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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ECLC School Occupational Therapist is Named Best in the State
for Excellence in Serving Students with Special Needs**

HO-HO-KUS – Brandy Springer seems to do it all. As an occupational therapist at ECLC of New Jersey’s school for children with special needs, Springer provides individualized therapy sessions for a large caseload of students every day. She created and teaches an afterschool yoga program and incorporates yoga into the classroom and therapy. She manages special sensory diets for dozens of students. She is a regular speaker at education conferences around the state, and she provides workshops for ECLC parents, covering topics, such as sensory integration, stress reduction and feeding and nutrition.

In addition to her many professional achievements, Springer embodies her sunny name. Like the season following winter, Springer lights up the room with her radiant smile and her warm personality can thaw the frostiest of hearts.

Those professional and personal qualities, coupled with her dedication and hard work, have brought Springer to the top of her profession as a school occupational therapist. She has been named New Jersey’s “Related Services Provider of the Year” by ASAH, a nonprofit that represents 135 private, special education schools and agencies serving students with disabilities across the state. Each year, the honor goes to an outstanding occupational therapist, physical therapist, social worker, nurse, speech therapist, counselor or psychologist at one of ASAH’s member schools or agencies. Winners were chosen at the regional level, and then an overall state winner was selected during the ASAH conference in Atlantic City on Nov. 15.

Springer has worked at ECLC of New Jersey's special-needs school in Ho-Ho-Kus for five years and is a valued asset to the staff. "Brandy is the kind of person who is not only willing to take on challenges, but takes them on with enthusiasm, professionalism, and complete dedication," said Ho-Ho-Kus Principal Vicki Lindorff. "Whenever a request is asked of Brandy, you can expect one of two answers: 'Sure!' or 'No problem!' She is the type of person who never says 'No.' "

This award marks the third year in a row that ECLC of New Jersey's school staff members have been recognized for excellence at the state level by ASAH. In 2013, one of ECLC's veteran Chatham school teachers, Judy McGrath, was named the state's "Educator of the Year," and in 2012, Sharon Luberto, who is the physical therapist at ECLC's school in Ho-Ho-Kus was named the "Related Services Provider of the Year."

"We are so proud of Brandy for this recognition. Through her work at our school in Ho-Ho-Kus, she is making a tremendous difference in the lives of children with special needs every day. She also supports our staff, parents and other professionals in the field," said ECLC Executive Director, Bruce Litinger. "We are so proud of her achievement."

Springer is also giving back by passing on her expertise to students and colleagues in the field. She is a fieldwork supervisor for occupational therapy students from Eastwick College, Seton Hall University and Ithaca College, and she provides workshops through a grant from the state Department of Education, via Rutgers University, for the Safe Schools program at locations all over New Jersey. In addition, she was a co-presenter at the 2014 Council for Exceptional Children conference in Mahwah.

About ECLC

Established in 1970, ECLC of New Jersey is a nonprofit offering lifelong services -- education, careers and day programs -- to children and adults with special needs, including those diagnosed with autism, Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities.

ECLC runs schools in Chatham and Ho-Ho-Kus enrolling more than 300 students. As students prepare to graduate, employment specialists from ECLC's affiliate Community Personnel Services (CPS),

take over, guiding them into the next chapter of their lives. CPS specialists find meaningful jobs for students in their communities and provide ongoing support and advocacy in the workplace.

Graduates who are not ready for the rigors of the workplace are eligible, if appropriate, for ECLC's fulltime, day program called P.R.I.D.E. At the P.R.I.D.E. Centers in Florham Park and Paramus, adult clients enhance their independent living skills, socialize with peers, volunteer and enjoy paid work opportunities. A distinguishing feature of the P.R.I.D.E. program is that clients create their daily schedule and are almost never in the centers all day or limited to repetitive tasks. A fleet of vans carries clients into the community for activities and learning opportunities, and the centers feature new, teaching kitchens, computers and dedicated activity rooms. Learn more about ECLC at www.eclcofnj.org.

ECLC is a member of the Alliance of Private Special Education Schools of North Jersey, a coalition of more than 30 state-approved private special education schools dedicated to helping parents and educators better understand and access appropriate program options. Learn more about the Alliance at <http://specialeducationalalliancenj.org>.