

Community Options Community Options Community Options Community Options Community Options Community Options

# CHOICES

Community Options, Inc.

Supporting People with Disabilities Since 1989.

Fall 2004

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## Our Friend In New Jersey



The Honorable Mike Ferguson

Community Options has a friend in New Jersey and his name is Congressman ( R ) Mike Ferguson of Somerset County. Congressman Ferguson represents New Jersey's 7th District in the U.S. House of Representatives. First elected in 2000, he is now serving in his second term in the 108th Congress. Born and raised in New Jersey, Congressman Ferguson and his wife, Maureen, have four young children. They live in Somerset County.

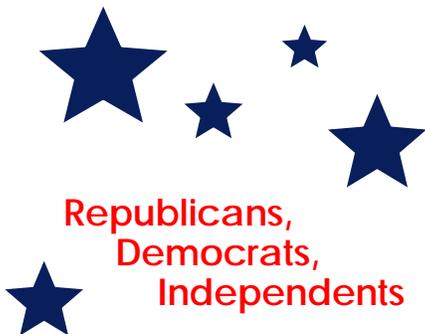
Before entering the House, Congressman Ferguson was an educator and small business owner. He founded an educational consulting firm that advocated school reform and scholarship programs. He also served as Adjunct Instructor of Political Science at Brookdale Community

College in Lincroft, New Jersey.

A graduate of Delbarton School in New Jersey, Ferguson attended the University of Notre Dame where he received a bachelor's degree in government. After graduation, he taught history and coached basketball at Mount St. Michael Academy in the Bronx, New York.

Congressman Ferguson later received a master's of public policy degree with a specialization in education policy from Georgetown University in Washington, DC. He also served as Executive Director of the Catholic Campaign for America.

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**MAKE YOUR  
VOTE COUNT!**

## A Sweet PartnerShop

Community Options Enterprises has been working behind the scenes for several years to negotiate a franchise agreement with Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream. An ice cream store is such a symbol of community and happiness; we think it would be a natural work site for people with disabilities. The company, known for its philanthropy, has a special program for non-profits called "PartnerShops". We are hopeful that our first shop will open in the Saddle River area in the Spring of 2005 with funding from Atlantic Bank.

*We cordially invite  
all members of the  
Community Options family  
to join us in Pittsburgh on  
November 12, 2004  
as we pay tribute to  
Andrea Geraghty.*

## *Tenth Anniversary Gala*

Community Options, Inc.  
is celebrating ten years  
in Pittsburgh

November 12, 2004  
Heinz Field, Pittsburgh, PA

Please join us as we honor  
Andrea Geraghty,  
Geraghty & Associates



## **Pittsburgh Office Celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary With A Tribute To, Andrea Geraghty**

It has been ten years since Community Options opened its Pittsburgh office as part of the initiative to close the Western Center. From the very beginning, Andrea Geraghty, of Geraghty & Associates, has been our advocate in word and in deed. She concentrates her practice in all facets of real property law, both transactional and litigation. She presently holds the position of Co-Chair of the Lawyer Realtor Committee, a joint committee of the Allegheny County Bar Association and the Realtors Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh and has recently been appointed by the Pennsylvania General Assembly's Joint State Government Commission to serve on its Advisory Committee on Real Property Law.

Ms. Geraghty has provided legal counsel and practical advice that has allowed Community Options to expand its programs and to enhance the quality of supports. Our favorite of her many accomplishments is her argument that resulted in the State Supreme Court reversing an earlier decision of the Commonwealth Court regarding property tax on homes operated by non-profit organizations. As a result of her advocacy, Community Options and similar organizations became entitled to exemption from property taxation in Pennsylvania.

Ms. Geraghty also assisted Community Options with the logistics of opening a home in a community that was hostile toward the idea of a local group home.

Community Options is honored to have Andrea Geraghty as legal counsel and we are grateful for her consistent support of all people with disabilities in the Pittsburgh area. We cordially invite all members of the Community Options family to join us in Pittsburgh on November 12, 2004 as we pay tribute to Andrea Geraghty.

## **Bill Introduced To Provide More Money For Direct Care Staff**

The Direct Support Professional Fairness and Security Act would increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for staff salaries in certain targeted programs, including community based support services, like those operated by Community Options. We applaud the bi-partisan work of **Representatives Lee Terry (R-NE) and Lois Capps (D-CA)** in addressing the crisis in availability of direct support workers.

# Welcome Home Claire!

Community Options is proud to announce that Claire Mahon has accepted the position of Executive Director for our North Jersey region. Claire has a long history of service to people with disabilities. During her tenure with the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities, she was a principle architect of the New Jersey home and community based Medicaid waiver. She worked for over 25 years in various capacities at DDD before retiring from the position of Assistant Director for Community Services. She then served as Executive Vice President for PSCH, a large private non-profit corporation serving individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses.

