

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**12th Annual Milestones Autism Spectrum Disorder Conference offers new exclusive parent features, a Medical Track and an Employment Track**

April 8, 2014

CLEVELAND - Milestones Autism Resources, formerly known as Milestones Autism Organization, is pleased to announce its 12th Annual Autism Spectrum Disorder Conference to be held on Wednesday, June 18, and Thursday, June 19, from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the Cleveland I-X Center.

The Conference brings family members and professionals in the field of autism together to share evidence-based practical strategies and best practices. Attendees can engage in more than 75 educational workshops focusing on practical, field-tested ideas and be inspired by the national keynotes: Dr. Peter Gerhardt, EdD, National Autism Consultant, and Brittany Lauber and Justin Rooney, Self Advocates. The two-day event will also provide the opportunity to network and visit with dozens of exhibits featuring autism-specific products and services.

For the first time, the Milestones Autism Spectrum Disorder Conference will offer exclusive parent features, a Medical Track and an Employment Track.

Parents will have a separate check-in area at the Conference Center and staff will be readily available to guide them in selecting which workshops to attend. Parents will have the option of attending a special networking luncheon where they will meet with other parents and family members through facilitated, round-table discussions. Tables will be divided based on child’s age on Wednesday and by areas of interest on Thursday.

Medical professionals including physicians, nurses and physician assistants can earn Continuing Medical Education (CME) in Medical Track sessions on Thursday, June 19. These educational workshops will increase the knowledge and skills that medical professionals use to provide services to patients with autism. Workshop topics include: making doctor visits smoother for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), advances in ASD research, alternative therapies for treating individuals with ASD and more. The Medical Track was planned in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint providership of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and Milestones.

Thursday will also include the new Employment Track for adults with ASD, families, job coaches, employment specialists and transition coordinators. Participants will learn hands-on strategies to support adults with ASD in the workplace. Workshop topics include: hard skills get you hired and soft skills get you fired, practical tips and strategies for job coaches, maximizing a student’s transition years in high school to lay the foundation for employment and more.

This year’s Milestones Annual Autism Spectrum Disorder Conference is made possible by multiple sponsors including the Cleveland Clinic, John Carroll University, the Organization for Autism Research, Rock the House, University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children’s Hospital and others.

The Annual Conference first started in 2003 after Milestones’ co-founders Ilana Hoffer Skoff and Mia Buchwald Gelles met in the waiting room of their children’s speech therapist’s office. As they began talking, they realized they both had a great deal in common and began mentoring each other through the ups and downs of autism. They shared hopes and dreams for their children, but more importantly, they shared what was working with their children and learned from each other. They realized small steps added up, and they saw their children make real progress using Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). The question in their minds shifted from, “How can we help our children?” to “How can we help other families?”

Milestones was born. The determined duo decided that what Cleveland needed was a major autism conference, and they took on the task of the first Milestones Autism Spectrum Disorder Conference.

On August 4, 2003, 400 people flooded Milestones Autism Resources’ full-day Conference. The success of the Conference was a clear indication that an organization like Milestones was a necessity in Northeast Ohio and motivated the two to continue with their mission and evolve the Conference and the organization into what it is today.

***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. Each year, Milestones serves 1,500 individuals. Its website, milestones.org, connects 34,000 unique visitors to more than 900 autism resources.

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