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**PRESTIGIOUS CARNEGIE HERO MEDALS AWARDED TO
TWO SECURITY GUARDS AT ST. CHARLES HOSPITAL**

(Port Jefferson, NY) – In its first award announcement of 2010, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission yesterday named two security guards at St. Charles Hospital as recipients of the prestigious CARNEGIE MEDAL.

Thomas Connors and Eric Surbito were awarded the medals due to their act of heroism on January 11, 2009, when they rescued Sister Alice Benedict from a convent fire on the hospital campus. The men entered the burning building without equipment and with no regard for their personal safety after they arrived on the scene and learned that Sister Alice was trapped on the second floor. Despite thick smoke, the men found the unconscious Sister and brought her to the first floor where they were met by firemen from the Port Jefferson Fire Department. Despite severe smoke inhalation, Sister Alice completely recuperated and is back to work administering to patients in Hospice.

Carnegie's "hero fund," established in 1904, is administered by a 21-member commission in Pittsburgh. The commission was charged with honoring whom the founder of the fund, Andrew Carnegie, called the "heroes of civilization," individuals whose lifesaving actions put them in stark contrast to the "heroes of barbarism, (who) maimed or killed" their fellow man. The Commission's working definition of a hero as well as its requirements for awarding the medal, remain largely those that were approved by the founder. The candidate for an award must be a civilian who voluntarily risks his or her life to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the life of another person. The rescuer must have no full measure of responsibility for the safety of the victim and there must be conclusive evidence to support the act's occurrence.

The Carnegie medal is given each year throughout the United States and Canada. Out of a total of 8,000 individuals nominated this year, 22 were awarded the medal. The most medals were awarded in New York state, a total of 6, with 2 being the security guards from St. Charles Hospital.

Both Connors and Surbito insist that they are not heroes and what they did is part of their job. However, Jim O'Connor, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, St. Charles, stated, "We are extraordinarily proud of Tom and Eric for being recognized as among a select few across our country and throughout Canada who receive this high honor. Their courage and bravery in is a shining example of true heroism. We are forever grateful to them for saving the life of one of our beloved Daughters of Wisdom."

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