

## 2018 Outstanding Service Award

On Thursday, July 12, Martha Ritter was presented with the 2018 Outstanding Service Award for SWWC. The award was presented at the Minnesota Service Cooperatives Annual Conference held July 11-13 at Cragun's Resort in Brainerd.

Martha began working at SWWC in 2001 and retired this past March. During her 17 years, her impact on programming for our members is evident by the growth of our third party billing services. Beginning July 2000, Minnesota public schools were required by statute to seek reimbursement from insurers and similar third parties for the costs provided by the district whenever the services were otherwise covered by the child's health coverage. SWWC worked with the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Human Services to formulate a program to address third party billing. Martha was involved in building these services from the ground up.

Over the years, Martha served on the MDE's State Advisory Committee on third party billing and was a member and presenter for N.A.M.E. (National Alliance of Medicaid in Education). She initially provided support to schools in the Montevideo area, but eventually expanded to support all schools in the SWWC 18-county region necessitating the need for a second third party billing assistant.

Dellynne Monson, a third party billing assistant who was trained by Martha and worked alongside her the past four years, states "Martha has been an instrumental and vital part of making sure that everything required to bill is being done in a timely and compliant matter. She created all the tools and necessary correspondence and updates for everyone. She has tirelessly advocated for our districts and providers whenever necessary with DHS and MDE. Her work and passion should not go unrecognized - for without her effort, this program would not be what it is today."

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of dollars that Martha has helped bring to school districts through third party billing over the past 17 years. The total for 2017 was nearly \$2.5 million ... so it's fair to assume the number is high and has benefited our member school districts greatly!

Nine individuals were honored at the awards banquet - one representing each of the nine service cooperatives. Recipients exercise leadership, support the regional delivery system, contribute to the board of directors' work, and advance the goals and philosophies of the Minnesota Service Cooperatives. They embody the spirit of cooperation and apply that to their roles at their service cooperative. Honorees have a unique understanding of the strengths and needs of their members, and use those insights to positively influence and improve outcomes.

Shown left to right in photo below are: SWWC Board Chair Maydra Maas, Martha Ritter, SWWC Executive Director Cliff Carmody.

