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## **Plainsboro Resident Tricia Baker One of Ten Finalists for L’Oreal Paris USA *Women of Worth* Prize to Support Her Mission to Save Young People’s Lives**

PLAINSBORO, NEW JERSEY (November 4, 2013) – In 2009, Tricia Baker of Plainsboro co-founded Attitudes in Reverse® (AIR) along with her husband Kurt and daughter Katelyn soon after they lost their son/brother Kenny to suicide. Their mission is to save lives by educating teenagers and young adults about mental health, related disorders and suicide prevention. The impact Tricia has had through the educational presentation, *Coming Up for AIR™*, as well as other AIR programs, has inspired the Women of Worth award selection committee at L’Oreal Paris USA to award \$10,000 to Tricia. She is now one of 10 finalists for a grand prize of \$25,000.

“We are a 100-percent volunteer organization and I am proud of what we’ve accomplished in just three years with our limited financial resources,” Tricia said. “We are thrilled and very grateful for this recognition and financial support from L’Oreal, which will help us make much more progress toward eliminating stigma and ensuring that all young people with mental health disorders receive treatment so they can live healthy and successful lives. We are excited about the possibility of receiving significantly more funding, which would enable us to do so much more both locally and beyond our state borders – and even throughout the nation.”

The funding already awarded by L’Oreal, as well as the possible additional financial reward, will enable AIR to educate many more students throughout New Jersey and in other states with its classroom presentation and its new *In Their Shoes™* exhibit, which is designed to build empathy for young people who experience mental and emotional struggles; train more dogs to be Emotional Support Animals and match them with individuals with psychiatric and other disabilities through the AIR Dogs: Paws for Minds™ program; expand its Annual Miki & Friends Walk & Run for AIR event (Miki is Tricia’s service dog); and exhibit at other community events to build more awareness of mental health and suicide prevention, as well as awareness of AIR as a resource.

Everyone can vote once a day, every day between 9:00 a.m. on November 4, 2013 and 11:59 p.m. on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the Women of Worth website ([www.womenofworth.com](http://www.womenofworth.com)) by using an e-mail address to log on and casting votes.

In addition, on November 6, 2013, bonus points can accumulate further. Everyone will be able to vote on L’Oréal Paris USA’s Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/lorealparis>) by “Liking” the page and the post about Tricia. On the same day, votes can be cast by re-tweeting the tweet about Tricia on L’Oréal Paris USA’s Twitter page (<https://twitter.com/LOrealParisUSA>).

To learn more about the initiatives Tricia is undertaking through AIR and the profound, life-saving impact she is having, please visit [www.attitudesinreverse.org](http://www.attitudesinreverse.org). Further insights into the value of AIR and Tricia’s role in the organization can be gained by visiting [youtube.com/attitudesinreverse](http://youtube.com/attitudesinreverse).

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“While other nonprofit organizations that focus on mental health provide valuable education, support and other services, AIR is unique in its proactive and preventive approach. Tricia strategically focuses on the 14- to 24-year age group, based on the fact that this population is most vulnerable to the development of mental health disorders and risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors,” wrote Shauna Moses, Member of AIR’s Board of Directors, in her nomination of Tricia for this award.

“AIR is also unique in its use of dogs to encourage people to engage in conversations about mental health and suicide prevention. In fact, Tricia’s mission and determination are largely founded on the fact that these topics are not discussed as they should be. Open discussion is necessary to educate individuals of all ages to eliminate stigma and ensure people’s willingness to seek help when needed,” Moses added.

Suicide is the second and third leading cause of death among college and high school students, respectively. One of every 12 students seriously considers suicide and one in nine attempts it, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Furthermore, while one of every four individuals nationwide has a mental health disorder, 60 percent do not receive treatment. Stigma is one of the most prominent barriers to seeking care. Lack of treatment increases the risk of substance abuse and suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

“Clearly, education is absolutely essential to save lives. I admire Tricia and her family for taking on this vital cause and I am proud to be working with them.” Moses said. “In the short amount of time that I’ve known Tricia, I have witnessed the impact she has when she engages people in discussions, whether it’s during a school presentation or while exhibiting at a community event. I have no doubt the dogs initially attract attention; however, I strongly believe Tricia’s warmth, openness and passion keep people engaged in conversation and foster interest in mental health and AIR.”

“Everyone’s support is priceless – just as the lives we help save are priceless. We appreciate the efforts of our Board members, other volunteers and many Facebook friends,” Tricia said.

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Attitudes In Reverse® (AIR) was established by Tricia, Kurt and Katelyn Baker of Plainsboro, NJ, in 2010, soon after their son/brother Kenny completed suicide following a long battle against severe depression and anxiety. Their mission is to save lives by educating students about mental health, related disorders and suicide prevention. In the first two and a half years, they have presented *Coming Up for AIR™* to more than 12,000 students in middle and high schools and colleges in New Jersey, New York and Vermont, and they have been invited to present at other schools in New Jersey, as well as Georgia and Texas. AIR also includes an AIR Dogs: Paws for Minds™ program, through which displaced dogs with the ability to serve as Emotional Support Dogs, which are more than pets, are matched with individuals who have mental illnesses or developmental disabilities, thereby saving two lives with each match. For more information about AIR, please visit [www.attitudesinreverse.org](http://www.attitudesinreverse.org).