

## LEAP RECEIVES “FREEDOM TO COMPETE” AWARD

LEAP is honored to be one of seven employers nationally, to receive the “Freedom to Compete Award” from the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

In 2002, under the leadership of Chair Dominguez, the EEOC launched the “Freedom to Compete” Initiative, a national outreach, education and coalition building campaign to provide free and unfettered access to employment opportunities for all individuals. The central theme of the initiative is that every individual deserves the opportunity to compete and advance as far as his/her talent and ability allows, without regard to discriminatory barriers based on race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age or disability.

The award is given to employers, organizations, or other entities that have demonstrated results through best practices in promoting fair and open competition in the workplace, and have implemented a specific practice that has removed barriers that hinder free and fair workplace competition and has increased access, inclusion, and/or promotional opportunities for qualified workers.

LEAP’s founding director, Doris Brennan, a strong, determined and talented woman who became a quadriplegic as a result of a car accident, strongly believed that persons with



*Award recipients. Ex. Director Melanie Hogan is standing second from right.*

disabilities are equally capable of doing valuable, productive work if the right supports and services are available. LEAP follows this core philosophy by recruiting and hiring qualified persons with disabilities.

Leading by example sends a powerful message. The majority of LEAP’s employees are persons with disabilities. Employers as well as potential employees with disabilities are able to actually see individuals with all types of disabilities competently handling job requirements and meeting labor force needs in a variety of ways.

When interviewing and making promotional decisions, LEAP staff identify accommodations that might be needed to make the person most productive. At LEAP, this is not a negative or burden. It is simply a part of hiring the right employee for the job.