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Occupations Foundation, Inc. 2008 Gala to Honor Sullivan Renaissance and Founder, Sandra Gerry

April 15, 2008

ORANGE & SULLIVAN COUNTIES, NY – Occupations Foundation, Inc. will honor Sullivan Renaissance and Sandra Gerry, founder, as the recipient of the 2008 “Vision of Hope” Award at the third annual Gala and Award Dinner on Saturday, September 20 at Anthony’s Pier 9 in New Windsor.

Sullivan Renaissance was created when volunteers responded to Ms. Gerry’s vision that Sullivan County could enhance the appearance of its communities while building pride and a “can do” spirit among the residents. Now entering its eighth year, Sullivan Renaissance has grown into a year-round program involving thousands of volunteers from all 15 towns. In addition to grants for beautification efforts like welcome signs and gardens, Sullivan Renaissance works directly with communities to plan and revitalize Main Streets and neighborhoods. Grant programs involve young people, municipalities, businesses and seasonal communities. Recently, solar lights in were installed in three communities and environmental demonstration grants awarded throughout the county.

“It is an honor and a privilege to recognize Sullivan Renaissance and Sandra Gerry for helping to bring people together to improve communities in Sullivan County,” said Jim DeStefano, Occupations president and CEO.

In addition to her community beautification and environmental efforts, Ms. Gerry has chaired the Sullivan County Community College Foundation’s Annual Scholarship Benefit Gala for the last fifteen years. This Gala has raised over a million dollars in scholarship money. She is President of the Beaverkill Foundation, established by her and her husband Alan, to assist charitable causes in Sullivan County. She also serves on the board of the Gerry Foundation, Inc., the family foundation whose mission is to benefit the county economy by

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developing the world class performing arts center, Bethel Woods, at the site of the original Woodstock Festival in Bethel.

“We started working with Sullivan Renaissance last year to remove unsightly and unsafe buildings, and one could see a positive difference in Sullivan County,” said James W. Taylor, Jr., President of Taylor Recycling, who is the Dinner Chair of this fundraising effort.

“I am delighted to serve for my third year as the Chairman of the Occupations Foundation Gala Committee. Occupations, Inc. is an organization that I support and truly believe in – I believe in its staff and its mission to help people with special needs live healthy, satisfying and independent lives,” commented Jim Taylor.

The funds raised through this special event enable the Foundation to further support Occupations Foundation’s capital project for renovation plans for 21 and 23 Grand Street in the City of Newburgh. This capital project clearly supports the services which are essential to addressing the mental health and child welfare needs of the children, families and adults of this high need community.

Sponsorship and journal ad opportunities are available at various levels, and the cost of an individual dinner for the “Vision of Hope” Award Dinner is \$150 per person. For reservations and sponsorships, please call Patti Archiere at 845-692-4454, ext. 101, or visit www.occupations.org for details.

Occupations Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization established to raise funds in support of the programs and services of Occupations, Inc.

Occupations, Inc., programs include outpatient mental health services, case management, child welfare, emergency services, residential services, and employment opportunities to people with developmental disabilities and individuals recovering from mental illness. Occupations, Inc., also provides an extensive transportation system throughout Orange County. **Occupations will celebrate 45 years of services in September 2008.** All of Occupations, Inc.’s services can be accessed 24-hours a day, seven-days-a-week, through one toll-free call to the Service Access Center at **1-888-750-2266.**