

U.S. Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md., 5th) was presented Oct. 27 with the Javits Wagner O'Day Champion award for his efforts to aid the employment of people with disabilities.

The Upper Marlboro office of Melwood, an organization that serves people with developmental disabilities, was selected as the site for NISH, a nonprofit agency that creates employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities, to present the award.

The Javits Wagner O'Day Act is the landmark legislation that led to opportunities for hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities to prove themselves in federal workplaces.

Hoyer has been a supporter of Javits Wagner O'Day programs as well as additional legislation benefiting people with disabilities, according to a press release. He was a key sponsor of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and has since risen to the post of House majority leader.

At the ceremony, Hoyer was introduced to two Melwood-trained workers who have succeeded at their jobs secured by NISH. Raymond Reher has worked as a landscaper at a U.S. Treasury site in Prince George's County for 18 years. He gets up every day at 4 a.m. and takes two bus rides and two train rides to get to his job. Essie Jackson has been with Melwood eight years and does custodial work at the headquarters of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. With help from the staff members she met on the job, she made her fondest dream come true in April by purchasing her own condominium, according to the release.

Hoyer told them, "Your hard work means that more people will have the chance to succeed on their jobs. Almost all employers who hire workers with disabilities tell me that those workers are the most dedicated workers they have, and they usually turn out to be the best at their jobs."

Melwood President/CEO Earl Copus said, "We are indeed fortunate to have right in our own district, one of the greatest friends for people with disabilities among all elected officials in the United States, Congressman Steny Hoyer."

NISH East Region Executive Director Bob Sullivan added, "Congressman Hoyer has been a

## **Hoyer cited for work for disabled**

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consistent and loyal supporter of the Javits-Wagner O'Day program, and NISH is proud to honor him as a JWOD Champion.”