

## In.....General Assistance

In November of this year, the Social Workers Division of TOI will reach its 41<sup>st</sup> year mark. On November 9, 1970 at the Annual Convention of the Township Officials of Illinois, 25 people met at a Seminar for Township Social Workers. Mrs. Ruth Cima, Graduate Social Worker, Oak Park, acted as the Chairman of the Seminar and the address was given by James M. Brown, Chief of Operations, Department of Public Aid, Springfield. Mr. Brown began by congratulating the group for **“having this first meeting of Township General Assistance Social Workers.”** It was suggested that all townships have their Supervisors pay Associate membership dues for each Social Worker or Administrator to Mr. Troy Kost, Secretary of the Township Officials of Illinois.

During the early years of this group, “pass the hat” was used to collect money to defray the expenses of the secretary. As the years passed, terms of office were set, suggestions were made to TOI regarding social workers being made Associate Members, and letters were mailed to all Supervisors requesting that they register their social worker/administrator for the annual conference. The conference seminars continued to present speakers from the Department of Public Aid and later, from Social Security and Unemployment. In 1975 it was suggested that an Historian be appointed and Ruth Schwarz of Alton Township volunteered. In 1976 by-laws were formally adopted. During these early years, there were two meetings held at the conference...the Seminar for Social Workers and a Joint meeting with the Supervisors Division. The group continued to request that **“Supervisors bring more of their Social Workers to future conventions so that they can keep abreast of and have insight in the organizational structure of the program because they are the ones who are making actual contact with the people in need.”** By now the group was asking for a \$2.00 donation from those who attended the State meeting to cover the cost of supplies. By 1983, it was announced that no collection would be taken as \$10 from each registration fee of the social workers attending the conference would be paid to the Social Workers Division by TOI. In 1986, George Miller, Executive Director of TOI welcomed the delegates and guests to the Social Workers

Division meeting and spoke to the **“important role that the Supervisor and Social Worker play in local government units.”**

Donations were now being made to the TOI Scholarship Fund in the amount of \$1500. In 1992 President Allers introduced Maxine Schultz, City of Bloomington Twp Supervisor and noted that Supervisor Schultz was retiring after many years of devoted service to township government. The General Assistance Training Institutes are named for Maxine Schultz. At the 1994 meeting, Bryan Smith, representing George Miller, stated that **“social workers are the driving force behind the Supervisors and that our jobs are vital and important to township government.”** He urged us to continue to be more active and visible in statewide organizations. By 1995 Divisional awards were being presented at the Awards Luncheon at the annual conference. In **1996 Greg Peline** was the first honoree named by the Social Workers Division. Since **2006** our division has honored Outstanding Social Workers: **Juanita Martinez, Wayne Township; Kimberly Owens, DuPage Township; Judy Kreklow, Algonquin Township and Jane Tischler, Wheeling Township.** In **2009 Julie Villarreal, Elk Grove Township** was presented with the President’s Choice award. The recipient of the **2010 PC award** was **NJ Enterprises** for its **VisualGA software.**

1996 was the year of Welfare Reform, the township abolishment movement, new Social Security laws regarding substance abusers, Acute Medical legislation and tax caps. As you can see, things change and things stay the same! **We have stayed the course! We make a difference!**