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# CHOICES

Community Options, Inc.

Supporting People with Disabilities Since 1989.

Fall 2005

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## SENATOR JON CORZINE Supports Community Options

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Community Options Car raffle to benefit victims of Hurricane Katrina.

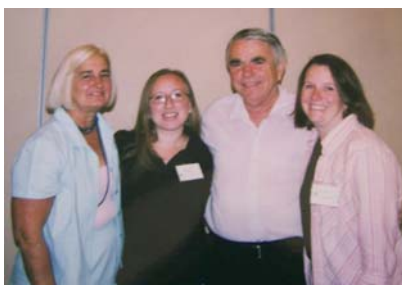
Full Story on Page 4



Joe Brown, Job Coach & Katie Terzian.

Katie has a love for animals and is happy to have found a job taking care of cats.

Full Story on Page 3



COI Trustee Marge Brown, Gentle Teaching Mentor Jessica Short, Dr. John McGee & Director of Training Lisa Smith at the 6<sup>th</sup> Gentle Teaching International Conference.

Full Story on Page 3

“Part of strong leadership for our State means providing new opportunities for New Jersey that make sense to both our budget and our values. I commend Community Options for empowering people with disabilities through employment and residential opportunities that make independence for people with disabilities a fiscally sound possibility.”

- Senator Jon Corzine



Senator Jon Corzine & Robert Stack, President/CEO of Community Options, Inc.

CEO Robert Stack was honored to receive the above commendation on behalf of all the employees and volunteers of Community Options, Inc. His meeting with Senator Corzine was part of an on-going effort to inform policy makers about the needs of people with disabilities and their families in New Jersey and across the country. Major points of their discussion were institutions, community support systems, donated housing, and employment.

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## Texas Opens New Office

On September 9, 2005 Community Options opened its newest office in San Antonio, Texas. San Antonio is the second largest city in Texas with a total population of over two million people. The new location at 1405 N. Main Street is centrally located approximately three miles from the Alamo and the famous River Walk.

Mario Saenz, Regional Vice President for Texas and New Mexico said, “I am ecstatic to announce the opening of our San Antonio office. I have currently hired two well experienced individuals who are excited to join our Community Options family and look forward to the expansion in San Antonio.” Gina Keith, Case Manager, brings over fifteen years of experience and Daniel Driskell brings over eighteen years of experience working with individuals with disabilities. Both of their energy, motivation, creativity and knowledge have developed a good

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

PRINCETON, NJ

**Lord & Taylor's Benefit Bash**  
October 18, 2005

Shop while supporting Community Options employment and residential programs. \$5.00 tickets are on sale until October 17<sup>th</sup> to attend Lord & Taylor's Benefit Bash at Bridgewater Commons Mall. You will receive 20% off purchases throughout the day. 100% of the proceeds will benefit Community Options. **Please contact Christine Larkin at 609 951-9900 ext. 157 to purchase the admission tickets.**

NASHVILLE, TN

**Inaugural Golf Outing**  
November 7, 2005

Come and join COI Nashville at its First Annual Golf Outing at Springhouse Links Golf Club at Gaylord Opryland. Registration and breakfast begins at 7am followed by an 8am shotgun. The cost per player is \$100 or \$400 per foursome. **Please contact Hollie Campbell at 615 885-1099 for more information.**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM

**Pancake Slam**  
Mid-November

Enjoy a pancake breakfast at COI Albuquerque's First Pancake Slam. **For more details please contact Gary Marsjanik at 505 265-7936.**

PITTSBURGH, PA

**Gift of Giving 2005**  
December 2-24, 2005  
10:00 am - 9:30pm

COI Pittsburgh is pleased to announce Gift of Giving 2005. This annual three week gift-wrapping campaign will once again be held at Century III Mall. Local area shoppers will have the opportunity to visit our gift-wrapping booth to have their holiday packages wrapped in return for a donation. **For more information or to volunteer contact Courtney Kazmeraski at 412 431-7079.**

## Executive Director Spotlight

**Bret Li-Vaks** has been the Executive Director in Northern New Jersey since June 2005. Although his time at Community Options has been short, he has taken on the task of restructuring the region in order to allow our consumers the opportunity to maximize the greatest services possible. This is the largest of our residential programs throughout the country.

