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Three From Niagara County Honored at Developmental Disabilities Statewide Conference

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y., Nov. 2, 2017 – Three Niagara County residents received statewide honors at the Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State conference on Oct. 30 in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. All three honorees were chosen from nominees across New York State.

Awardees include:

New York State Senator Robert G. Ortz of North Tonawanda received the Legislator of the Year Award. As chair of the the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee, Senator Ortz is a strong advocate for people with disabilities. In particular, he has worked to secure funding to relieve the staffing shortage in the disability field.

Charles Dieteman, a student at Lewiston-Porter High School who has cerebral palsy, received the Anthony J. Koenig Volunteer Award. Beginning in sixth grade, Charles began educating his peers on cerebral palsy and showing them that there are no limits to what people with disabilities can accomplish. He has raised more than \$4,000 for Empower by selling wrist bands and pizza. Mr. Dieteman previously received the Police Athletic League "Do the Right Thing" Award and Empower's Junior Leadership Award.

Kim Kiely, director of job training and day programs at Empower, received the Natalie Rogers Employee of the Year Award. Kiely is leading the effort to transform Empower's sheltered workshops to integrated sites for people with disabilities. A Youngstown resident, she has worked for Empower for 28 years.

With 300 employees and a \$14 million budget, Empower is one of Western New York's 60 largest nonprofit organizations. The administrative offices, preschool, community clinic and service coordination program are located on Lockport Road in the Town of Niagara. The job training and day programs division is based in Niagara Falls, while residential facilities are located throughout Niagara County. Licensed by the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities and the New York State Education Department, Empower is an affiliate of the Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State.