



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Occupations Foundation, Inc. Celebrates Hudson Valley Disability Awareness Month Honoring Individuals from our Communities

ORANGE COUNTY, NY--- On Sunday, October 4, 2009, Occupations Foundation, Inc. held a celebration brunch in recognition of Governor Paterson's recent proclamation declaring October as Hudson Valley Disability Awareness Month. More than 200 people gathered to celebrate the outstanding achievements of individuals in our communities.

Those honored for outstanding achievements by the Occupations Foundation, Inc. were Harvey Rosenthal, Executive Director of New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, Inc. , Donna Ponessa, Nurse Evaluator for Westchester Independent Living Center's Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) Waiver Program, 15 year old Liam Manak from the Town of Greenville, Frances Hoffman of Newburgh and the participants of the Personalized Recovery Orientated Services (PROS) program of Occupations, Inc. The awards were presented by Orange County's Commissioner of Mental Health, Chris Ashman; and Hudson Valley Developmental Disabilities Services Office's Deputy Director of Support Services, Jacklyn E. Spring.

Award recipient, Donna Ponessa, commented, "My goal is to live life to its fullest. I won't allow my disability to define who I am. I can't get caught up in the semantics of whether or not I'm a person with a disability, a wheelchair user, ventilator dependent, and MS'er; please just call me Donna."

The Occupations Foundation partnered with Provident Bank as its Brunch Sponsor, and several other community organizations and leaders to sponsor this elegant event. James W. Taylor, Jr., President of Taylor Recycling Facility was chair for this fundraising initiative of the Occupations Foundation, Inc. and Graham M. Skea, was honorary chair.

"Truly one of the most inspirational events I have ever attended. The individuals honored were true examples of courage, hope, and self determination. We are also blessed to have such a dynamic service system in our communities to assist people with disabilities, live independently and achieve their goals." commented Graham M. Skea.

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.

Page 2

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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. For more than 45 years, the Occupations, Inc., System of Services, a not-for-profit agency, has provided 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. Its affiliate, Family Empowerment Council, Inc, provides services to people with disabilities, including service coordination and case management, mental health family support, early intervention, educational advocacy, consumer-directed personal care, residential habilitation and respite services. New Dynamics Corporation, a not-for-profit sister corporation of Occupations, Inc., is a leader in providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. 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.

For more information on the Occupations Foundations, Inc., or for information on how you can help, please contact Wendi Chason, Director of Development at (845) 692-4454, ext. 136 or visit the website at www.occupations.org.

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**PHOTOS CAN BE EMAILED UPON REQUEST
IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT OUR AWARD
RECIPIENTS, PLEASE CONTACT PARCHIERE@OCCUPATIONS.ORG**