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PAT MORRIS ACKNOWLEDGED AS NAPSEC'S 2017 RELATED SERVICE PROVIDER OF THE YEAR

(Westville, NJ) - Archbishop Damiano School staff continues to lead the way as the National Association of Private Special Education Centers (NAPSEC) officially named augmentative communication specialist Pat Morris Related Service Provider of the Year. This is the second year in a row that the national honor has been awarded to an ADS staff member, as Joelle Rossi took home NAPSEC's Educator of the Year Award in 2016.

Serving at Archbishop Damiano School (ADS) for more than three decades Pat Morris has become an expert in the field of augmentative communication. Beginning at ADS in the early 80's, Pat says augmentative communication was only in its infancy at the time. However, she saw a need for the augmentative communication early on as many students lacked verbal speech and the fine motor skills needed for American Sign Language.

Over the years, the augmentative communication program has grown exponentially. In the span of 25 years, the program has gone from serving just a single student with one augmentative communication device to more than 50 students and using nine different communication devices.

As an early adopter of eye gaze technology, Pat requested the purchase of the Tobii PCEyeGo retinal scanners only months after their release.

"We are very fortunate to have someone with her vision, ingenuity and creativity on our school staff. She is a motivator to others and her achievements are a credit to herself and our therapeutic department on their focus to provide state of the art services and cutting edge advancements in their field," ADS principal Kate Flynn said. "Pat is a dedicated, committed individual who is always looking ahead to new and developing trends to assist our students with disabilities."

Pat has also launched a number of successful initiatives over the years, including leading a core vocabulary collaborative learning team, which developed and implemented core vocabulary list, three years prior to the core vocabulary released by Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) and adopted by New Jersey. She has also created interactive books, which the speech language pathology team and herself can use to help students with vocabulary and navigating their augmentative communication devices.

In addition, to her tremendous work as part of the speech language pathology team, Pat also dedicates

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her time to putting together the school's yearbook as well as dedicating her time to the prom and carnival every year. Since 1971, NAPSEC has represented private early intervention services, schools, residential therapeutic centers, postsecondary and adult living programs serving individuals with disabilities and their families.

About St. John of God Community Services

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Caption: Pat Morris (right) stands with Archbishop Damiano School assistant principal Dr. Greg Zink (left) moments after accepting the award for Related Services Provider of the Year at NAPSEC's 2017 Leadership Conference.

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