MAYOR PRESENTS 2011 ACCESS AND INCLUSION AWARDS TO LOCAL RECIPIENTS

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard joined members of the Mayor’s Advisory Council on Disability today to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and present the 2011 Access and Inclusion Awards.

“This year’s recipients have shown an extraordinary commitment to promoting accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities,” said Mayor Ballard. “As the City works to expand and ensure accessibility and inclusion throughout Indianapolis, so do these recipients through unique initiatives that produce concrete, impactful results.”

The 2011 Access and Inclusion Awards celebrate the 21st anniversary of the signing of the ADA, a historic piece of civil rights legislation that mandates equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities. In enacting the ADA, Congress declared that the United States’ proper goals are to assure that persons with disabilities have equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency.

The National Organization on Disability selected Indianapolis to receive its Accessible America Award in 2009, heralding the City as a national model for its focus on disability issues and successful design of programs, services and facilities that are accessible for citizens and visitors who have disabilities.

The recipients of the 2011 Mayor’s Advisory Council on Disability Access and Inclusion Awards are:

**Accessibility Award:** The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis

The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis adheres to a purposeful exhibit development process with universal design in mind including checklists for key elements and strategies to make exhibits accessible to all users. The checklists include the use of closed-captioning for all audio and video presentations and the incorporation of touchable elements in each exhibit. From its famous Carousel, which is physically accessible, to the new exhibit *National Geographic Treasures of the Earth*, which includes adjustable exhibits, accessible dig pits and an exciting elevator “transport” entry, the museum is committed to providing an accessible experience for all guests.

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**Employer Award:** The Hospitality Certification Program
The Hospitality Certification Program promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities who experience homelessness in Indianapolis by providing training and employment services that help people re-engage in the community. Individuals receive training in 13 types of jobs in the customer service and hospitality industry. Over 30 employers have hired at least one program graduate, and through this process people of Indianapolis with disabilities who are homeless build their self-esteem, find a fulfilling career, obtain stable housing, participate in community life and follow their dreams.

**The James Pauley Lifetime Service Award:** Deborah McCarty
Deborah (Deb) McCarty started her long career as a disability advocate in the 1970s. Immediately upon college graduation, she began working in the area of residential services for people with disabilities. Subsequently, she worked with the Indiana University Institute on Disability and Community focusing on school to work transitions for youth with disabilities. Deborah has since led the formation of the Back Home in Indiana Alliance, an educational and advocacy coalition that focuses on building capacity and organizing community resources to respond to the needs of people with disabilities and increase awareness about the opportunities they have to live in safe, accessible, affordable homes.

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