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Social Security expert will speak at WilPower

Northfield, Ill., March 31, 2005 - Michelle Lawrence of the U.S. Department of Human Services will speak at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 11, 2005, at WilPower Inc., a mental-health agency at 444 Frontage Rd., Northfield.

WilPower provides psychiatric rehabilitation and supportive housing for people disabled by chronic mental illnesses on the North Shore. It holds once-a-month meetings for families and members of the community, often featuring a prominent speaker.

Ms. Lawrence, M. A., is a benefits specialist for the Division of Rehabilitation Services Benefits Planning Project. The project is the result of a grant from the Social Security Administration. The benefits planning project helps recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) understand the impact of earning on cash benefits through individualized detailed written analysis.

Prior to accepting this position, Ms. Lawrence held various positions in the field of behavioral science. As a counselor she has worked with a variety of populations in chemical dependency, crisis intervention and psychotherapy. Ms. Lawrence received her master's degree from Roosevelt University in clinical professional psychology and she is certified through Cornell University as a benefits specialist. She is also an adjunct faculty member at Triton College, teaching a variety of classes in psychology.

WilPower, a not-for-profit agency supported by government funds, user fees and contributions from the community, serves nearly 200 members in day programs at its clubhouse at 444 Frontage Rd., Northfield, and operates permanent housing for 39 members in Glencoe, Morton Grove, Skokie and Wilmette. It has provided rehabilitation and housing to residents of the North Shore since 1989.