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NISH Awards Ashkin for 'Green Cleaning' Efforts

CHICAGO, IL, Nov. 11, 2003 – The Medal of Appreciation was presented by NISH (formerly National Industries for the Severely Handicapped) to Stephen Ashkin, president of The Ashkin Group of Bloomington, IN, a consulting firm specializing in greening the cleaning industry.

The award was one of the "green" highlights for Ashkin during the recent ISSA/INTERCLEAN 2003 tradeshow, the largest exhibition of its kind for the cleaning and maintenance industry, held in Chicago last month.

"Steve has helped us tremendously in adopting green cleaning products and procedures," said Mickey Crowe, project engineer of NISH's southern region. "He has become one of our primary sources of information regarding environmentally preferable cleaning systems."

NISH, working with the JWOD (Javits0Wagner-O-Day) Program provides employment opportunities for more than 36,000 Americans who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

These programs work directly with government agencies that purchase products and services provided by nonprofit agencies employing such individuals throughout the country. Ashkin has been working directly with NISH to help these agencies green their cleaning operations.

"I am very proud of my work with NISH and their recognition of my efforts in support of people with disabilities," said Ashkin. "I am also happy to see them embrace the concept of green cleaning in their programs."

Ashkin was also pleased by the progress he saw on the ISSA/INTERCLEAN tradeshow floor. "I have never before been greeted by so many manufacturers interested in discussing green cleaning issues. So many more manufacturers are producing or planning to develop environmentally preferable cleaning products than in the past," he said.

Ashkin attributes the growing interest in environmentally preferable products to:

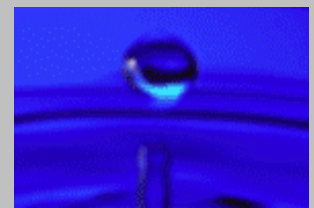
- Green Seal Certification: This year, many advocacy groups and manufacturers recognized the

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Green Seal Certification for cleaning products, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, establishing a set of standards for environmentally responsible cleaning products.

- **Product Pricing and Efficacy:** Today's green cleaning products are priced more competitively and are largely considered as efficient and effective as their conventional counterparts.
- **Demand:** With the adoption of green cleaning products and systems by federal, state, and local entities nationwide, as well as by many in private industry, more customers are demanding environmentally preferable cleaning products.

"The NISH award, the seminar, but especially the increasing use and recognition of environmentally preferable cleaning products and systems has truly made 2003 a great year for me-personally and for the green movement."

In the new book, *Environmentalism Unbound*, Dr. Robert Gottlieb describes Steve Ashkin as the "leading advocate for a stronger environmental profile among cleaning product manufacturers and suppliers," and "the most visible industry figure advancing the cause of environmentally preferable products."

The Ashkin Group provides green consulting services for school districts, building owners, product manufacturers, and cleaning contractors, and can be reached at 812-332-7950.



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