

NEWS RELEASE

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New Avenues to Independence named Ohio's 2011 Social Entrepreneur Award winner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CLEVELAND, OH, May, 2011 – New Avenues to Independence was recently selected as Ohio's 2011 Social Entrepreneur given by The Entrepreneur and Small Business Division of the Ohio Department of Development.

New Avenues was honored because of its ability to provide opportunities for people with disabilities and special needs to become more independent and productive members of society. Being an organization that offers the highest quality support services and develops innovative and inclusive programs while being sensitive to the role economic development plays in its strategic plan played a major role in being selected.

Criteria for this award states that the recipient must have adopted a mission that creates and sustains social and private value, such as identifying an inherently unjust situation that causes exclusion, marginalization or suffering of a segment of the community that lacks the financial means or political clout to achieve any positive transformation or benefits; uses inspiration, courage, fortitude, entrepreneurial principles and business tools to creatively challenge and change the current situation in an imaginative and innovative way; and acts boldly without being limited by resources currently at hand.

The organization needs to have conceptualized a solution that creates or promotes the earning potential and/or alleviates the economic suffering of the targeted group, thus ensuring a better economic future for that group and its community. The solution must create social value by providing opportunities to targeted constituencies who traditionally had no or limited opportunities for employment or skill training. The organization's actions had to have resulted in the creation of jobs for the socially and

economically disadvantaged constituency. They must show that thought has been given or action has been implemented to sustain the impact of the solution, and become self-sustaining through reinvestment.

The overall goals of the Buckeye Industries program, a business enterprise of New Avenues, are to create wage-earning opportunities for individuals with disabilities, generate revenue to be reinvested into other critical programs and services provided by New Avenues, and positively impact the community and environment.

Buckeye Industries has three locations and offers services to local businesses throughout Northeast Ohio. Services include:

- Document Destruction
- Styrofoam/Cardboard Recycling
- Janitorial Services
- Outsourced Production Work

Currently, the program provides structured vocational training and guidance to 75 individuals who participate in the program, 42 of whom are earning a wage through employment. For individuals with disabilities, learning structured work skills and collecting a wage provides a meaningful vocational experience, and the sustainability-focused services positively impact the community and environment.

New Avenues to Independence will be honored at The Entrepreneurship Expo on Friday, May 20, 2011. The event will be held at Ohio Dominican University LEAD Program in Columbus, Ohio. For more information contact Domini Graham Hunt, SBDC Manager, Training and Communications, Entrepreneurship and Small Business Division, 614- 728-4607, domini.hunt@development.ohio.gov.

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.