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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Saratoga Bridges receives a grant from Saratoga Casino & Raceway Foundation, Inc.

Saratoga Bridges received a \$1,500 grant from the Saratoga Casino & Raceway Foundation, Inc. to fund their Family Reimbursement Program. This financial assistance has been in existence since 1990. Funds have made it possible for families, who care for a loved one with a developmental disability living at home, to obtain a cash subsidy to assist with expenses that are not covered by Medicaid reimbursement or other private insurance plans. Families submit requests -- predominately for children 2-21 years old with the majority under the age of 12 -- to purchase services or items including additional respite coverage, iPads, clothing, tutoring, social skills programs, camp tuition, clinical therapies, travel expenses, swings, YMCA memberships, after school social programs, therapeutic swimming and horseback riding lessons, Applied Behavior Analysis therapy, therapeutic equipment, sensory items, books and conference fees.

A committee of family members and professionals from other human services organizations volunteer to meet quarterly to review, discuss and prioritize each request with Saratoga Bridges acting as the oversight agency to assure that due diligence is conducted and achieved. Every year they find they cannot meet every worthy applicant. In 2013, over 100 requests were submitted for children 15 months to 32 years old -- with an average age of 13. The total amount requested was over \$60,000 and only approximately \$30,000 was able to be dispersed. 64 families were assisted, but in most instances they only received a portion of their request. Sadly budget cuts continue, but families' needs escalate. The impact is significant for families who often endure added physical, emotional and financial stress. Consequently, this left many in need to wait until 2014 when more funds may become available.

Saratoga Bridges has been providing the highest level of programs to people with developmental disabilities and their families for more than 55 years by promoting their abilities and achievements in every aspect of community life. As one of the largest private non-profit organizations in Saratoga County, they have been committed to ensuring that the individuals they serve are able to realize their goals, hopes and dreams as they work, shop, play, and volunteer while leading full, productive and contributing lives. This voluntary service provider believes that the care they give increases immeasurably the quality of life for every citizen. The agency employs close to 600 conscientious people who work diligently and with great compassion in their 24/7 care of over 800 individuals. Saratoga Bridges philosophy truly is that every day is full of possibilities!