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PREVENTION FIRST HONORS EXCELLENCE IN PREVENTION

Ocean Township, NJ, September 13, 2011 – On Monday, September 19, 2011, Prevention First honored outstanding individuals and organizations for their commitment and dedication to promoting the prevention of bullying, substance abuse and violence in Monmouth and Ocean counties. The 2011 Excellence in Prevention Awards took place at noon in the garden of Branches Catering in West Long Branch with over 50 attendees, including many local government officials. The agency created the award to recognize vital contributions made by local individuals and organizations that have helped enhance the lives of our children. This year's recipients were Ellen S. Cohen, Donna DeStefano, Filter Advertising, Michael Spraulding and Kydeshia Wilson.

Ellen Sue Cohen serves as the Administrator of the Monmouth County Youth Services Commission. She is responsible for the development of a Comprehensive County Youth Services Plan and the administration of county, state and federal grants for services for at-risk youth involved in the Family Court and juvenile justice system. Ms. Cohen has established linkages with schools, police and community based organizations throughout Monmouth County and serves on various committees and advisory boards.

Donna DeStefano created an Alcohol and Substance Abuse Resource website at www.pickawareness.com. Donna's website provides resources, referrals, prevention education and life skills to parents of children in Substance Abuse situations. To help educate and empower families further in our communities, she also created a Facebook page P.I.C.K. (Parents In Connection for Kids) along with K.I.C.K (Kids In Connection with Kids) where children can find ways to help others and find healthy ways to spend their time.

Founded in 2005, Filter Advertising is a full-service agency with offices in NYC and Red Bank, NJ. The agency's expertise includes creative development and production for TV, print, radio, web, social media, B2B and brand identity. Brands they have worked with include USA Network, A&E, Comedy Central, Food Network, NBC Sports, Parfum De Coeur, Suntory, Ford, Subway, Whole Foods, Retro Fitness and Prevention First. Filter is headed by Chris Brignola and Jay Sharfstein and President JC Addison. Their website is at www.filteradvertising.com.

Michael Spraulding, a member of Prevention First's Prevention Coalition of Monmouth County Youth Time To Shine (YTTS) Committee, was one of three youth selected to attend the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) National Leadership Conference held at National Harbor, Maryland in February. Michael also received a scholarship to attend CADCA's Mid-Year Training Institute in Anaheim, California and was the youngest youth at the Mid-Year Training and the only youth to represent YTTS. As Michael said, "This conference was NO vacation." Michael analyzed the problems in his community, created posters and a logic model and presented his work to over 300 youth and adults at the training, where he may be invited back as a trainer of trainers.

Kydeshia Wilson believes she can make a difference in her community and overcome her circumstances by volunteering a lot of her time to the West Side Community Center, Summer Camps, the Asbury Park Police Athletic League Summer Camp and Prevention First. In the past three years, Kydeshia has attended several trainings as a Committee youth leader for the YTTS Committee. In July of 2010, Kydeshia received a scholarship to attend the CADCA National Leadership Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, and has been to CADCA's Mid-Year Forum twice. This year, she attended a Teen Driving Summit at Rutgers University. At several monthly coalition meetings, Kydeshia shared what she learned with adult and youth coalition and community members, and in 2010 she successfully lead an activity during the Adult/Youth Forum, Then and Now.

About Prevention First -- Prevention First is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency and Registered New Jersey Professional Development Provider, providing students, parents and professionals with research-based prevention education programs to help children successfully handle difficult everyday situations as well as extraordinary challenges such as violence and substance abuse.

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