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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Brevard Achievement Center Associate Wins National Award

Rockledge, Fla. – Brevard Achievement Center (BAC) is proud to announce that Associate and Wounded Warrior, Edward Johnson, Jr. received the 2012 AbilityOne Program Employee Award: Honor Roll for Veterans with Disabilities at the NISH/AbilityOne national conference held in San Antonio, Tex. on May 8. The annual award is given to honor a veteran with significant disabilities who has shown outstanding achievement in his or her work life. Johnson, a 1991 graduate of Cocoa High School and veteran of the United States Army, was selected by two judging panels from a pool of 50,000 applicants.

Johnson's story began in Iraq in 2006 when a sniper's bullet made a clean entry through his helmet, grazed his scalp and caused him to lose consciousness and feel disoriented for several days. Five days after the incident, however, Johnson was sent back to the front lines. Over the next three years, Johnson suffered additional injuries from three separate roadside bomb attacks. The combination of his injuries finally led doctors to diagnose him with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, and release him from active duty.

Reentering civilian life was not easy for Johnson as he struggled with the effects of his TBI and PTSD. Watching him suffer at home, Johnson's wife, Serena, took matters into her own hands and got him admitted into the Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic at Ft. Benning, Ga. For a year, Johnson, his wife and son lived at Ft. Benning while he received the care he needed. When they returned to Brevard, however, life still wasn't the same.

"I felt completely alone and not normal," said Johnson. "I didn't want to go anywhere but my house."

Fortunately, Johnson's wife heard about Brevard Achievement Center's programs and services that help people with disabilities learn to live independently. In April 2012, Johnson joined the ranks of the custodial staff at Patrick Air Force Base through BAC's AbilityOne program. Today, he is a changed man.

"I was fighting a lot of demons when I returned from combat," said Johnson. "If I hadn't found Brevard Achievement Center I'd probably still be at home sitting on the couch. But, thanks to the overwhelming support I've received from my supervisors and colleagues at BAC, I've been able to contribute to my family again and feel like a productive member of society."

In addition to winning the 2012 AbilityOne Program Employee Award: Honor Roll for Veterans with Disabilities, Johnson has received 15 commendations for his military service, including the Purple Heart.

Founded in 1968, Brevard Achievement Center employs over 6,000 adults with disabilities throughout Florida and in Puerto Rico through its many programs and services, including AbilityOne. For more information about the NISH/AbilityOne program, visit www.nish.org. To learn more about BAC, visit www.bacbrevard.com.

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