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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Two individuals of Solon City Schools honored for their significant impact on the local community of individuals with disabilities**

April 2014

CLEVELAND - Alison Edie, M.S., Ed, and Justin Bachman are being honored at the Milestones 12th Annual Autism Spectrum Disorder Conference in June for their selfless efforts to educate the local community and improve the lives of people of all abilities.

Edie will be awarded the Outstanding Educator Award for her commitment to improving the lives of her students and their families. As an Intensive Instruction Resource Room teacher at Orchard School in Solon, she works with a diverse group of students with special needs, teaching individuals with autism and other disabilities. She is constantly differentiating instruction to create student-specific supports to meet each child's needs.

“Alison schedules family conferences which is above and beyond what is expected of her,” Eden Meihls, school psychologist at Solon City Schools, said when she nominated Edie. “She invites family members to her classroom in an effort to increase consistency of programming for her students … asking for no recognition or compensation.”

Edie’s effort to align at-school and at-home educating started when she founded her own non-profit called Huge Possibilities in 2007 while working on her Master’s degree. The mission was to educate the immediate and extended families of children with special needs, focusing on giving families the tools and training they need to continue to provide a positive home environment for the child. Edie now brings this philosophy to her classroom through her Family Dinner Program. The Family Dinner is an evening presentation to family members about their child’s specific needs, including a workshop of open dialogue between family members on how to best help the families during daily routines.

Bachman, an 11th grader at Solon High School, will be awarded the Teen Trailblazer Award for his creation of the Tolerance Fair, an annual event that brings together non-profit and resource organizations to teach people how to get involved in community service, find resources and help people deal with their differences.

“Justin took a personal challenge and found a way, through the support of his dedicated family and friends, to create a positive message for all of us to strive towards,” Ilana Hoffer Skoff, Milestones executive director and co-founder, said.

His accomplishments came after learning how to deal with his personal challenges. Bachman has Tourette’s syndrome, a neurological disorder that causes his body to make involuntary movements and noises; severe ADHD, which makes it difficult to concentrate; and dysgraphia, a fine motor skills disorder resulting in the inability to write legibly. Years of being bullied, three attempts to end his life before age 11 and a year confined to a wheelchair due to his disabilities is what inspired him to create the Tolerance Fair for others going through some of the same challenges.

Along with Alison Edie and Justin Bachman, three other individuals will be honored at the Conference for their efforts to provide services and supports for individuals with disabilities including: Diane DePasquale-Hagerty, executive director of Medina Creative Housing, receiving the Community Innovator Award; Sarah Rintamaki, executive director of Connecting for Kids, receiving the Parent Tribute Award; and Sister Agnesmarie LoPorto, president of Julie Billiart School, receiving the Professional Excellence Award.

Milestones 12th Annual Autism Spectrum Disorder Conference will be June 18-19 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Cleveland I-X Center. Parents and professionals are invited to attend and enjoy over 75 educational workshops. New to this year, the Conference will offer exclusive new parent features, a Medical Track, Employment Track and more. National keynotes include Dr. Peter Gerhardt, EdD, national autism consultant, and Brittany Lauber and Justin Rooney, self-advocates and co-chairs of the Ohio State University/Central Ohio Chapter of the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network. Find more information and register at milestones.org.

**About Milestones Autism Resources**

Founded in 2003, Milestones Autism Resources, previously known as Milestones Autism Organization, helps individuals with autism throughout Northeast Ohio reach their unique potential and is the first call for help at each transition of an individual’s life. Milestones focuses on **educating** and **coaching** for family members and professionals in evidence-based practical strategies. Its conferences, workshops, professional development, referral calls and online resources **connect** the autism community with vital information, and each other. Milestones serves more than 1,500 people each year and reaches 34,000 unique visitors through its website, milestones.org, that provides more than 900 autism resources.

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