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Creating Communities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 15, 2010

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UCP/CLASS welcomes Alliance for Community Respite Care.
Two organizations join forces to strengthen the cause.

Pittsburgh, PA – March 15, 2010 UCP/CLASS officially announces the beginning of a successful collaboration with the Alliance for Community Respite Care (ACRC). After discussions with members from both UCP/CLASS and ACRC's Board of Directors an agreement was made to envelop ACRC into UCP/CLASS. ACRC will be a separate service system under the broader scope of UCP/CLASS and its other programs and services.

The Alliance for Community Respite Care is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization committed to helping caregivers families' access quality respite care. The ACRC formed in 1997 as a collaborative network of families, providers and stakeholders dedicated to educating the community about the need for respite care. The mission of the Alliance for Community Respite Care is to provide support and relief through access to respite care for caregivers of children and adults of all ages with special needs. The ACRC focuses its efforts in Western Pennsylvania and works closely with the Pennsylvania Lifespan Respite Coalition. MaryJo Alimena Caruso, President of the ACRC Advisory Board, commented, "The need for respite accounts for 1/3 of all requests for supports and services by family caregivers nationwide. A merger seemed like a logical solution as the ACRC and UCP/CLASS have similar missions. We believe that an

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increase in awareness of and access to respite care will strengthen families, improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and ultimately make a positive impact in our communities."

UCP/CLASS is the 14th largest Pittsburgh-area, non-profit human service provider for people with a wide range of disabilities and a strong advocate for disability rights. The mission of UCP/CLASS is to support people with disabilities as they explore options, participate in the community and strive toward equality.

Recognizing the similarity of the services provided by each organization, a merger was a responsible decision that enables ACRC to continue providing quality respite care in an even more efficient manner.

Al Condeluci, CEO of UCP/CLASS remarked, "UCP/CLASS is excited to align with the ACRC. There is no question of the critical importance respite services and supports are to families across the life spectrum. By UCP/CLASS and ACRC joining hands we are confident we will continue to expand high quality respite opportunities in the western PA region."

ACRC's Board of Directors will continue to volunteer their time assisting families in need of respite care services. Their contact information will remain unchanged. For more information about the ACRC you can visit their website at www.acrcc.org .

UCP/CLASS is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization founded in 1951 with the mission of working toward a community where each belongs. UCP/CLASS continually seeks innovative approaches that foster the independence of adults and children with disabilities and promote their full participation in communities and activities of their choice. For more information, visit www.ucpclass.org .

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