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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRIO OF LUMINARIES TO OPEN GROUNDBREAKING PRIVATE BOARDING SCHOOL FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM

SHRUB OAK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, IN NEW YORK'S WESTECHESTER COUNTY, WILL PROVIDE THE FIELD'S MOST PROGRESSIVE ACADEMIC AND THERAPUETIC PROGRAM FOR 391 STUDENTS ON A STATE-OF-THE-ART CAMPUS

SHRUB OAK, NEW YORK – NOVEMBER 16, 2017 – An inter-disciplinary team of world-class visionaries in the fields of autism education, therapeutic intervention and student life today announced the formation of Shrub Oak International School (“Shrub Oak”) – a new, world-class special education boarding and day school that will serve an international population of young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The school will open its doors in September 2018 with a mission to advance autism education by providing the field’s most progressive academic and therapeutic approaches as it helps students prepare for a purposeful, independent future.

The team of founding co-directors, two of whom will live on campus, includes:

- **Gil Tippy, Psy.D., Co-Director and Head of Clinical services** is a world-leading expert in developmental approaches to intervention for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). He has over 30 years of experience as a teacher and psychologist and is a founder of the renowned Rebecca School in New York City. He is a co-author, with Dr. Stanley Greenspan, of the renowned book *“Respecting Autism,”* which defines the highly successful use of developmental, individual difference, relationship-based principles (DIR)/Floortime™, a groundbreaking approach incorporated into Shrub Oak’s curriculum.
- **Dianne Zager, Ph.D., Co-Director and Dean of Education** is recognized globally as a pioneer in autism education. She has consulted with school districts across the U.S. to develop autism educational programs and founded one of the nation’s first college support programs for students with autism. She has served as president of

the International Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities, and has over 30 years' experience directing graduate and post-graduate programs to train school personnel in autism. Dr. Zager has done extensive work in the transition of students with autism to adulthood and employment. She was founding editor of *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, one of the most widely read autism journals in the nation.

- **Wendy Eklund, MBA, Dean of Student Life** has extensive experience designing student-life experiences that provide engaging, enriching opportunities for students. As assistant director for residence life at Sarah Lawrence College, Wendy administered all the housing logistics, identified ways to improve student experiences and engagement in the residences, and oversaw the resident advisors and hall directors.

"This work is our passion and the three of us are truly blessed to be able to work together overseeing the growth of Shrub Oak into a pioneering center of excellence for advancement of special education," Tippy said. "We have all experienced the magic of helping children grow into adults living fulfilling, self-sustaining lives and we are beyond excited to open this incredible school."

Shrub Oak sits on the 127 acres of bucolic, hilltop grounds of a retrofitted former-seminary in Westchester County, New York. The campus will integrate nature, agriculture and cutting-edge technology to provide students with a sensory experience that is unmatched by any special education boarding school in the world. The building will include a modern gym, a restaurant-quality kitchen and dining facility, modern common rooms for socializing, state-of-the-art classrooms, a well-appointed student hub, and well-designed dormitories. The space will also feature an indoor pool, an open space for robotic development and learning, and numerous career training spaces and services. Its working farm includes livestock and crops set against a backdrop of open fields and wooded trails. A state-of-the-art, 24/7 security system will be incorporated into all areas of the building and grounds.

The school will ultimately have an enrollment of 391 residents and day students, aged 14 to 30+ years old. Each student's program will maximize therapeutic and learning opportunities, not only in the classroom but also in the dining hall; on the fields and trails; and in the residential areas as well as the neighboring community.

Shrub Oak's goal is to ensure that all students achieve goals determined by their developmental capacity. This includes employment and the ability to live as independently as possible upon graduation. In order to do so, each student will have an

inter-disciplinary team of clinicians, teachers and student-life professionals who will collaborate closely to construct and implement custom programs.

Based on the IEP-development model, which focuses on a student's unique issues, while working to reinforce therapies and educational programs, the individualized programs will range from rigorous academic preparation for college to learned skills for independent living and future employment. The areas of emphasis for student program include executive functioning, cooperative work, organization, time management, and task completion—all seamlessly interwoven throughout day and evening activities.

About Shrub Oak International School

Shrub Oak International School is a world-class, private, special education boarding and day school preparing students for independent adult life and employment. Serving the sophisticated needs of an international co-ed population of young adults on the Autism Spectrum, the school's innovative relationship-based program is grounded in evidence-based principles that build on each student's specific needs and interests. Shrub Oak's modern, technology-infused facility is set on 127 acres of farmland where students can learn in a natural environment, full of sensory experiences.

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