continuing to advocate for children in my district and throughout Massachusetts.” Earlier this year, Candaras secured \$500,000 in state funding for an oral health pilot project that will serve young children in cities such as Springfield and Holyoke.

The “Great Friend to Children” award is presented annually to individuals and institutions that have helped to build awareness of issues that reflect the needs of children, celebrate diversity and take action to build a better future.

The event also served as a fund-raiser for the museum, which is located in Holyoke's Heritage State Park. Guests too observed a violin performance by Holyoke teen Symin Charpentier, and participated in a silent auction to benefit the Museum.

Founded in 1982, the Children's Museum at Holyoke receives over 60,000 visitors each year and serves children, families, schools and groups through various events and exhibits. It enjoys a joint programming network with the Holyoke Merry-Go-Round, the Heritage State Park Visitors' Center and the Volleyball Hall of Fame.

“Part of my job is making people aware of the resources available to them and their families and helping them take advantage of these opportunities,” said Candaras. “The Children’s Museum at Holyoke is a terrific resource and was named recently in the top 12 out of more than 350 children’s museums in the country. I am proud to be honored by such an outstanding organization,” she said.

Candaras will receive another notable honor when the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA) names her Legislator of the Year for her work on behalf of senior citizens. Candaras lead the charge to increase the “Community Spouse Resource Allowance” (CSRA) to the federal maximum of \$99,000. This increase will benefit seniors whose spouses enter nursing homes. NAELA will host a dinner in Candaras’ honor on Tuesday, November 28, 2006 at the Weston Hotel in Waltham, MA.

For more information on the Children’s Museum in Holyoke, visit [www.childrensmuseumholyoke.org](http://www.childrensmuseumholyoke.org) and to learn more about Representative Candaras’ initiatives for seniors, including the Community Spouse Resource Allowance, visit [www.galecandaras.org/press\\_releases/06/Equal\\_Choice\\_PCA\\_and\\_CSRA\\_Release\\_7\\_31\\_06\\_Final\\_Draft\\_.pdf](http://www.galecandaras.org/press_releases/06/Equal_Choice_PCA_and_CSRA_Release_7_31_06_Final_Draft_.pdf).