



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Autism Society Names OCALI 2010 Autism Champion**

*OCALI Receives National Recognition for Leadership and Contributions to the Autism Community*

COLUMBUS, OH -- The Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) is a recipient of a 2010 Autism Champion award presented by the Autism Society.

Autism Champion awards are given to organizations or persons who have made significant contributions to improving the lives of all affected by autism spectrum disorders (ASD). "The leadership of OCALI has played a critical role in creating top quality programs in technical assistance, training and support to children with autism in Ohio – service that is emulated around the country thanks to your organization's example," said president and CEO Lee Grossman. "OCALI has been a leader committed to bringing the educational standards and practices for those affected by autism to the highest level."

"OCALI is humbled and honored to receive national recognition for our continued efforts in support of individuals with ASD," said OCALI executive director Shawn Henry. "This award reinforces the vision and foresight of the state legislature and administration who created OCALI, Ohio's statewide resource center. Thanks to ongoing support from the Ohio Department of Education and through continued partnership with the Autism Society, OCALI has been able to develop a platform for achievement across Ohio and beyond. We are pleased to know we are headed in the right direction while acknowledging there is still much work to be done."

A project of the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio and funded primarily through a grant from the Ohio Department of Education – Office for Exceptional Children, OCALI's mission is to build state- and system-wide capacity to improve outcomes for individuals with autism and low-incidence disabilities through leadership, professional development, technical assistance, collaboration and technology.

OCALI's collaboration with the Autism Society includes participation in NATTAP – the Network of Autism Training and Technical Assistance Programs. Through a grant provided by the Autism Society, OCALI played a lead role with NATTAP members on the development of the National Teacher Competencies, evidence-based, comprehensive national standards for institutions of higher education and school districts who prepare teachers of individuals with ASD. These competencies are now integrated into the Autism Internet Modules (AIM), free online courses developed by OCALI in collaboration with national and international partners. AIM is designed to support the unique needs of adult learners and is currently used in every county in Ohio, all 50 states and 92 countries.

OCALI will receive its 2010 Autism Champion award during the annual Autism Society Conference, Friday, July 9, 2010, at the Hyatt Regency Dallas, 300 Reunion Boulevard, Dallas, Texas, 75207.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the current prevalence rate of ASD is now 1 in 110 births. Educators, parents and community members continue to look for answers and support.

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**Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI)** serves families, educators, and professionals working with students with autism and low-incidence disabilities, including ASD, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments and traumatic brain injuries. OCALI's mission is to build state- and system-wide capacity to improve outcomes for individuals with ASD and low-incidence disabilities through leadership, training and professional development, technical assistance, collaboration and technology. More information is available at <http://www.ocali.org>

The **Autism Society**, the nation's leading grassroots autism organization, exists to improve the lives of all affected by autism. Efforts include increasing public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the spectrum, advocating for appropriate services for individuals across the lifespan, and providing the latest information regarding treatment, education, research and advocacy. More information is available at <http://www.autism-society.org>