



Press Release

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Autism Family Tours Organization Celebrates Growth with Announcement of New Board Members

FANWOOD, NJ, November 16, 2009 – Autism Family Tours with Brianna has announced two new board members to its growing non profit organization, authorizing the appointments of Roberta Chmielnik of Fanwood and Mabel Levine of Westfield. The remaining board members include Claudette Bardwil, President; Beverly Fagan, Secretary; Antonio Robertiello, Treasurer; Janet Greene, Christine Gee-Lowrey, and Adrienne Robertiello.

Roberta Chmielnik serves as an operational analyst with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, Food and Beverage Consulting Practice. In her current advisory role, Roberta's expertise includes conducting program assessments on current and potential business and presenting strategic options to clients. For more than fifteen years, Ms. Chmielnik has been involved with a not-for-profit agency that serves people with developmental disabilities throughout their lifespan. Recently, she conducted training for both child day care and adult services staff. Roberta has first hand experience with children with disabilities, as her son is hearing impaired. She understands how challenging it can be to find successful programs and community supports during a child's formative years. Roberta has been involved with Autism Family Tours supporting many programs and activities throughout the year.

Mabel Levine has been serving Autism Family Tours with Brianna as a volunteer in many capacities. She is also a member of the Autism Family Tours running team. Mrs. Levine works at Trinitas Regional Medical Center as Director of Planned & Annual Giving for the Trinitas Health Foundation. She had served as the Director of Membership at the Shackamaxon Golf & Country Club and as Regional Director at the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation. Her background reflects skills and accomplishments in the areas of sales, marketing, project management, volunteer recruitment, fundraising, and Spanish translation. She has worked with children with special needs in the Mountainside school system. Mabel and her husband Brian, the township attorney for Scotch Plains, have four children.

Programs that have been offered by Autism Family Tours include therapeutic horseback riding program, family fun nights, swimming, craft making, and other family-focused activities. Autism Family Tours provides many safe, welcoming, and affordable social and cultural opportunities for families to share. The organization has recently implemented a peer mentor development program as part of Pathways for Exceptional Children and is developing a bicycle riding program in partnership with Intensive Therapeutics, an organization that provides group and individual, occupational and physical therapy services to children with special needs. Autism Family Tours has many new programs and activities in development.

Connected with the organization is a family-centered autism support group, Group S.P.I.R.I.T!, an acronym for Spectrum Parents Inspired with Resources, Information, and Teamwork. Facilitated by Christine Gee-Lowrey, this group enables provides opportunities for parents to know that they are not alone and that there is help. Monthly meetings, held at Scotch Plains Public Library, offer helpful tips and short-cuts, important community resources, and ways to avoid common oversights. Guest speakers and open discussions take on many areas of interest including, information exchange, advocacy, education and literacy, therapies, nutrition, safety, transportation, siblings, travel, community awareness, recreation and much more.

Information about the organization, volunteer opportunities, donations, ongoing community activities, and autism-related resources is available at www.autismfamilytours.org. For more information, contact info@autismfamilytours.org or call 908-889-8860.

The mission of Autism Family Tours with Brianna, Inc., is to provide customized, therapeutic, educational and recreational programs for children with autism and their immediate family members. Through grants and various fundraising efforts, the organization strives to provide either reduced cost or complimentary community programs for families experiencing autism. The Board collaborates and shares resources in order to optimize the benefits of the programs and to strengthening the family unit. The organization is a 501(c)(3), non-profit, charitable organization.