



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Cortland County Health Department

CORTLAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE – Cortland County Board of Health

The Cortland County Board of Health has awarded the 2015 John B. Bennett Public Health Award to Christella Yonta for her significant contributions to the promotion of public health in Cortland County. This award was established in 1979 to recognize members of the community, either professionals in the health field or lay people, for distinguished volunteer service in the advancement of public health in Cortland County. The award is named for Mr. John B. Bennett, who served on the Board of Health from 1949 to 1976, many of those years as president or vice president.

Ms. Yonta is on the staff of Seven Valleys Health Coalition where she is the Project Coordinator for its Healthy NOW program and administers the Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work and Play Grant. Her work at SVHC has involved establishing and promoting the use of neighborhood trails, creating community gardens, fostering transportation policies that ensure streets are safe and accessible for all users, and enhancing the variety and visibility of fruits and vegetables in convenience stores. She has been engaged in the administration of a 5-county diabetes prevention program, and research and development of the Cortland Counts annual community assessment.

Ms. Yonta’s dedication to public health is evidenced by the extensive interactions between her job responsibilities and volunteerism. Her work in public health does not stop at her office door. She has been a major contributor to a wide variety of health and wellness programs for the City of Cortland, Cortland County (serving on its Youth Bureau Board and Traffic Safety Board), Cortland City Schools, St. Mary’s School, the YMCA, and TC3 (the Leadership Cortland Project and Backpacks for Kids in Care). She has been a board member for United Way for Cortland County (including serving as 2011-2012 campaign Co-Chair), CAPCO (serving on its Hunger Coalition and Policy Council), the Cortland Child Development Center, and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Sincerely

Barry L. Batzing, Ph.D.
President, Cortland County Board of Health