

# **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH**

### **SUSAN MIKOLIC, R.N., PRESIDENT OF STEPPING STONES IS AN EXPERT**

Eastlake, OH. 5/1/06. Stepping Stones is a consulting firm that specializes in releasing the learning potential of children with emotional challenges, helping them succeed academically and in life. Susan Mikolic, the founder, is a nurse and a mother of two children with mental illness, and an expert when it comes to the strategies and tools needed to help these special children. She has spent a good part of her life learning about mental illness, advocating for her children, and working with schools and government agencies to help her children succeed in spite of their illnesses.

Sue's son, Matt Mikolic, age 18, has been coping with mental illness all his life, sometimes unable to attend school or perform the simplest tasks. He was appointed by the Governor to a seat on the Ohio Transformation State Incentive Grant "Transformation Working Group" as the youth voice for mental health. The Workgroup is comprised of primarily cabinet level state department leaders and other state leaders. Matt will graduate from high school with his class this year. He is available for interviews.

In 2002, Mikolic invested her passion for helping children and her knowledge of mental illness into a business called Stepping Stones. Her business provides services to educators in support of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. One of the provisions of the Act calls for ALL academic scores to be counted in school scores that are submitted to the state, including children with emotionally disturbances and special education children.

Stepping Stones helps educators understand their students with emotional disturbances and helps them set up specific curriculum strategies and techniques so that students perform better. Students are less likely then to miss school due to increasing illness brought on by stress. When school staff understand the child's illness and assist in keeping the stress in the child's life to a minimum, the severity of the child's illness can be best managed, the child can attend school regularly, experience success, gain self-confidence, learn, and graduate!

Mikolic gives seminars on a variety of pertinent topics to groups of families or educators who want to understand children with emotional disturbances and help them achieve academic success. She also consults with families and educators and consults on cases for students. Seminar topics include Releasing the Learning Potential of Students with Emotional Challenges, It's All About the Energy, The Road to Wellness, and many others.

Mikolic currently serves on the Ohio Department of Education's State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC), a federally mandated advisory body to the Ohio Department of Education. She is active in many organizations and has spoken to groups such as the Ohio Department of Health, American School Health Association, John Carroll University, and many more.

Mikolic has served on the Ohio Department of Education's Positive Behavior Support Advisory Committee. Her impressive background includes Co-chair, Ohio Department of Mental Health Strategic School Success task force; Member, Steering Committee of "Mental Health, Schools, and Families Working Toward a Shared Agenda", and President of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Lake County.

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For more information, contact Susan Mikolic at 216/513-6098.

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