

AUTISM SERVICES, INC.



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Heidi B. Henzler, Marketing and Fundraising Coordinator
716.631.5777, ext. 369
hhenzler@autism-services-inc.org

Autism Services, Inc. Employee To Be Honored by Professional Association *Amherst Resident Will Receive NYSSLHA's Distinguished Service Award*

Williamsville, New York – (March 18, 2015) –Autism Services, Inc. (ASI) is pleased to announce that Director of Clinical Services, Tracy A. Panzarella, M.A./CCC-SLP/L, will receive the New York State Speech- Language- Hearing Association's (NYSSLHA) 2015 *Distinguished Service Award*. The honor will be bestowed upon Ms. Panzarella during the Association's Annual Honor and Awards program on Friday, April 24, 2015, beginning at 5:00 p.m. at the Rochester (NY) Riverside Convention Center.

The Distinguished Service Award is presented to members of NYSSLHA who have contributed outstanding service to the organization on a broad and continuing basis. Criteria to be considered for this award go beyond the expected level of responsibilities and functions associated with elected office or membership on Association committees. Nominees for this award exemplify long-term commitment to high standards of service to NYSSLHA in a variety of roles.

“Tracy's hard work and dedication to Autism Services and the students we support, is evident in all she does,” says Executive Director, Veronica E. Federiconi. “She has been an integral part of the agency's growth since joining us in 2002, when we were a small program of 24 students; she is now Director of Clinical Services for a staff serving over 100 students. Her commitment and enthusiasm to develop and coordinate outreach and education programs helps us meet the needs of our children, their siblings, families, and the community at large. “

Ms. Panzarella received her B.A. and M.A. from UB's Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences in 1997 and 1999, respectively. Since that time, she's piloted speech-language pathology programs with two local agencies. The first was during her clinical fellowship year at Heritage Centers, starting the Speech-Language Pathology Program at the agency's Article 28 Clinic in conjunction with the Resource Center. After three years with Heritage Centers, Ms. Panzarella was appointed Speech-Language Pathology Department Supervisor at Autism Services, Inc. and began the agency's Speech-Language Pathology program while maintaining a full-time caseload of students, ages 5-21. In 2006, Ms. Panzarella was promoted to Director of Clinical Services, and she currently provides oversight to the supervisors of the Speech-Language Pathology and Occupational Therapy Departments, as well as coordinates the Community Outreach and Family Education Training Programs.

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In addition to her administrative duties, Ms. Panzarella develops and organizes two semi-annual autism workshops in conjunction with the Autism Society WNY Chapter each spring and fall. She also created and organizes ASI's "Tea for ASD" fundraiser. Additionally, the Sibling Education Program Workshops, and is an instructor for the N.Y.S.E.D. Approved Coursework/Training in the Needs of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders of which Autism Services is a provider. She taught a course at Daemen College during the Fall 2002 semester titled, "Language and Communication" through the Department of Exceptional Education, and has presented at several local workshops on communication and Autism Spectrum Disorder, most recently at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center's CCC Workshop Series in September 2012. Tracy also presents lectures on Autism Spectrum Disorder to Buffalo State College's speech-language pathology graduate students in their professional issues course on an annual basis.

Ms. Panzarella is an active volunteer in the speech and hearing community at both the state and local levels. Since 2003, she has served in numerous roles in the Speech-Language-Hearing Association of Western New York (SHAWNY), including President, First Vice-President, Scholarship Committee Chair, and Public Relations Committee Chair. Ms. Panzarella has served as Secretary of the New York State Speech-Language Hearing Association (NYSSLHA) from 2009-2013. In 2014, she began a two-year term as NYSSLHA's Director, Speech-Hospitals and Agencies. In addition to her various roles on the NYSSLHA Board of Directors, she has served as Autism Committee Program Co-Chair for the 2015 NYSSLHA Convention, Professional Issues Program Committee Chair for the 2012 NYSSLHA Convention, Membership Committee Chair, By-Laws Committee Chair, and Child Language Program Committee Member for the 2008 NYSSLHA Convention. Additionally, she is a member of the Buffalo State College's Speech-Language Pathology Department's Advisory Board, as well as the Advisory Board for the Center for Autism Support and Education (CASE).

Throughout her career, she has been honored with several awards to recognize her work, including *Buffalo Business First's* 40 Under Forty Award in 2009; SHAWNY's Honors of the Association for Outstanding Service and Dedication to the Fields of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology in 2011; and *Buffalo Business First's* Healthcare 50 Award in 2013. A strong believer in continuing education, Ms. Panzarella currently holds seven American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Awards for Continuing Education (ASHA ACE Awards), and completed a certificate program through the University at Buffalo's School of Social Work Institute for Nonprofit Agencies titled, "Managing Organizational Change."

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