

NEWS RELEASE

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New Avenues Annual Meeting celebrates 60 years of service and creation of the Thomas M. Lewins IV Lifetime Achievement Award

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CLEVELAND, OH, February, 2012 – New Avenues to Independence will hold its 2012 Annual Meeting on February 23, 2012 at the TS Macklin Party Center in Solon. New Avenues was started in 1952 by a group of concerned parents of children who had varying degrees of disabilities. Originally named the Parents Volunteer Association (PVA), New Avenues has stayed true to its mission for the last 60 years offering services and supports to individuals with disabilities, such as developmental disabilities, autism, mental illness, cerebral palsy, brain injury and Down syndrome.

This year will not only be a celebration of 60 years of service to the community and a recap of the past year's numerous accomplishments but also an announcement of the new Thomas M. Lewins IV Lifetime Achievement Award.

Tom Lewins, Executive Director, has been responsible for managing and administrating New Avenues for the past 25 years. Tom's passion for individuals with disabilities stemmed from his tours of the Beatrice State facility in Nebraska in 1967 and Dachau, a concentration camp, in Germany in 1968. The impact of the tours and, most significantly, the similarities in the inhumane treatment of people, stirred so deeply in Tom that he has dedicated his career toward advancing the rights and opportunities of individuals with disabilities for most of his professional life. "New Avenues has been proud to have Tom's leadership, expertise and dedication for so many years," states Karen Knavel, Community Relations and Housing Director.

So it is only fitting that Mr. Lewins' name should be associated with lifetime achievements. The Thomas M. Lewins IV Lifetime Achievement Award will honor individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to enhancing the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities throughout his or her professional lifetime.

Another renowned guest will be the keynote speaker, Leslie Sawyer, HOME Choice Statewide Outreach Coordinator of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Mayor Ted Andrzejewski of Eastlake will conduct the swearing in of the new Board of Directors for 2012.

The theme for this special year is “60 Years of Fundamental Values and Extraordinary Visions”. For more information on attending the Annual Meeting or contributing to the Thomas M. Lewins IV Lifetime Achievement Award, please contact Karen Knavel.

About New Avenues to Independence

New Avenues to Independence, Inc., is an organization that proudly provides support services, programs and opportunities for people with disabilities to become more independent and productive members of the community. For more information, contact Karen Knavel, 216-481-1909 ext. 224, kknavel@newavenues.net, www.newavenues.net.

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