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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### **WCBDD employee earns leadership award from MLK Community Coalition**

(Lebanon, OH) – On January 17, 2022, Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) employee, Ellen Hudson, was recognized by Lebanon’s Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Coalition as a recipient of the “Adult Community Leader Award.” Hudson was announced as a winner during the 37<sup>th</sup> MLK Day Virtual Celebration, where she was honored for her contributions to the community through her work with the Voices of Warren County, a choir comprised of adults with disabilities.

The MLK Community Coalition of Lebanon is an organization that focuses on building an inclusive network of individuals in order to strengthen and empower the community. Each year, the Coalition recognizes and awards people whose contributions promote social justice, diversity, and inclusion, thereby emulating the vision of Dr. King. The “Adult Community Leader Award” is presented to individuals who demonstrate a strong and growing commitment to service, as well as a sustained effort in advocating equal opportunities for all.

Throughout her career, Hudson has devoted many hours in developing and nurturing the choir. She continuously seeks out different opportunities to showcase the choir in order to share its diverse talents with the community. This determination was best illustrated when the Voices of Warren County competed in the World Choir Games, an international choir festival held every two years on different continents. Thanks to Hudson, the choir had the opportunity to perform at the 2012 World Choir Games, located in downtown Cincinnati.

In addition to the choir, Hudson serves as the Advocacy Coordinator to the WCBDD Voices Speaking Out self-advocacy group. The group meets monthly to promote independence and inclusion for people with disabilities, and engages in multiple service projects throughout the year. Hudson is also a co-facilitator for the Next Chapter Book Club, a nationwide program that offers adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities a fun and engaging way to participate in their communities through reading.

Known for her mentorship and humility, Hudson is described as a quiet leader and advocate for those still finding their voice. She is a champion of the people, who very much exemplifies what it means to be a community leader.

“Ellen cares so much about the people we serve and providing them with opportunities to be involved in their communities,” expressed WCBDD Superintendent, Megan Manuel. “I’m so pleased that Ellen was honored with this well-deserved award,” Manuel added. “She is a wonderful employee and a tremendous asset to our agency and to people with developmental disabilities.”

Upon receiving recognition for her recent accolade, Hudson (true to character), humbly said, “I am honored, and I love my job!”

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