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BURTON BLATT INSTITUTE HONORS
DR. JOEL M. LEVY WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Longtime CEO of YAI/NIPD Network Recognized for Contributions to Field

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (May 4, 2009) – Joel M. Levy, DSW, longtime Chief Executive Officer of the YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities (YAI/NIPD) Network, has been named the recipient of The Burton Blatt Institute’s Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was presented during a special luncheon on Monday, May 4, 2009, at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan in New York City.

In a distinguished career which spans four decades, Dr. Levy has served as a national leader in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities. Dr. Levy has played a pivotal role in the social revolution that transformed the lives and changed the destinies of thousands of individuals with disabilities.

"Joel Levy has been a pioneer in the creation of residential, employment, health care and other services that have made it possible for individuals with developmental disabilities to lead dignified and productive lives in their communities," said Peter Blanck, Ph.D., J.D., Chairman of the Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) and University Professor at Syracuse University.

Dr. Levy has advocated before government and partnered with media to raise awareness of the needs and rights of people with disabilities. He has chaired national and international conferences, which have served as a forum for the exchange of the most up to date information and ideas in the field. Through his publications and teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, New York University and Adelphi University, he has helped prepare a new generation of social workers.

Burton Blatt was a pioneer who almost single-handedly exposed the shocking and inhumane conditions to which people with developmental disabilities were subjected. He was a thinker, a writer and a teacher whose work prepared and inspired a new generation of professionals in our field. He was a crusader for justice, dignity and freedom, whose passion and compassion awakened a complacent society and helped usher in a new and better era for people with developmental disabilities.

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About The Burton Blatt Institute:
BBI at Syracuse University takes its name from Burton Blatt, a pioneer in humanizing services for people with disabilities, staunch advocate of deinstitutionalization and national leader in special education. With its multiple satellite offices and partners, BBI works nationally and internationally to advance the civic, economic and social participation of persons with disabilities by fostering public-private dialogue and building the capacity to transform policy, systems and people through inclusive education, the workforce and communities. For more information on BBI, the ADA reports and the expert panel, visit http://bbi.syr.edu.

About the YAI/NIPD Network:
For more than 50 years, the YAI/NIPD Network has provided a place of hope and opportunity for people with developmental and learning disabilities and their families. Comprised of seven not-for-profit, independent health and human service agencies, the YAI/NIPD Network serves people of all ages throughout the New York metropolitan area, including Long Island, New Jersey and Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Sullivan, Dutchess and Ulster counties, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. One of the most comprehensive networks of its kind, the YAI/NIPD Network’s more than 5,600 staff members serve 20,000 individuals in more than 450 community-based programs. The YAI/NIPD Network is recognized nationally for its conferences, training seminars and publications. For more information about the YAI/NIPD Network or to obtain services, call 1-866-2-YAI-LINK or visit www.yai.org.

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