We are very happy that Claire's personal decision to move back to New Jersey coincided with our need for a strong leader in North Jersey. The Community Options office in North Jersey is located in Wayne and provides community residential and employment support to people in Passaic and Bergen county communities.

Top priorities for our new executive will be opening two new HUD homes, revitalizing the local business advisory council, and working with families and friends to develop a volunteer community connection base. CEO, Robert Stack looks forward to once again working with Claire and to introducing her to all her new colleagues.

# New Offices In Tennessee and Texas

Regional Vice-President Karen Hensley has been busy in Tennessee. She and her staff are in the midst of moving into new, owned office space in Nashville. There will be room for all current staff and room to grow as Tennessee continues to rely on Community Options to help move people from institutions into the community.

A new service area was recently opened in Cookeville. New Executive Director, Jennifer Enderson will be supervising community homes and a new respite home. Garth Platt continues to expand services in Chattanooga.

Regional Vice-President Mario Saenz is also moving into new, owned office space in El Paso with funding from Wells Fargo Bank. He and his dedicated staff have waited many years for a home of their own! The new 7,800 square foot building will also house a Daily Plan It and other affirmative businesses for people with disabilities.



**MAKE YOUR  
VOTE COUNT!**

## Your Donation Counts!

Historically, the services that Community Options, Inc. provides have been supported primarily through the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 811, and by grants from corporations, foundations, and individuals.

Times are changing, and government funding for people with disabilities is diminishing. To continue serving the increasing number of people waiting to leave institutions, we must rely on the generosity of individuals who support Community Options' commitment to empowering people with disabilities to live regular lives by benefiting from and contributing to society.

*Yes! I can help Community Options, Inc. continue to develop residential and employment supports for people with developmental disabilities.*

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of:

\$25     \$50     \$100     \$250

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be made payable to Community Options, Inc. and sent to:

Community Options, Inc.  
16 Farber Road  
Princeton, NJ 08540

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*(as you would like it to appear in all donor listings)*

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Contributions to Community Options, Inc. are tax deductible as allowed by law.*

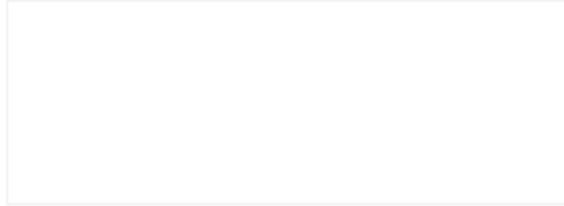
Community Options, Inc.  
16 Farber Road  
Princeton, NJ 08540

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

*The deadline for  
voter registration  
for the general election  
in November is October 4th.*



**VOTE**



## Our Friend In New Jersey

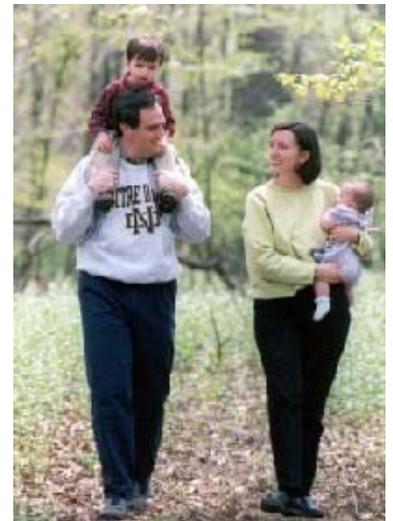
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Congressman Ferguson is a strong advocate for people with disabilities and he believes in providing necessary support to help people become full participants in their own lives and in the life of their communities. As a fiscal conservative, he is very interested in the Community Options' entrepreneurial and micro-enterprise models. He understands that public funding can support more people if those who want to work receive the support they need to become financially independent.

Community Options has requested guidance and advice from Congressman Ferguson in developing a call center in Hillsborough that would employ more than twenty people with disabilities. The building, already owned by Community Options, will provide a hub for training and employment in information technology skills provided by InspiriTec, Inc. InspiriTec, Inc. is a "social entrepreneurship" whose mission is to develop employment for persons with disabilities in computer-related professions. The organization prides itself on its ability to integrate compassionate and empowering human services with world-class information services.

We are hopeful that this joint venture will result in jobs and independence for the people we support. Contact information for Congressman Ferguson is listed below.

Warren, NJ (908) 757-7835  
Washington, DC (202) 225-5361  
Website [www.house.gov/ferguson](http://www.house.gov/ferguson)



*Congressman Ferguson with his family*