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**Statewide News Release**

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**Kentucky Woman Honored for Disability Advocacy  
at National Developmental Disabilities Conference**

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (July 11, 2016) – Disability Rights Advocate and former member Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities (CCDD) Tina Jackson was recently inducted into the Self-Advocate Leadership Circle, a national group.

The award luncheon was last week during the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities Annual Conference in Washington.

The Self-Advocate Leadership Circle was established in July 2014 as an effort to recognize the determination, hard work and commitment of self-advocates from across the country who speak up for their rights and the rights of others with disabilities. Members of the Leadership Circle participate and bring their voice to all aspects of NACDD serving on committees, work groups, conference planning.

The Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities includes 16 governor-appointed individuals with disabilities and family members of individuals with disabilities as well as representatives from major state agencies that serve people with developmental disabilities. CCDD's mission is to create systematic change in Kentucky that empowers individuals to achieve full citizenship and inclusion in the community through capacity building and advocacy.

Jackson, of Louisa, Ky., was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy when she was 18 months old. Jackson's reality for the past 30 plus years has been one of tube feedings and total silence due to stroke and increasing issues with vision and balance.

Between the '80s and '90s, she worked in the fields of social work and medical records. It was during this time period she suffered a number of physical setbacks, from the onset of seizures to having a stroke. Several new disabilities resulted, including the loss of her speech and part of her vision, as well as problems with eating and drinking. Swallowing tests showed she was aspirating, and this led to the placement of a PEG (percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy) feeding tube.

Jackson did not let that stop her from being an advocate. With the assistance of a communications device, she is a public speaker and a volunteer. She sells a patented assistive device, The Jackson PEG Tube Stand,



invented by her husband, Mark, to assist people in regaining and maintaining their independence. She is also a local coordinator of a community enrichment project called "Community of Sharing" that has been funded by a grant from the CCDD. The program brings citizens together to improve the community.

Lela Hale, a member of the CCDD, said Jackson has become a leader among her peers.

"Tina has 'led by example' to support and empower her peers to speak out and stand up for themselves as well as to educate people of all abilities about the power of self-advocacy," she said of her friend. "Despite her limits on her ability to speak, her voice carries loudly through the communities, projects, groups and varying employment positions she has been involved with her entire life.

"When I hear the words 'self-advocate,' I see Tina's beautiful face with her 1,000-watt smile that lights the way through the darkness of misperception and melts even the hardest of hearts. She is the true definition of that phrase," Hale said.

Learn more about the CCDD online at <http://www.kyccdd.com/>.

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*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services, the Department for Public Health, and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*