Mayor Ballard Presents 2009 Access and Inclusion Awards to Local Recipients

City accepts national award for accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities

INDIANAPOLIS—Mayor Greg Ballard joined the members of the Mayor’s Advisory Council on Disability today to present the 2009 Access and Inclusion Awards to three local recipients and to accept the 2009 Accessible America Award from the National Organization on Disability.

“Indianapolis is successful when everyone has the opportunity to contribute,” said Mayor Ballard. “The individuals and organizations that we honor today with the Access and Inclusion Awards demonstrate that inclusion is not simply the right thing to do, but is also the smart thing to do.”

The 2009 Accessible America Award from the National Organization on Disability (NOD) recognized Indianapolis as a national model of a disability-friendly city. The competition showcased best practices in accessibility and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in community life.

“This award reflects decades of commitment to a barrier-free philosophy that has led to an inclusive Indianapolis,” said Juli Paini, Coordinator of the Indianapolis Office of Disability Affairs.

NOD applauded Indianapolis for its historic commitment to access, including the creation of the Indianapolis Business Leadership Network, a business-led endeavor that promotes employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It also highlighted the universally accessible features along the Cultural Trail and the efforts of Mayor’s Advisory Council on Disability in distinguishing Indianapolis from other communities. Additionally, NOD cited the City’s partnerships with the Veterans Administration, Bosma Enterprises and the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired in providing internships for students and adult jobseekers with disabilities, as well as training exercises for contractors regarding physical access.

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As part of the recognition from NOD, the City received a check for $25,000, sponsored by the AARP. The money will be used to support access and inclusion for persons with disabilities and seniors in Indianapolis.

Approximately 20 percent of Indianapolis residents have a disability, and that number is expected to increase as medical technology saves more lives, baby boomers age and veterans return from combat.

The recipients of the 2009 Mayor’s Advisory Council on Disability Access and Inclusion Awards are:

**Employer Category:** Community Health Network
Community Health Network has been a model employer and has an active interest in diversifying its workforce and increasing disability awareness at the worksite. In addition, it has been an active partner in Indiana’s Project SEARCH pilot, providing quality work experiences for students with significant disabilities. Community has gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that Project SEARCH students and staff were welcomed into business sites. The organization has provided an ideal classroom space for students and has been very instrumental in helping secure internship sites at various departments throughout Community Hospital East.

**Accessibility Category:** CICOA's Lifelong Living Initiative (LLCI)
LLCI assists individuals with limited resources, many of whom also have a disability, to stay safely in their residence of choice. The initiative enables residents to stay in their homes in a safe environment and encourages homeowners to stay active in all aspects of community life.

**James Pauley Lifetime Service Award:** Janna Shisler, J.D., LL.M.
Janna Shisler is a local attorney known to her colleagues as a person who breaks down the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities every day. Shisler has held positions with the Indiana Teachers Retirement Fund and the Hoosier Lottery and has served as a Diversity Committee member of the Indianapolis Bar Association and the Indianapolis Mayor’s Diversity Task Force, the Indiana Governor’s Planning Council for People with Disabilities, the Julian Center Board of Directors, and the Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana Foundation Board.

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