

# CHOICES

Summer 2008

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## Community Options, Inc.

*Supporting People with  
Disabilities Since 1989.*

Our Mission is to provide  
housing and employment  
supports for individuals  
with disabilities.

[www.comop.org](http://www.comop.org)

## NJ Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen tours the Daily Plan It

On June 16<sup>th</sup>, New Jersey Congressman  
Rodney Frelinghuysen and his staff  
toured the Morristown Daily Plan It.  
Congressman Frelinghuysen met with

Robert Stack and  
the Community  
Options  
Enterprises  
team to gain an  
understanding of  
the job training  
and development  
activities taking  
place at the  
shared office and  
conference center  
in Morristown,  
NJ. He and  
his staff were  
thoroughly  
impressed with  
the organization's

innovative approach to job readiness  
and community integration taking place  
within his District. During his visit,  
Cathy Douma, the parent of one of

the 20 individuals working at the  
Morristown Daily Plan It, provided the  
Congressman with a first-hand account of  
her son's success within the program and

discussed the many  
challenges parents and  
family members face  
in finding meaningful,  
practical job training  
for their loved ones  
with disabilities.  
She relayed her and  
her son's positive  
experiences at the  
Morristown DPI  
and emphasized  
the importance of  
legislative support  
for new approaches  
to employment  
services. Congressman  
Frelinghuysen

committed to remaining involved and  
supportive of Community Options  
and looks forward to working with us  
in the future!



*Congressman Frelinghuysen, Robert Stack, Cathy Douma,  
Corey Hribar, Svetlana Repic-Qira, & Christopher Dixon*

## Community Options Enterprises Receives 3-Year Accreditation from CARF

In April, COE underwent a vigorous audit and assessment by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities in order to renew certification. We are pleased to announce that COE passed with flying colors. This clearly illustrates COE's ability to provide superior and effective employment and training services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

NJ Regional Vice President, Svetlana Repic-Qira receives the prestigious Betty Pendler Award. This annual award is given to employees or others whose dedication and work exemplify Community Options' mission.



Featured in photo COI Board members Dr. York & Peter Dulligan with Svetlana Repic-Qira.

## 2nd Annual Surf Camp

*"Thank you so much for a fabulous day. To see my daughter out there yesterday with a big smile on her face was priceless. Thank you to the many volunteers who gave their time and expertise to our kids. I hope they know how much it means to all of us. As a parent you look forward to the day that it's your kid who scores the winning goal, makes the basket at the last second or strikes out the best hitter. As a parent of a child with special needs I didn't think I'd ever experience that feeling. Truthfully, I don't want my daughter to stand out - I want her to mix in. Looking out into the water yesterday, Anna looked like a typical eight year old. That, to me, was as good as any basket she could have scored."*

Visit the link to view video:

[www.fifthroomcreative.com/imatter2008/](http://www.fifthroomcreative.com/imatter2008/)



Delia Donahue & her husband Mike Donahue at the 17th Annual Auction.

## David's Peanut Butter Puppy Bites

David began receiving services from Community Options in December 2007 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. David is a Jackson Class member diagnosed with Profound Mental Retardation, Autism, Pica and Diabetes. He doesn't speak, but understands many phrases in English and some Spanish as well. He expresses himself through body movements and some sign language. David is self-employed. He has a dog biscuit business and receives intensive job coaching 15 hours a week. David's job coach, David Young, is assisting Mr. Shunkey in the development of his dog biscuit business. The men have been working together baking the biscuits at David Shunkey's residential home. They

have been assembling sample packages, decorating small baskets to serve as point of purchase displays and have distributed the treats to Lyn Marie's Hair Salon and several upscale vet clinics around Albuquerque. David Young has created a business card for Mr. Shunkey, designed and produced product labels, and is currently researching some larger outlets through which to offer the Puppy Bites.

The two men recently attended an orientation enabling them to use a large, industrial kitchen, located in the South Valley, which would allow them to bake larger numbers of puppy treats. A business operation plan is required for use of the large kitchen and until this is complete, David will continue to use his house oven. Mr. Young has also obtained FDA approval for David Shunkey's business.

## Robert Stack named in New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson's Poverty Reduction Task Force

Robert Stack, CEO of Community Options, has been appointed as a member of New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson's 'Poverty Reduction Task Force'. The task force will develop specific recommendations for legislative, regulatory and infrastructure initiatives to reduce poverty and income inequality in New Mexico. Governor Richardson cited that he is "confident [he] will be a valuable

member of this board and will fulfill [the] responsibilities with integrity and dedication." Mr. Stack is the only member appointed to the task force outside of New Mexico. The efforts of Robert Stack and his organization to empower individuals with developmental disabilities impressed Governor Richardson throughout several meetings during his term leading to his appointment.

To learn more about this appointment read the article posted in "Town Topics" on July 30, 2008.

[www.towntopics.com/jul3008/other3.php](http://www.towntopics.com/jul3008/other3.php)

## EL PASO, TEXAS

October 10, 2008 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. – 8th Annual Wine & Cheese (Dance & Auction) will take place at the EL Paso Sandunes Hall.

