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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LAUNCHABILITY® ANNOUNCES 2014 AWARD RECIPIENTS:

Sharon Herrin and Roy Pendergrass, Co-Recipients of the Milton P. Levy Jr., Outstanding Volunteer Award; AT&T, Recipient of the Alliance Data Corporate Champion Award
Awards to be presented at 13TH Annual A Special Evening with Smokey Robinson Hosted by Alliance Data, benefiting LaunchAbility®

Dallas, Texas – Jan. 31, 2014 – For the first time, LaunchAbility® will honor co-recipients of the Milton P. Levy, Jr., Outstanding Volunteer Award, the nonprofit's highest honor for individuals. **Sharon Herrin and Roy Pendergrass** will both be honored for their leadership in the community and support of LaunchAbility's® mission to build independence for children and adults with disabilities. Additionally, **AT&T** will receive the Alliance Data Corporate Champion Award for the company's support of LaunchAbility® and disability employment. AT&T is a proven leader in hiring those with cognitive disabilities and developing best practices within the business community. All awards will be presented at the 13th Annual *A Special Evening with Smokey Robinson hosted by Alliance Data and benefiting LaunchAbility®* on Monday, March 31, 2014, 8 p.m., at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center.

Milton P. Levy, Jr. Outstanding Volunteer Award Co-Recipient **Sharon Herrin** (75252 North Dallas) has served on the board of LaunchAbility® since 2004 and held numerous leadership roles such as past president and secretary; inaugural chair of the Expanding Worlds Luncheon; volunteer and fundraiser for A Special Evening; and most recently, member of the development and finance committees. She was instrumental in the formation of the LaunchAbility® Foundation and is its current president-elect.

Prior to her work with LaunchAbility®, Herrin, in support of her best friend battling breast cancer, joined with founders on the first board of directors for the Plano Chapter of the Susan G. Komen Foundation. There she not only helped with fundraising, but she also served as volunteer chair for The Plano Race for the Cure and Board President. The national office of Susan G. Komen Foundation recognized her management ability and tapped her to serve as chair for the Susan G. Komen National Awards Luncheon.

"Receiving the Milton P. Levy Outstanding Volunteer Award is among the highest of honors, and I am humbled to be selected as this year's co-recipient, receiving an award with Mr. Levy's name attached," said Sharon Herrin. "His philanthropy was legend to so many who benefited from his wisdom and generosity. This is the highlight of my philanthropic efforts supporting LaunchAbility® and other wonderful nonprofits over the years. I love being a part of this wonderful organization and helping spread the news about its successes and future goals including the growth of its new foundation."

Herrin, whose career in the real estate field has spanned more than 35 years, founded Herrin Commercial Real Estate in 2002 and now specializes in retail properties. Her involvement with CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women) led to her first contact with LaunchAbility® (then called Special Care and Career Services). The nonprofit had received grants from the CREW Golf Classic. She was initially invited to volunteer for *A Special Evening* and then joined the Board of Trustees.

As a volunteer with CREW, Herrin served as president of the CREW Dallas Board and received the CREW 2001 Outstanding Achievement Award. She is a member of the 9,000 member CREW Network, a national affiliation of CREW Dallas, and a Trustee on the National CREW Foundation Board. Most recently she was co-chairman of sponsorship for the 2013 CREW Network and Marketplace Convention hosted by CREW Dallas. Herrin also has supported the Dallas Women's Foundation, Dallas Summer Musicals Guild, Girl's Incorporated, Our Friend's Place, The U.T. Southwestern Medical Presidents Council, and Metrocrest Social Services. Professionally, she is an active member of The International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) and North Texas Association of Commercial Realtors (NTCAR). Sharon and her husband Jim are Dallas natives.

"Sharon is not only a savvy business-woman and valuable asset to the LaunchAbility® board, but you cannot help but smile when you are with her," said Kathryn Parsons, CEO, LaunchAbility®. "LaunchAbility® is extremely fortunate to be the recipient of her boundless energy and passion. Everything she touches is magical, and she could not be more deserving of the award."

Milton P. Levy, Jr. Outstanding Volunteer Award Co-Recipient **Roy Pendergrass** (75230 Preston Hollow) is a retired international human resources executive who devotes much of his time to volunteer service in the nonprofit sector. He has served on the LaunchAbility® board since 1997 and is also a trustee. He spent a year helping the nonprofit start its foundation in 2011 and serves as the first president of the LaunchAbility® Foundation Board.

"It was a surprise and honor to hear I would be receiving this award," said Roy Pendergrass. I wouldn't serve with an organization if they did not do an outstanding job. I was also attracted to LaunchAbility®'s board because all members are worker bees, always ready to roll up their sleeves. This nonprofit is truly one of the strongest organizations around who do what they do. Because I have a daughter with Down syndrome, I know the value of their services from infants on up. Without question, LaunchAbility® opens windows to the world so their clients can develop their potential as much as possible. The least I can do is support them however I can."

Pendergrass is also chairman of the Fairhill School Board. Previous board experience includes trustee positions on the St. Paul Medical Center Board and Foundation Board. His international business career encompassed international business operations and consulting. He retired as vice president, ORC Worldwide, an international human resources consulting firm. Before entering consulting, he was vice president, corporate staff and director, International Human Resources for Texas Instruments. Other senior management responsibilities at Texas Instruments included service as vice president, Industrial Relations and EEO Compliance, human resources director – Europe, and human resources director – Asia/Pacific. During an international career spanning more than two decades, he lived and worked in eight countries throughout Asia, Europe, and Latin and South America.

