

# Pathways Awareness Foundation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Pathways Awareness Offers Congregations Grants of Up to \$1,000 For Taking Steps to Include Worshipers with Disabilities**

Since 1997, Pathways Awareness has distributed more than \$90,000 through its Open Hearts Awards program, granting funds to houses of worship nationwide that have already taken action to include worshippers of all abilities and who have specific projects to improve accessibility and inclusion. Awards are announced in the fall in conjunction with Inclusion Awareness Day. **Deadline for nominations is August 1st.**

### **National Children's Junior Awards**

Children ages 5 to 18 years old outside the Chicago, Illinois area (*outside Cook, Lake, Will and DuPage Counties*) can nominate their House of Faith for a National Junior Open Hearts Awards with a description of their congregation's inclusion efforts and a video or a series of photos that shows how their place of worship welcomes and includes individuals of all abilities. Nominations must include a completed nomination form and tell how the congregation will use a grant of up to \$1,000 to expand inclusion efforts. Parents and teachers may facilitate the entry process or children can create entries on their own. Children are encouraged to use the *Different Gifts But The Same Spirit* lesson plans before creating their entry. The plans are available for downloading from [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org).

### **National Adult Awards**

The National Open Hearts Award invites congregations outside of the Chicago, Illinois area (*outside Cook, Lake, Will and DuPage Counties*) to submit a description of their inclusion efforts and a video or series of photos showing how their congregation uses best practices to welcome and include worshipers of all abilities in worship, ministries, religious education and leadership roles. Nominations must include a completed nomination form and tell how the congregation will use a grant of up to \$1,000 to expand inclusion efforts.

Send nominations to Pathways Awareness Foundation, 150 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 2100, Chicago, IL 60601, fax to: 1-888-795-5884, or email to [friends@pathwaysawareness.org](mailto:friends@pathwaysawareness.org).

Examples of past award-winning efforts include providing Braille worship aides, placing Jewish Mezuzah at wheelchair height and purchasing an automatic door opener and providing sign language interpreters.

For more information about the awards and Inclusion Awareness Day and for Open Hearts Awards nomination forms call **1-800-955-2445**, visit [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org), or email [friends@pathwaysawareness.org](mailto:friends@pathwaysawareness.org).