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For Immediate Release

The NJCDD Honors Outstanding Community Leaders at the 2012 Community Building Awards Luncheon

Trenton – The [New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities](http://www.njcdd.org) (NJCDD) will honor eight individuals and organizations that have shown leadership in promoting inclusive communities at the annual **Community Building Awards Luncheon**. The event will be held at the **Lafayette Yard Marriott** in Trenton, NJ on **Wednesday, April 18 at 11:30 am**.

In addition to honoring this year's Community Building Awards recipients, The Council has invited Commissioner Sharon Lewis of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Administration on Developmental Disabilities to deliver a keynote address at the event.

The Recipients of the 2012 Community Building Awards are:

Colleen Frasier Self Advocate Award – Robert Fesel (Lawrenceville)

Elizabeth Boggs Family Member Advocate Award – Kathy Roberson (Middlesex) & Marianne Pettineo (Fairlawn)

Lifetime Achievement Award – Richard West (Tuckerton)

Distinguished DD Systems Change Award – Lowell Arye (Deputy Commissioner – NJ Dept. of Human Services)

Access Above and Beyond Award – ANI Medical Transportation (South Orange)

Exceptional Policymaker Award – Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald (D – District 6)

Fellowship in Inclusive Education Award – Lisa Benjamin (Long Beach Island Consolidated School District)

Established in 2008, the Community Building Awards are intended to show encouragement, support, and recognition to individuals and organizations that have exhibited an exceptional commitment to promoting community inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities. Eight awards were created to honor the hard work and dedication of these community leaders.

Each year, the NJCDD looks to members of the community to help us identify outstanding individuals and organizations within the community. Whether a devoted educator, a visionary community leader, or a diligent advocate, the Council believes such individuals or organizations should be commended and given

the acknowledgment they deserve. The public is invited to make nominations for award recipients in early January and awards are handed out at a ceremony every April.

About the Keynote Speaker

Sharon Lewis was appointed Commissioner of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities in March 2010. Prior to her appointment she served as the Senior Disability Policy Advisor to the U.S. House Committee on Education & Labor, advising members of the Committee on legislative strategy and disability related policy issues in education, employment, and healthcare; and as a Kennedy Public Policy Fellow for the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Children and Families.

In Oregon, Sharon managed the Oregon Partners in Policymaking Program, working with individuals with disabilities and family members to participate in policy decisions at all levels. She also worked on public policy for the Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition and The Arc and served as co-chair of the Oregon Family Action Coalition Team.

Sharon is the parent of three daughters, including one with a disability. She is a native of Michigan and a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, MO.

About the NJCDD

Since its establishment in 1971, the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities has pursued its mandate to ensure that people with developmental disabilities and their families have every opportunity to participate in the design and implementation of programs, services, and supports that promote self-determination and community inclusion.

Through outreach, leadership and advocacy programs, and through innovative grant projects, the Council works to realize its vision that all individuals with developmental disabilities have the opportunity to be active members of their community; to set real goals and make their own choices; and to exercise the same rights, privileges, responsibilities, and opportunities that any other New Jersey resident enjoys.

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