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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REM Ohio Team To Be Recognized for Outstanding Service and Achievement

AKRON, OH - REM Ohio, a provider of human services to adults living with developmental disabilities, announced today that a team of employees from their Cleveland office, will receive the Outstanding Team Award from the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) at the organization's annual awards ceremony, in Columbus, Ohio on October 28, 2009. The outstanding team will be honored for the work they have done with adults with Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS). The team is comprised of Mary K. Ziccardi, area administrator; Sara Clemson, regional director; Laura Orozco, program director; and Tina DiDino, health services nurse.

PWS is a complex genetic condition that affects many parts of the body. In infancy, this condition is characterized by weak muscle tone, feeding difficulties, poor growth, and delayed development. Beginning in childhood, affected individuals develop an insatiable appetite and chronic overeating. As a result, most experience rapid weight gain leading to obesity and other chronic diseases linked to obesity.

Over 15 years ago, this team came together to research, plan and develop the first community home in Ohio that specialized in the unique environmental needs and supports for adults with PWS. Collectively, they have provided the vision and leadership to create a community home and support system that now serves as the benchmark not only statewide, but has also influenced nationwide standards of care. Today, the team continues to work together to expand services and community options for persons with PWS. Team member, Ziccardi, is a contributor to the 3rd edition of the book "Management of Prader-Willi Syndrome" - specifically the residential chapter. She is also a featured PWS expert on the Prader-Willi Syndrome Association (USA) and Prader-Willi California Foundation's DVD, "Understanding the Student with Prader-Willi Syndrome;" has recently completed her third, three-year term on the PWSA's (USA) Board of Directors; and consults and trains on both residential and educational programs on a national and international level.

"I believe that it is safe to say that this team's personal dedication to people with Prader-Willi Syndrome has directly contributed to greater longevity and an enhanced quality of life for these individuals and their families," said Carla Parker, state director, REM Ohio. "Their development of services, advocacy for human rights, and education of others, clearly demonstrates excellence and a life mission to serve others."

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Since its inception in 1991, OPRA annually recognizes those individuals and organizations that have demonstrated outstanding service and achievement in the field of mental retardation and developmental disabilities in Ohio.

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About REM Ohio

REM Ohio provides an array of high-quality services for people with developmental disabilities and other complex conditions throughout Ohio, with a state headquarters located in Akron, Ohio and regional offices in Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati. The company currently employs 605 full time and 324 part time employees. The individuals and families supported by REM Ohio have a variety of needs, all of which are met within the communities where they live, work and play. Because each person's needs and preferences are different - an often change over time - REM Ohio offers a range of community-based residential and non-residential programs and supports.

REM Ohio is a partner of The MENTOR Network, an organization dedicated to providing high-quality, community-based services to adults and children of all abilities, headquartered in Boston, MA. Founded in 1980, The MENTOR Network has evolved from a single residential program to a national network of local human services providers, offering an array of services to adults and children with developmental disabilities, acquired brain injuries or other catastrophic injuries and illnesses; youth with emotional, behavioral and medically complex challenges; and elders in need of home care.

About OPRA

The Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) is a statewide association of service providers, and a leader in efforts to collaboratively build a statewide service system to meet the needs of our ultimate customers - Ohioans with mental retardation and developmental disabilities.

Founded in 1974, OPRA is a non-profit organization that represents community-based providers of services to individuals with disabilities. At the beginning of de-institutionalization, OPRA supported efforts to move Ohio's citizens with developmental disabilities from large state-operated institutions into small, privately owned, community-based residential settings. Today, while still offering community-based services in supervised residential settings, we also are providing individualized supports to adults and children in their own homes, as well as vocational and employment assistance.