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Sharon Pierce Awarded Sagamore of the Wabash

Indianapolis, IND. – Sharon Pierce, President & CEO of The Villages and **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana, received the Sagamore of the Wabash Award during The Villages' Annual Fulton Training Conference. James Payne, Director of the Indiana Department of Child Services, presented Pierce with the distinguished award on behalf of Governor Mitch Daniels. The award is the state's highest honor, which the Governor of Indiana bestows. It is a personal tribute given to those who have rendered a distinguished service to the state or to the governor.

Sharon Pierce has served as The Villages' President and CEO for seventeen years. Before joining the organization, Sharon was the Deputy Director for the Indiana Division of Family and Children, overseeing Indiana's state child welfare system. Her experience also includes positions with the Children's Home & Aid Society of Illinois, Youth Advocate Program and Illinois Collaboration on Youth.

"Sharon has been a passionate, tireless and effective advocate for children for decades," said James Payne, Director, Indiana Department of Child Services. "Her involvement in so many areas of child welfare has prepared her to be known as a leader of leaders locally, statewide and nationally. She has earned the respect and trust of so many people and is the perfect example of what a recipient of The Sagamore of the Wabash should be."

Pierce is a member of numerous boards and service organizations promoting the best interests of children. Among her many affiliations, Pierce served on the National Board of Directors for the Child Welfare League of America and provides child welfare training; and is on the organization's National CEO Advisory Board. She currently serves on the National Board of Directors of Prevent Child Abuse America. In addition, she chairs the IARCCA Public Policy Committee and the IARCCA Institute for Excellence. Pierce has worked with the Indiana General Assembly on numerous legislative initiatives which impact children and families. She served on the Board for Child Care Coordination, the Commission on Abused and Neglected Children, currently chairs the Healthy Families Indiana Think Tank, and serves on the Guardian Scholars Advisory Board

Pierce is married and has four children and one grandchild. She and her husband reside in Zionsville.

About the Sagamore of the Wabash: *The Sagamore of the Wabash award was created during the term of Governor Ralph Gates, who served from 1945 to 1949. The term "sagamore" was used by the American Indian Tribes of the northeastern United States to describe a lesser chief or a great man among the tribe to whom the true chief would look for wisdom and advice. Each governor since Gates has presented the certificates in their own way. The award is the highest honor bestowed by the Governor of Indiana. It is a personal tribute usually given to those who have rendered a distinguished service to the state or to the governor.*

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About The Villages: *The Villages, Indiana's largest not-for-profit child and family services agency, serves more than 1,400 children and their families each day. Their vision is that every child will flourish in a healthy, nurturing, self-sufficient family. www.villageskids.org.*

About Prevent Child Abuse Indiana: *As a Division of The Villages, **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana serves as a catalyst for preventing child abuse in all its forms and thereby enhancing the quality of life for children and families in Indiana. **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana is the state's chartered member of Prevent Child Abuse America. www.pcain.org*

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