



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Former President of Ameritech Illinois joins leadership of local non-profit**

(SKOKIE, IL – October 10, 2007) Attorney and former President of Ameritech Illinois, Ms. Joset B. Wright, joined Skokie based Orchard Village in September as Senior Director of Institutional Advancement. Wright will be responsible for development functions including brand marketing, internal and external communications, Board development and initiatives in government, corporate, and customer programs.

Trained in the legal profession, Wright, a native of Indianapolis, Indiana, served as an attorney for a variety of public and private organizations, most notably as Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for the Marion County Prosecutor's Office in Indianapolis and General Counsel of Ameritech Indiana. Wright rapidly ascended the ranks of the telecommunications industry, beginning at Indiana Bell, a subsidiary of Ameritech Corporation and a former Bell Operating Company. She began her tenure there as an Attorney, rose to Vice-President of Procurement and Property Services, and culminated as President of Ameritech Illinois following its merger with SBC Communications. She most recently served as Vice-President and Managing Director at The Hollins Group, a minority-owned executive retained search firm headquartered in Chicago, Illinois.

Wright places a high value on giving back to the community and is involved in a number of service activities. She is currently an advisory board member of the McGaw YMCA in Evanston, Illinois, and was a board member for more than ten years with the Children's Home and Aid Society of Illinois. She previously served on the boards of the National Minority Supplier Development Council, the Indianapolis Museum of Art and the Indianapolis Children's Museum. In addition to her career and volunteer activities, Ms. Wright is busy raising two sons: Evan, 21 and Joseph, 18. She is passionate about reading, cooking, and music.

When asked why she decided to redirect her career path and join Orchard Village, Ms. Wright has one answer: "Billy Harvey." Billy lived next to Wright's grandparents when she was a child. She and her siblings would play games with him on a regular basis. Billy's favorite was Chinese Checkers. Wright and her siblings saw Billy only as a friend, not as a friend with severe cerebral palsy. Wright was sad as a teenager when she found out that Billy had been institutionalized. His parents did not have the knowledge or methods that would allow them to keep Billy at home. There were no other options available to them besides placing him in an institution, which has since been closed. Wright now takes comfort in knowing she is helping provide a community where people like Billy can grow and thrive in a nurturing environment.

Wright's addition to Orchard Village coincides with the organization's strategic plan to develop innovative ideas while continuing to build on the organization's strong foundation of enabling people with disabilities to become contributing members of their communities and to live as independently as possible. Wright's plans for advancing the organization and its mission include identifying new growth opportunities, ensuring that Orchard Village continues to be an asset to the community, producing a broader array of vocational opportunities that will help fill the employment gap for unskilled workers, and most importantly, increase revenue for the agency in order to maximize the quality its services. Wright emphasizes that, "There must be awareness that a lack of resources for people with disabilities exists, and that it affects the whole community."

“I am here to help people understand that our clients are deserving of respect, attention, and increased support. We must understand that developmental disabilities are not going away; they are becoming more prevalent. People living with these disabilities can not be marginalized or ignored. If someone has to make life better for people with disabilities, why not me?”

**About Orchard Village** – Orchard Village is a not-for-profit organization that has been supporting people with disabilities for 35 years. Orchard Village’s primary focus is based upon person-centered planning. The use of one-on-one interviews and 21 personal outcome measures ensures that every person controls his or her own destiny.

Orchard Village provides residential, vocational, intermittent, seniors’ day program, specialized services, and in-home respite services to 300 individuals throughout 28 communities in northern Cook County. The most recent addition to Orchard Village is Orchard Academy. The high school provides much needed support for students in special education to develop the vocational, social, and independent living skills necessary to transition successfully into life after high school. For more information about Orchard Village, contact Erika Vavrik at (847) 967-1800 ext. 133, or visit [www.orchardvillage.org](http://www.orchardvillage.org).

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