



Press

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***Jackie Benton of Simsbury Honored
by Bank of America as Local Hero for HARC***

HARTFORD, CT, December 2011 **Jackie Benton of Simsbury** was recently honored as one of five Local Heroes by Bank of America at its **2011 Neighborhood Excellence Initiative** awards ceremony held on November 22 at Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts. Bank of America's Neighborhood Excellence Initiative recognizes and rewards community-based organizations, local heroes and student leaders in 44 U.S. cities and London, who are working to improve their communities.

Each of the five Local Heroes received a \$5,000 grant for the nonprofit charity of his/her choice. Ms. Benton was nominated for the honor by James W. Heffernan, a Local Hero award recipient for HARC in 2008, a past chair of the HARC board of directors and a member of the current HARC board of directors.

Representing HARC, Inc., Ms. Benton spoke eloquently of the inspiration she receives from her son, Alexander, who has special needs, in her fundraising work on behalf of HARC and people

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with intellectual disability. She thanked her family and friends who joined with her to form the dynamic core committee that established HARC's Walkathon Fundraising event. According to Ms. Benton, "HARC is near and dear to my heart, and I share this honor tonight with all of my friends and family, our committee and all of those who have given so much time and energy to this amazing cause."

Along with \$5,000 for each of the Local Heroes to direct to a nonprofit, Bank of America presented Neighborhood Builder grants of \$200,000 to two Hartford area organizations, Billings Forge Community Works and Hartford area Habitat for Humanity, and recognized five Student Leaders who this summer received paid internships with local nonprofits and participated in a leadership summit in Washington, D.C. Bank of America contributed more than \$450,000 through the initiative in 2011, and more than \$3.6 million since its inception in 2004, in the Hartford area alone.

About HARC

HARC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of people with intellectual disability and their families. It was founded in 1951 by families, long before community services were available and institutionalization was the only option. HARC remains a strong advocate for civil rights and opportunities, and is a major provider of clinical and supportive programs that span the entire lifetime: early intervention (Birth-to-Three), family support, respite care, employment and day services, residential, recreation, behavioral health and elderly services. HARC is celebrating its 60 years of service to the Greater Hartford community with many events during 2011.

HARC is a Community Investment Partner of United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut and serves Greater Hartford.

For further information about HARC go to its website, www.harc-ct.org or call 860.218-6047

Photo caption: Bank of America's Local Hero, Jackie Benton, with Kevin Cunningham, Connecticut State president, Bank of America.

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