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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ECLC of New Jersey’s Physical Therapist Wins State Award for
Innovative Programs that Support Students with Special Needs**

HO-HO-KUS – Sharon Luberto of Midland Park, the physical therapist at the ECLC of New Jersey school in Ho-Ho-Kus for children with special needs, has been named the state's “Related Services Provider of the Year” by ASAH.

For the past 15 years, Luberto has been helping students, who are diagnosed with Down syndrome, autism, complex learning or multiple disabilities, do everything from improving their balance and coordination to better visually tracking words on a page to navigating the school's stairs to get to class.

She was singled out for using creative thinking and approaches in working with her students and looks to many different sources for inspiration, from the school's facility, dog, Patrina, to high-tech toys, like the Wii.

Recently, she started a morning Zumba class to help students transition from sitting during long bus rides to activities of the school day. Listening to the music and moving to the fast rhythms makes students become more alert, awake and and ready for class.

The annual award is given by ASAH, a nonprofit organization of more than 125 private schools and agencies in New Jersey that provide education and services to people with special needs. The competition draws nominations from member schools throughout New Jersey, and Luberto was initially chosen as the Region I winner from a long list of educators working at schools in Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Passaic and Union counties.

The final selection from finalists representing four regions across the state was set to be announced on Nov. 2, 2012, during ASAH's annual conference in Atlantic City, but the event was postponed after the devastation of Hurricane Sandy just days before. She finally learned of the award on Feb. 8 at a special lunch, and it was a moment worth waiting for!

Outside of ECLC, Luberto has been involved with running special needs play groups in Waldwick and offers afterschool physical therapy sessions for students who do not receive services in their schools.

What is ECLC?

A private, nonprofit organization, ECLC of New Jersey provides a network of lifelong services -- education, enrichment and employment -- to children and adults with special needs. ECLC operates two schools in Ho-Ho-Kus and Chatham, educating more than 300 students with autism, Down syndrome and other severe learning and/or language disabilities.

For ECLC's graduating students and other adults with special needs, ECLC's Community Personnel Services (CPS) agency offers transition services from school into meaningful job opportunities or day programs.

ECLC also runs its own day program, called P.R.I.D.E., with centers in Paramus and Chatham. At the P.R.I.D.E. program, adult clients build a foundation for success by focusing on their independent living skills and vocational training. The ECLC Foundation supplements funding for all entities and supports afterschool activities, respite weekends (overnights), alumni programs, the P.R.I.D.E. and CPS programs as well as capital projects. Learn more about ECLC at www.eclcofnj.org.