



News Release

For immediate release - July 12, 2016

**Note to media: All media members are invited to attend the launch party on August 2nd.*

Bittersweet and GLCA Collaborate to Help Students Transition into Competitive Employment

Whitehouse, OH...Bittersweet and the Great Lakes Collaborative for Autism (GLCA) have partnered together to create *Venture Bound*, a new program helping young people with cognitive challenges prepare for successful and sustainable employment. *Venture Bound* will be piloting this program beginning with Perrysburg Schools and local employers to identify career potential in each student. Working together, *Venture Bound* will build on each student's interests and strengths to create individualized life-skills training, curriculum, volunteer experiences, and employment opportunities.

Meg Ressler, President of the GLCA Board of Directors says, "Too often, our students with cognitive challenges are participating in a general education curriculum and graduating without the much needed life and employability skills to successfully enter the workforce and remain gainfully employed. We believe our kids should have opportunities for employment upon graduation and into the future. We are excited to partner with Bittersweet and Perrysburg High School to bring *Venture Bound* to our students and their employers, ensuring a positive and rewarding experience for both."

Venture Bound will consist of a three tiered training program offering exploration and classroom assessment, volunteering in the community and participating in various job trainings, and employing students in the community. This three tiered program will work to provide young people with the necessary skills, confidence, and support to obtain meaningful and rewarding employment - and recognize them as valuable contributors to the community. *Venture Bound* will launch at Perrysburg High School beginning fall 2016.

Thomas L. Hosler, Superintendent of Perrysburg Schools, says, "Perrysburg Schools is thrilled to be the first district in the area to partner with *Venture Bound* and offer our students this incredible opportunity. *Venture Bound* will provide an interactive and inclusive environment where each student can develop confidence and skills needed to be successful in the work force."

Bittersweet, GLCA, and Perrysburg Schools will host a launch party for the new program on Tuesday, August 2nd at 6:00 p.m. at Perrysburg High School.

About Great Lakes Collaborative for Autism

The GLCA mission is to inspire the growth of opportunities that will create a limitless future for all touched by autism. Since 2004, the GLCA has helped create 8 new programs that serves all ages, funded over \$1 million in direct support to programs, and assisted in an additional \$2 million in grant funding. The GLCA has also worked diligently to facilitate collaboration among service providers with a focus of what is in the best interest of families.

About Bittersweet, Inc.

For 33 years, Bittersweet, Inc. has been successfully serving adults and adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders across four locations in Ohio. Bittersweet offers unique supports that encourage individuals with autism to grow and develop their abilities and talents in an agricultural setting. The Bittersweet community offers many products for sale to support employment and vocational opportunities for individuals with autism. The mission of Bittersweet, Inc. is to positively impact the lives of individuals with autism and those whose lives they touch.

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