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NEWS RELEASE

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PORTAGE COUNTY “EMPLOYEES OF DISTINCTION” REVEALED AT LUNCHEON 7 NOMINEES RECOGNIZED AND 2 AWARDED WITH HIGHEST HONOR

RAVENNA, Ohio—September 11, 2009— Seven outstanding employees from Portage County were recognized and two individuals were revealed as winners of the “Employee of Distinction Award” at the 5th Annual Employee of Distinction Luncheon hosted by Goodwill Industries on September 11 at Ravenna Elks Lodge.

Congratulations to the 2009 Portage County Employee of Distinction Award Winners:

Andra Polasky, Corporate Services Coordinator, Coleman Wellness Solutions

Andra has been described as “the heart of the business.” She has assisted hundreds of businesses in Ohio with safety compliance, drug free workplace implementation, building smoke-free worksites and assisting employees with work/life balance. As the company’s most requested trainer, she has amazing customer service skills and goes above and beyond her responsibilities to meet the needs our customers. She always has a smile on her face an ear to listen to whatever you might need to talk about. Andra stepped into a leadership role within the business to help it thrive and grow.

Penny Ray, Children Services Manager, Portage County Department of Job and Family Services

Penny’s dedication to children and families is one of her best qualities. For more than 30 years, she has advocated for the agency and has been a constant presence for staff and families. She has the ability to see the “big picture” and to plan for the future. She is open to trying new ideas and concepts if it will improve service. She has also mentored/coached workers and supervisors to do their best, to problem solve and to creatively work within the system. In addition to planning for the future, she is able to take a realistic view of the situation in order to make a good and informed decision. Penny finds the positive in people – no matter how difficult – in order to help that person feel successful.

The luncheon is an employee recognition event for Portage County where stellar employees (from Portage County employers) are recognized for their efforts. Nominations were reviewed based on Quality of Work; Dedication to the Business; and Extraordinary Efforts. Individuals with the highest average rankings received an “Employee of Distinction Award,” and the winners were kept a surprise and revealed at the luncheon.

At the luncheon, emcee and radio personality Chuck Collins from 1590 WAKR read highlights from each of the seven nominees’ nomination forms as they received a certificate commemorating their nomination and two free tickets to a performance at Akron’s historic Civic Theater. In addition, the two winners were given an engraved Bulova clock from Shulan’s Jewelers.

The luncheon also featured a vintage fashion show – “20th Century Work Clothes” – that included outfits from the turn of the 20th century to 1970s. The clothing is a part of Goodwill’s extensive vintage fashion collection, which has articles of clothing and accessories dating from 1850s to the 1980s. The collection is used to help raise awareness and funding for Goodwill’s mission of helping individuals prepare for, find and retain employment.

“We are truly inspired by the nominees’ work ethic and dedication. They are all such wonderful role models for their co-workers and all those around them. Goodwill is pleased to once again help Portage County employers showcase their top-performers and their Shining Stars,” said Nancy Ellis McClenaghan, Goodwill President & CEO.

2009 Portage County Goodwill Industries Employee of Distinction Nominees & Award Winners

1. Kim Ellsworth, Program Manager, Family & Community Services, Inc.
2. Linda Forte-Legg, Registered Service Specialist (Retired), Portage County Board of MRDD
3. Brian D. Kelley, Chief Information Officer, Portage County – Information Technology Services
4. Andra Polasky, Corporate Services Coordinator, Coleman Wellness Solutions ****AWARD WINNER****
5. Penny Ray, Children Services Manager, Portage County Department of Job and Family Services
****AWARD WINNER****
6. Peggy Seither, Habilitation Liaison, Hattie Larlham
7. Brian Tirbovich, Community Service Worker, Mobile Meals, Inc.

About Goodwill Industries

Goodwill Industries of Akron is a not-for-profit corporation that helps individuals prepare for, find, and retain employment. Operating in the five-county region of Summit, Portage, Medina, Ashland, and Richland, the Akron-based agency was established in 1927. It is a private, independent organization, operating as an affiliate member of Goodwill Industries International, and a United Way agency in Summit and Medina Counties. Goodwill helps to directly strengthen the region’s workforce through its employment programs and indirectly through the net proceeds from its retail outlets and contract services division. For more information about Goodwill, visit www.goodwillakron.org or call 800-989-8428. ###