He received a bachelor's degree in economics from Yale University and a master's degree in industrial and labor relations from Cornell University. Between undergraduate and graduate studies, he served three years as an officer in the U.S. Navy. Pendergrass and his wife Rebecca live in Dallas. They have two daughters, Laura and Emily.

“Roy’s servant leadership is beyond compare,” said Parsons. “He has a quiet strength about him, the depth of which engenders trust and confidence to all those who are fortunate enough to be in his circle of influence. His contributions to the executive decisions of the board of LaunchAbility® have served the agency extremely well and will have lasting effects on the years to come.”

Since 2010, **AT&T** has been an important partner to LaunchAbility® and its clients with cognitive disabilities. In addition to supporting LaunchAbility® as well as the EmployAbility program with the Dallas Mayor’s Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities on a financial level, AT&T has driven hiring initiatives not just internally, but externally with their partner companies. Like UT Southwestern and Blue Cross Blue Shield, both former Alliance Data Corporate Champion Award winners, AT&T began a new LaunchAbility® Academy site.

The Supported Employment program between AT&T and LaunchAbility® helps open the door to employment for capable individuals that might otherwise not been available. The Academy prepares them for life-long careers as loyal team-members by giving them the chance to prove themselves on the job. The model includes on site, on-the-job training as well as extensive curriculum on both general employability skills and unique aspects of working in highly-regulated industries.

“On behalf of AT&T, we are pleased to make Dallas-Fort Worth our home and proud to be a leader in hiring people from all walks of life, including those with disabilities,” said Stephen McGaw, chief marketing officer, AT&T. “It’s about putting the right people in the right job so that both the company and the individual can be successful. “Rethink possible” is not only a slogan for us, it’s a way of life. We’re grateful for the partnership with LaunchAbility®, and look forward to continuing the mutual goals of making our community great.”

“AT&T has proven that even as one of the world’s largest companies, they can be nimble and responsive to community needs,” said Kathryn Parsons, CEO, LaunchAbility®. “When they came on board, they jumped into action with tremendous speed, out-of-the-box solutions, and smart-thinking that they apply to their work with passion and success. They have a corporate culture of social responsibility and engagement that flows down to the individual level and has quickly understood what our clients face on a daily basis. AT&T is truly changing lives. Obviously the company has a global impact, but here in North Texas we are especially lucky to have the AT&T heartbeat set the rhythm of leadership for our community. LaunchAbility® is proud to honor AT&T with the 2014 Alliance Data Corporate Champion Award.”

The 2014 *A Special Evening* Event Co-Chairs are **Piper and Mike Wyatt** and this year’s Honorary Event Chair is **Caroline Rose Hunt**. Guests will be entertained by a live auction, as well as Smokey Robinson’s live performance.

For more than 50 years, LaunchAbility® has been expanding worlds for children and adults with disabilities by providing services to help them reach their maximum potential. Over the past 13 years, *A Special Evening* has raised more than \$2 million, allowing the ongoing expansion of LaunchAbility’s® programs and training, which continue to gain state and national recognition. The proceeds from *A Special Evening* directly benefit LaunchAbility’s® Adult Service and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) programs.

Tickets are available on the LaunchAbility® website: www.LaunchAbility.org; or by calling 1-800-595-4-TIX. Sponsorships for *A Special Evening with Smokey Robinson* hosted by Alliance Data, begin at \$750 for individual sponsorships and \$2,500 for corporate sponsorships. Individual tickets range from \$35 - \$150. The event is sponsored by 98.7 KLUV and PaperCity Magazine.

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ABOUT LAUNCHABILITY®

LaunchAbility's® Early Childhood Intervention program provides teams of therapists and specialists to work with babies and toddlers with developmental disabilities and delays to give them a greater chance for success in school and life. **Supported Employment** helps capable adults with cognitive disabilities (such as Down syndrome, traumatic brain injury and Autism) find, train for and keep good jobs. **The LaunchAbility® Academy** program provides training that gives adults with disabilities the opportunity to build careers in growing industries and is a collaborative effort with LaunchAbility®, Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and our host partners. Currently there are Academy programs located at UT Southwestern Medical Center, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas and our newest location AT&T. For more information about LaunchAbility®, visit www.LaunchAbility.org or call (972) 991-6777 ext. 7111.

LaunchAbility® is a registered trademark of LaunchAbility®.

About Milton Levy, Jr. (1925-2010) LaunchAbility's® Outstanding Volunteer Award Namesake

Milton Levy, Jr. was a prominent Dallas businessman, philanthropist, and tireless community leader. After serving in the armed forces during World War II, Mr. Levy returned to the United States and earned a B.B.A. degree from The University of Texas in Austin. He and his brothers grew National ChemSearch, founded by his father, into an international, publicly traded company that is now known as NCH Corporation, now privately held and operating in more than 50 countries worldwide. In 1978, Mr. Levy received the Entrepreneur of the Year Award from Southern Methodist University. He served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Baylor Oral Health Foundation, which has provided more than \$51 million to the Baylor College of Dentistry. He also served for more than 40 years combined on the boards of LaunchAbility® and Community Home for Adults (CHAI), agencies committed to providing hope, confidence and independence to people with cognitive disabilities. He was the co-founder and President of CHAI and served as President of LaunchAbility®. For his efforts, Mr. Levy was honored by both organizations. CHAI created the Milton P. Levy, Jr. Distinguished Leadership Award as a tribute to his years of dedication to the agency and those it serves. LaunchAbility® established the Milton P. Levy, Jr. Outstanding Volunteer Award, which honors his commitment to changing the lives of people through volunteering. Additionally he served many more civic organizations including numerous Jewish organizations and the Communities Foundation of Texas.