



BARBARA V. PÉREZ/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Rose Jorgensen of Lake Mary holds her award from the nonprofit LINGOs.

Volunteer of Year helps aid workers

OutStart's Rose Jorgensen put the zing into an online stress-reduction course.

By **ANDREA STANLEY**
SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL

Where there are disasters, from Florida's hurricanes to Africa's hunger and AIDS, there usually are humanitarian workers. A vital line of support for those workers connects to Central Florida.

Rose Jorgensen of Lake Mary designed an online training course to help relief workers around the world cope with traumatic stress. It has become so useful that Jorgensen

was recently honored as Volunteer of the Year by a group that helps international aid organizations.

"Many of us are not familiar with what these workers do and how they struggle to do their job and maintain some level of personal sanity," said Jorgensen, 52.

"They are becoming stressed to the level they are becoming traumatized. So it is necessary to get information to these workers on coping strategies."

Jorgensen became involved with the project when her employer, OutStart, a software company with an office in Lake Mary, wanted to donate services to the nonprofit

LINGOs — Learning for International Non-Governmental Organizations — which assists with training.

LINGOs' problem: a lengthy and hard-to-negotiate instruction booklet.

One of the businesses the group works with, the Headington Institute based in California, provides mental and spiritual support for relief workers and had created the booklet to help workers cope with stress.

"We wanted to keep the core product and turn it from a one-dimensional product to a multidimen-

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Volunteer of Year helps aid workers feel better

AID FROM H1

sional product — the same story, but a different experience,” said Lisa McKay, director of training and education services with the Headington Institute.

That was Jorgensen’s forte.

An instructional designer for eight years, Jorgensen creates online learning products. She also has a background in psychology and teaching. So, along with her husband, Steve, also an instructional designer, she immersed herself in the task.

“It is kind of like I am an architect — an architect of learning,” Jorgensen said.

After four months, she surfaced with a revamped online learning experience.

The text was shortened and the dull slides were jazzed up with multimedia interactions.

“My goal was to take the core information and make it understandable and motivational for these workers,” she said. “I wanted to take the rough content and put it into a format that is pleasing to look at.”

The course, which is offered online for free through Headington’s Web site, has become a best-seller in its field. In addition to the online version, thousands of compact discs have been shipped off to areas where the Internet is not available.

“Literally, workers on every continent have access to this,” said Eric Berg, executive director of LINGOs. “You could practically pick a country, and it would have been there. Certainly all of

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LINGOs rewarded Jorgensen for her work April 14, when she was presented with its 2008 Volunteer of the Year award.

“Rose is not only amazingly talented, but she does everything with an incredibly positive attitude,” Berg said.

Jorgensen was surprised.

“When you have an organization like LINGOs, and all of the organizations that come under their umbrella, there are so many people who do and give so much,” she said. “To me, these people are amazing. For somebody like me to be compared to them, well, I am a very small drop in a very large bucket.”

But Jorgensen’s small drop has touched thousands, and Headington is working to increase that number. It is translating the course into French, Spanish and Portuguese.

However, Jorgensen is already off on her next project for LINGOs — a styles and standards guide for creating online courses.

“I just really enjoy doing it,” she said.