**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact:
Ariel Pontius
Communications and Marketing Specialist
Highfields
517-230-7505 (cell)
apontius@highfields.org
[www.highfields.org](http://www.highfields.org)

Velrie Allen Receives Highfields’ Carl J. Latona Distinguished Service Award

*Onondaga, Michigan –* ***February 28, 2022*** – Velrie Allen, Highfields’ Residential Program Direct Services Supervisor, has been named the 2022 recipient of the Carl J. Latona Distinguished Service Award. Velrie was honored with the award at Highfields’ Employee Recognition Banquet on Saturday, February 26th at The Hidden Gem in Holt. She was chosen for the award by her peers for her leadership and dedication to Highfields.

The award recognizes integrity, passion to help others, perseverance and commitment to excellence. It is named after Carl J. Latona, who served as President and CEO of Highfields for more than 25 years.

Highfields’ CEO, Brian Philson said, “I am very pleased that Velrie is receiving this award. Her spirit is a shining example to the standard set by Carl Latona.”

Velrie is celebrating her 10th year with Highfields and has made a difference in so many lives.

 “I am deeply honored to accept this award,” said Velrie. “I'm still processing with the wonderful news. It is such a joy to see the amount of support that I have received as the news spreads!”

Velrie is so focused on the students and staff that she assists. She supports her staff and colleagues by going above and beyond the call of duty. Velrie helps put together holiday celebrations for students, such as the annual Black History Month dinner. She creates the menu, helps cook the food, and decorates. She goes the extra mile to give the students the feeling of being home while they are away from their homes.

Highfields is a nonprofit human services organization which provides home-based counseling, residential care, and experiential education and support programs for children, youth, and families in 12 mid-Michigan counties. For more information, please visit www.highfields.org.