## COI Board Welcomes New Trustee

Community Options is pleased to announce a new addition to the Community Options Board of Directors, Delia Donahue. Delia is a partner at Pepper Hamilton Law Firm, and has worked with Community Options as a volunteer for the last four years.

# October 25th

## Community Options to host National Run/Walk

Community Options of Bowling Green Kentucky is holding a fun walk/scavenger hunt on October 25, 2008 at 10 A.M at Kerieakes Park for their part in the National iMatter Run/Walk event. Bowling Green chose to promote a family atmosphere that the COBAC committee feels is more conducive to the individuals served in that region; individuals live mostly in family home provider situations. Along with the fun walk and scavenger

hunt, we will have food and a raffle held after the race. There will also be prizes given to those who place first, second, and third. Walkers may sign up for the event on the day of the race, or pre-register for a discounted rate online at [www.comop.org](http://www.comop.org).

Kentucky is only one of 14 locations across the country participating in the iMatter Run/Walk which will conclude our annual Disability Awareness Week in October.

## Clarence York Lecture Series

The Clarence York Lecture series kicked off on May 28, 2008 in New Jersey. Hosted by Bancroft NeuroHealth, the series focuses on helping individuals with disabilities play a more active role in their communities. The initial lecture was a one-day intensive seminar entitled "Building Communities for all Abilities".

Dr. Clarence York, who served as the former President of Bancroft for 20 years, for whom the Lecture Series is named has wholeheartedly dedicated his life to helping people with disabilities. Dr. York is an internationally recognized expert in

the field of development and leadership of organizations serving individuals with disabilities, and has been a member of the Community Options Board of Trustees for nearly 15 years. His Foundation, the Clarence York Foundation, has helped to touch many lives, assisting Community Options in their mission to provide housing and employment programs for individuals with developmental disabilities. Another seminar is planned for October 1, 2008 to continue the series.

To learn more about The York Foundation visit:

[www.TheYorkFoundation.org](http://www.TheYorkFoundation.org)

## COI's Annual Board of Directors meeting

Community Options hosted their Annual Board of Directors Meeting in Morristown, NJ at the Daily Plan It. This year, the meeting was again opened up to employees across the country allowing them to observe the governing body of the organization prepare for our 2008-2009 year. Topics included the new fiscal budget, successes, growth, and potential issues for the upcoming year and the solutions for those issues. Maralie Waterman Belonge, Executive Director of New Mexico observes; "I had the opportunity to meet the very impressive volunteer leadership of the organization and connect with many of my colleagues from Princeton and around the country, all of whom are doing extraordinary service and advocacy work.... In addition to the celebration of where we have come from, there was recognition and clear articulation through Robert Stack's comments of just how far we have yet to travel and with more ground gained, just how much more challenging that journey will be."

## LOCATIONS:

New Jersey/New York  
*Liberty State Park*

Binghamton, NY  
*River Park*

Syracuse, NY  
*Willow Bay*

Pittsburgh, PA  
*Allegheny County Park*

Bucks County, PA  
*Tyler State Park*

El Paso, TX  
*Ascarate Park*

Amarillo, TX  
*John Stiff Park*

Dallas, TX  
*Kiest Park*

San Antonio, TX  
*McAllister Park*

Bowling Green, KY  
*Kerieakes Park*

Cookeville, TN  
*Tennessee Tech Campus*

Chattanooga, TN  
*Chattanooga Riverfront Park*

Visit our website for further information.

[www.active.com](http://www.active.com)

*"I urge all of you in this room to work to promote institutional closure. There is no such thing as too small of an effort. A letter to your local paper, or a blog or educating a family member about how to talk to an elected official is a good way to inform others about the plight of those who cannot speak for themselves."*

– Robert Stack  
COI Board Meeting, May 17, 2008

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Princeton, NJ 08540

www.comop.org

## 17<sup>th</sup> Community Options Annual Auction

*Terry Morrison spoke to attendees at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Auction about how Community Options has changed her life. "I am happy to be out of New Lisbon [Developmental Center]. Now I am happy," Terry recalled during her speech. "Now I get to take the bus & work."*



*Featured in photo from left to right:*

*Kenny Fiore, Terry Morrison,  
Nancy Seiler, Sean O'Boyle*

## COI NJ Opens Children's Home

Community Options of Northern New Jersey is pleased to announce the opening of its first children's home. The home is the first of its kind to open in the state of New Jersey under the Division of Developmental Disabilities C-PEP (Children's Placement Enhancement Pilot).

The residence in Wayne, NJ is home to two adolescent girls with developmental disabilities. What makes this home unique is that Community Options has incorporated a house-parent model in lieu of the traditional direct support staffed model. We have a live-in couple who are a part of the girls' lives on a daily basis,

and help to create a consistent loving family environment, as well as direct staff who are on hand 24 hours a day to provide support to the house parents and residents. The administrative, management and support staff involved in the program have been through an extensive training program through the Boggs Center and through this training have become a cohesive and core group of staff to support the girls. The focus of the C-PEP program is to ensure that

children who are at risk of out of state placement are kept within the state, as well as bringing children who have already been placed out of state back to New Jersey.

