

**Press Release****For Immediate Release****Date: 11.12.18****Contact: Lee C. Shapiro**  
**(216) 781-6035**  
[shapiro@ajc.org](mailto:shapiro@ajc.org)**AJC Cleveland Presents its 2018 Isaiah Award for Human Relations to Towards Employment**

**Cleveland, OH** – AJC Cleveland will present its 2018 Isaiah Award for Human Relations to Towards Employment at a special breakfast program, Tuesday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 7:45 AM, at Cuyahoga Community College's Jerry Sue Thornton Center. The program will include a discussion, "Building Bridges, Strengthening Community" with Dr. Akram Boutros, President & Chief Executive Officer of The MetroHealth System, and Dr. Alex Johnson, President of Cuyahoga Community College. AJC Cleveland will recognize all 13 nominees, the scope of their work and commitment to bettering our community.

For over 50 years, AJC Cleveland has been privileged to present this prestigious award to recognize the extraordinary work of local non-profit organizations which show significant initiative and leadership towards advancing intergroup understanding and respect. The prophet Isaiah stands as a symbol of optimism and of the hope for redemption of all humankind. The Isaiah Award serves to recognize the efforts of Northeast Ohio's outstanding non-profit community, which in the spirit of Isaiah and AJC, continues to build bridges and improve our world.

In announcing the committee's decision, Isaiah Co-Chair David Hexter, noted, "As in past years, we had an outstanding group of finalists, all of whom make a difference in Northeast Ohio each and every day. The selection committee feels the responsibility of the Isaiah Award's legacy and our decision is never easy." "This year's recipient, Towards Employment, is a truly deserving organization" added Co-Chair Loree Resnik. "Through their services, programs, and community connections, Towards Employment has helped to empower individuals throughout the Cleveland community to strive for and maintain self-sufficiency through employment. In fulfilling their mission, they truly embrace both the spirit of Isaiah and the values of AJC."

"As a business consultant, I am impressed by the deep employer engagement that Towards Employment shows with annual placements of more than 500 Clevelanders in over 300 local businesses every year. I have served on many boards both within and outside of the Jewish community and this work is some of the most rewarding I have ever done" said Towards Employment Board member Nan Zieleniec.

Jill Rizika, Towards Employment's Executive Director, expressed "It is an honor to be recognized for building bridges, bettering the human condition in Cleveland, and engaging our community in these efforts. At Towards Employment we connect people to careers – creating bridges between un- and under-employed people with barriers to employment and businesses. When job seekers gain behaviors, skills, and experience they too can access employment opportunities in Cleveland created by recent economic growth. Receiving the 2018 Isaiah Award for Human Relations is affirmation that this is a bridge we all can help build!"

## **ABOUT AJC**

*For more than a century, AJC has been the leading global Jewish advocacy organization. With offices across the United States and around the globe, and partnerships with Jewish communities worldwide, AJC works to enhance the well-being of the Jewish people and to advance human rights and democratic values for all. Now in its 74th year, AJC Cleveland supports this mission through its work in advocacy, diplomacy, education, and bridge-building.*

*For more information, visit [ajc.org](http://ajc.org), or contact AJC Cleveland at 216.781.6035 or [cleveland@ajc.org](mailto:cleveland@ajc.org).*

## **ABOUT TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT**

*Towards Employment connects people to careers – helping them prepare, get, and keep a job; and then advance in a job – to change people’s lives, advance businesses, and strengthen community. Towards Employment has over 40 years of experience helping people gain tools to find a job, navigate life’s obstacles, and secure a long-term career. They serve 3,000 people per year with a range of employment and career building services and activities and connect over 500 people to good jobs each year. Towards Employment partners with over 300 businesses—including University Hospitals, Downtown Cleveland Hilton, and their own social enterprise Bloom Bakery—all of whom have confidence in Towards Employment’s training programs and personal coaching to prepare new and current employees for career success. Towards Employment uses learnings from rigorously evaluated program operations to influence the wider system and promote greater economic mobility and more equitable access to opportunity for all of NEO residents.*

*For more information, visit [towardsemployment.org](http://towardsemployment.org) or contact Adaora Schmiedl, Director of Development and Marketing, at 216.696.7310 or [aschmiedl@towardsemployment.org](mailto:aschmiedl@towardsemployment.org).*

**###**