



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WINGS Program, Inc. Awarded Two Prestigious National Domestic Violence Awards and Grant Funding

CHICAGO (May 28th, 2025) – WINGS Program, Inc. just received two distinguished Purple Ribbon Awards from DomesticShelters.org: **Interdisciplinary Team of the Year**: WINGS Housing Programs and **Intern of the Year**: Samantha Holmes. Judged by a national panel of leading domestic violence professionals, these awards ensure that recipients are among the best in their field.

The Purple Ribbon Awards winners are selected based on the size of their organization within each category. All honorees were celebrated during a virtual event held on May 22, 2025.

Out of 76 Purple Ribbon Award winners, only five agencies were selected to win an accompanying grant based on their overall rating. **WINGS Housing Program was one of the five exemplary winners earning a \$5,000 grant.**

“When they announced we won the grant over the ceremony’s livestream, the whole room erupted with cheers and excitement,” Rebecca Darr, WINGS President & CEO shares and continues, ***“This recognition and grant award comes at an uncertain time when federal funding for our many Housing Programs is at risk of being significantly reduced. Over 40 years, our Housing Programs have grown and been highly effective in empowering survivors of domestic violence to rebuild their lives. Upon leaving our Housing Programs, 97% share they are not returning to their abuser.”***

WINGS Housing Program Wins Interdisciplinary Team of the Year

WINGS Housing Program has a large portfolio of housing options to support survivors reclaim their independence. Last year alone, WINGS Housing programs served 387 people with housing and a comprehensive range of services including case management, therapeutic counseling, budgeting, permanent housing options, parenting skills groups, and more.

Two factors that make WINGS Housing Program exceptional are its diversified housing portfolio and experienced staff. At any given time, WINGS Housing Programs have **more than 150**

housing units in five different housing program models, allowing the agency to best match survivors to a program that fits their individual needs on their healing journey. Examples of WINGS Housing Program models include Shared Living Homes, Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Transitional Housing and more.

"Our Housing Team is extremely dedicated and effective. Many of our Housing Program staff have decades of experience," Darr shares, "Over the past 40 years, WINGS Housing Programs have helped create new beginnings for thousands of survivors."

Machelle works as a Senior Tenant Relations Manager for WINGS Housing Programs. She organizes move-ins and assists with any apartment-related issues. Machelle shares, "Many people come to us with just a garbage bag full of clothing. **Within 24-48 hours** of their shopping appointment at WINGS Resale, their selected furniture and housing items are delivered by our transportation team. **The clients then have a furnished apartment** and can set it up to feel like home... **One of the most exciting parts of my job is handing over the keys** to someone who hasn't had that on their own before...It's a powerful moment and the result of many WINGS teams working together."

Samantha Holmes Wins Intern of the Year

Samantha (Sam) Holmes has completed two unpaid internships with WINGS: once as an Intake Line Intern (August 2023-April 2024) and later as an Adult Counseling Intern (August 2024 – May 2025). As an Intake Line Intern, Sam screened survivors for program eligibility so thoroughly that staff would seldom have to call survivors back for clarifying information and risk re-traumatizing them. In her role as an Adult Counseling Intern, **Sam** demonstrated **initiative** and an **ongoing dedication to learning** by reorganizing WINGS referral lists and gathering client feedback in WINGS trauma practices survey.

"One quality that stands out most about Sam is her ability to **genuinely connect with people**. She worked with a client whose deep trauma caused them to struggle to trust others. Through Sam's authenticity, patience, and belief in the client's strength, they were able to build a relationship...**Sam's professionalism, warmth, and drive have left a lasting mark on WINGS,**" Megan, WINGS Director of Clinical Services shares.

Honorable Mentions

WINGS additionally nominated the following individuals who received Honorable Mentions:

- Denise Urban for Executive of the Year
- Yulizet Mojica for Hopegiver of the Year
- Sheila King for Lifetime Achievement
- Senator Cristina Castro for Outstanding Legislator

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ABOUT WINGS PROGRAM, INC.

With 40 years of experience, WINGS Program, Inc. is a premier provider of domestic violence solutions. As the largest domestic violence agency in Illinois, WINGS creates high-quality, customized, domestic violence programs for survivors of all ages, ethnicities, and gender identities. WINGS programs have provided over one million nights of safe housing, life-changing community-based counseling, award-winning mentoring programs and much more. **Anyone experiencing domestic violence can receive help by calling the 24-hour hotline at 847.221.5680. For more information, visit www.wingsprogram.com.**



WINGS Housing Program staff gather with Purple Ribbon Award.



Samantha Holmes wins Purple Ribbon Award for Intern of the Year.