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The Arc of Delaware County CEO Receives National Award

George Suess, Chief Executive Officer of The Arc of Delaware County (Delarc), was recently honored with the distinguished Outstanding Professional Achievement Award 2007 by The National Conference of Executives (NCE) of The Arc. Mr. Suess was one of four executives recognized nationally “whose leadership has resulted in significant improvement in support and services for people with disabilities and their families”.

The NCE Awards Program lauds the professional excellence of individuals working with chapters of The Arc. Mr. Gary Horner, NCE Board member shared, “George was nominated for his dedication and contributions to NCE and chapters of The Arc. He has many times presented at Convention and Summer Trainings as well as been available to local chapters as a wonderful resource. George has always been ready, willing and able to help and provide succinct, pertinent information that has helped executives and chapters in how they operate their respective chapters.”

Expressing gratitude for this recognition, Mr. Suess said, *“I have been privileged to work in Delaware County, a community that supports our efforts to consistently deliver the highest standards of quality care. Everyone, from the parents of the people we serve to our Board of Directors to the thousands of people who enable our mission through their membership and support of our programs to our hard working volunteers and dedicated staff, shares in this award. Mostly, I want to thank the people with developmental disabilities we serve for entrusting their dreams and sharing their accomplishments with us all.”*

Over the last ten years, Delarc has risen to national prominence as organizations across the country have sought to improve their services by incorporating Delarc’s philosophy and approach. In response to this demand, Mr. Suess and his staff frequently serve as consultants, delivering programs on proactive behavioral supports set forth in the Delarc book *“Shift Happens”*, the employee orientation program developed for internal use by Delarc, *Vantage Point*, which engages the entire organization in creating and delivering a meaningful first day to every new employee and the management approach reflected in their People Power Leadership model.

A casual conversation between Mr. Suess and the Director of Developmental Disabilities in the State of Georgia in 2007 has led to that State contracting with Delarc to mentor six separate

agencies over the course of 2008. Over the past year Delarc has also trained rehabilitation organizations in California, Louisiana, Iowa, Illinois, as well as New York State.

Robert Rothenberg, President of the Delarc Board of Directors, summed the organization's response to this award, *"Under George's leadership, Delarc has continued to raise the bar on the quality of services we provide locally and spearhead the national effort to treat people with developmental disabilities with dignity, respect and caring. This award stands as a testament to his willingness to share the lessons we have learned with organizations nationwide, lead the fight to eliminate the use of physical restraints and champion a proactive approach to learning and behavior modification."*

The NCE is a peer membership organization of over 300 professional leaders of local, state and national organizations serving individuals with cognitive or other developmental issues. They share a common purpose: to improve their individual abilities to better serve their organizations and constituents. The Arc of the United States advocates for the rights and full participation of all children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is the largest grassroots organization and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the world.

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The Arc of Delaware County Board of Directors stand proudly with CEO George Suess as he displays his National Conference of Executives Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement. Pictured with Mr. Suess (center, holding award) are Board members (left to right) Sandra Bullis, Ginger Blackman, Timothy Crain, Treasurer, Margaret Inge, Robert Rothenberg, President, Thomas Banks, Luella Rogers, Secretary, and Ruth Vitale. Board members absent from photo are Glenn Rappleyea and Mary Jane Giarrusso-Wilkin, Vice President.