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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

With Art:
jpeg photo – John Finch with award

News Release

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COVA receives national award from Eli Lilly Company

COVA (Center of Vocational Alternatives) has added to its national prestige with recognition by pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly and Company.

COVA received second-place recognition at the Lilly Reintegration Award ceremony Oct. 6 in Indianapolis, lauding the Careers for the Future Training Program, a computer resource center, and corporate computer donation program. This is the first time COVA has been nominated for the award.

“We are very pleased and honored,” says John Finch, Ph.D., COVA vice president of Rehabilitation and Employment. “All of our technology components were considered for this award under the banner of Careers for the Future, a relatively new initiative for us and the only one in the Midwest. Getting the recognition from such a prestigious source is very exciting.”

The awards recognize organizations and individuals dedicated to improving the lives of persons with serious mental illness, as well as the accomplishments of notable individuals living with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. COVA is recognized in the area of employment.

Past Lilly Reintegration Award winners have included College Bound, a New York-based program enabling adults recovering from serious mental illness to attend college part-time; Park Place ART Group, a New Jersey art therapy program for partially hospitalized individuals with mental illness; and Mojave Adult, Child and Family Services of Las Vegas, a mental health service organization operating in Nevada.

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Finch says it is particularly exciting to receive recognition from a worldwide pharmaceutical company, since advances in medication have empowered persons with mental illness to improve their lives through organizations such as COVA.

“Improvements and enhancements in medication help support recovery efforts such as employment, so there is a synergy between the two,” Finch says. “It’s often a combination of factors that move people along to recovery. It’s nice to have a pharmaceutical company appreciate the kinds of things we’re doing.”

This is the second consecutive year COVA has received national attention for its programs. In October 2005, COVA was awarded the U.S. Secretary of Labor New Freedom Initiative Award. The award is given annually to only seven organizations nationwide who demonstrate exemplary and innovative efforts in furthering the employment and workplace environment for people with disabilities.

COVA, a 24-year-old private, non-profit agency, serves persons with mental illness and employers by helping individuals choose, obtain, and retain meaningful employment through rehabilitation services and employment practices. Services include readiness programs, computer resources, benefits consulting, job development, job coaching and long-term follow-up. Employer services include assistance with disability management, return to work programs, and employee recruitment.

COVA serves nearly 2,500 clients annually and works with about 200 employers in Columbus and central Ohio. COVA is located at 3770 N. High Street in Clintonville. For more information regarding COVA or its services, please contact (614) 294-7117.

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