

Its founders say that one of Milestones' most important missions is to provide information. They have fielded calls from child life workers at hospitals, directors of teen youth groups, school personnel and, most often, parents and relatives.

"We help parents think through how to begin meeting the challenges they are facing," says Skoff. "We connect people; we tell them where they can get help."

In the future, Gelles and Skoff hope that Milestones will be able to help parents obtain objective needs assessments for their children with autism. They also would like the organization to address social, recreational, vocational and housing needs for young adults with the disorder.

While the women have done the lion's share of work in establishing and running Milestones, they are quick to recognize the contributions of

their spouses. Rabbi Joshua Hoffer Skoff came up with the name Milestones, while Joe Buchwald Gelles, who owns a graphic design firm, created all the organization's printed materials.

The other IDEA honorees include Robert Ross of Solon, principal of Cuyahoga East Vocational Education Consortium (CEVEC) for the past seven years; University Heights resident James Dunne, former director of the Eleanor Gerson School in Cleveland; and Scott Kendis, a 2004 graduate of Beachwood High School with learning disabilities resulting from a brain tumor. He successfully litigated against his local board of education allowing him to graduate with his class and continue to receive necessary educational services.

*For information about IDEA or tickets for the Nov. 16 event call 216-371-9874.*

skahn@cjn.org