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CONTACT:
Courtney L. Walker
UCP/CLASS
412.683.7100 X2153
cwalker@ucpclass.org

UCP/CLASS and Multiple Sclerosis Service Society (MSSS) Share a Common Cause
UCP/CLASS and MSSS making a strong alliance.

As of July 1, 2010, United Cerebral Palsy Community Living and Support Services (UCP/CLASS) and the Multiple Sclerosis Service Society (MSSS) will announce their merger when MSSS becomes a division of the services offered through UCP/CLASS. UCP/CLASS and MSSS have both been serving people with disabilities for more than 50 years. Over the years, these two organizations have collaborated to meet the needs of their respective and shared constituents. Regarding the merge, Al Condeluci, CEO of UCP/CLASS states, "It is truly exciting when two, great organizations can join hands that results in higher impact and quality for folks with disabilities who receive important community services."

UCP/CLASS was founded in 1951 by parents of children with Cerebral Palsy to explore options and opportunities for people with this condition. Over the ensuing years, UCP/CLASS has grown in both scope and function to become the 3rd largest disability service provider in Western PA. With a present budget of \$32 million dollars and a staff compliment of 750, UCP/CLASS serves over 3,000 individuals and families in four major program areas who have all types of disabilities.

Founded in 1952, MSSS offers direct client services to individuals with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) in Southwestern Pennsylvania. This area includes Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Greene, Fayette, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington and Westmoreland counties. The mission of the MSSS is to provide assistance to those diagnosed with MS through a variety of services and to help the general public better understand MS and the implications on those affected by MS and their families. Over the past 57 years, the MSSS developed a staff of dedicated professionals who work in a variety of programs serving more than 1,520 clients in 2009. MSSS Executive Director, Susan Navish commented, "The merger between UCP/CLASS and the MSSS is a wonderful opportunity to extend services to a wider population of people living with disabilities who will benefit from additional programs offered through both organizations".

Together, as MSSS becomes a division of UCP/CLASS the programs and services offered to people with disabilities in Western PA will grow stronger. This merger will:

- Create a seamless, sustainable and more standardized integration of services
- Expand service capacity to meet the needs of an aging and disability constituent population
- Increase grant and contract competitiveness at the state and national level
- Develop potential for more fee for service revenue opportunities
- Create operational efficiencies
- Continue to grow community visibility
- Increase political influence and policy education
- Expand market reach

UCP/CLASS and the MSSS have long, individual histories of promoting opportunities for full inclusion in the community for the people they serve. Now, in a unified framework, the goal of a "community where each belongs" becomes more of a reality.

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