Bret has sixteen years of experience working with individuals with disabilities in NJ, MA, and HI. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from Lesley University and is currently completing his MBA at Centenary College.

"It is a real pleasure and honor to work at such a dynamic organization. As a social services provider I'm touched because our consumers are a part of the community and have the opportunity to live in such a wonderful environment."



Volunteers Michelle Marino, Manager Jennifer Marino, Volunteer Bob Borneman, Executive Director Bret Li-Vaks & Volunteer Glenn Monticello.

*The Wendt Lane Day of Caring*

## Texas Opens New Office

*Continued from page 1*

faith trust with consumers and families in San Antonio.

The new office currently will be serving seven individuals with disabilities. There are a number of programs and services that the office will be starting, such as, supported employment, foster care, occupational therapy, speech and language pathology, home and community services, and many other programs.

Please contact the office at (210) 212-4969 or via fax at (210) 212-4966. **The mailing address is 1405 N. Main Street, Ste 237 San Antonio, TX 78212.**

## Community Options Expands National Board of Trustees

**Mr. Timothy Carden** has been appointed the newest member of Community Options' National Board of Trustees. Mr. Robert Stack, President & CEO, announced the unanimous vote of affirmation of the appointment following a vote on August 31, 2005.

Mr. Carden is a founding partner of Public Private Initiatives (PPI) located in Montclair, NJ. PPI is a strategic and financial advisory firm that specializes in securing private capital to supplement the cost of public projects, such as roadways, bridges, water systems, school facilities and public office buildings. Prior to forming PPI in 1996, he developed financial products as an investment banker at Kidder, Peabody and then as a Principal at Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette. Mr. Carden also served as the Executive Assistant to the Commissioner of Transportation, Cabinet Secretary to Governor Brendan Byrne and as the Commissioner of the NJ Department of Human Services.

Community Options, Inc., welcomes Timothy Carden to the COI family.

## GOOD NEWS STORIES

**Pittsburgh, PA-** January 2005 offered **Thomas Kendrick** with the distinct honor of living on his own with the help of Community Options, Inc.'s residential program. Since his move, Mr. Kendrick has been living on his own, enjoys the company of his roommates and is known for his sense of humor and good nature.

On June 2, 2005, he participated in commencement exercises held at the Children's Institute of Pittsburgh. Since age 5, he attended programs at the Children's Institute where he grasped the skills needed to handle various tasks, established memories to last a lifetime and left behind many individuals who offered their assistance to ensure his success.

This summer he eagerly tackled the next journey that life had in store for him, a brand new job. Parc-Way Industries welcomed Tommy to their organization as a participant in their Adult Training Facility (ATF) Program. Each day Tommy arrives at work where he sorts items such as bolts, nuts, and flat washers and aids with mass mailings.

**Princeton, NJ-** On September 12<sup>th</sup> **Katie Terzian** began working at Carolyn's Kitten Corner in Yardville, NJ. Katie has a love for animals and is happy to have found a job taking care of cats. Katie works three

evenings a week grooming, feeding and pampering the animals.

In June 2005, **John Matunas** moved into a new apartment and also started a new job. John lives at the Wyndham apartment complex along with one roommate. On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, John started working at Haldeman Ford in Hamilton, NJ in its automotive detailing department. John works two mornings a week working on the cars.

**Addison, TX-** **Adam Zavala** graduated from Richardson Berkner High School in May. Even though his teachers no longer teach him they still spend time with him. However, one of the teachers Velisa, wanted to do more. She is now Adam's advocate. She wanted to continue to be a part of his life. Her entire family has embraced Adam. He now has family that comes to see him, go out to dinner and celebrate birthdays and holidays with him.

**Deirdre Hubbard**, 28 years old, recently moved out of her mother's home. She was receiving Foster Care Companion Services but now receives Supported Home Living at her new home. She works at Foley's Department Store at the Town East Mall. Deirdre takes an active role in the Consumer Advisory Committee. COI Addison is proud of her accomplishments.

## New Website Launched

This past August, Community Options, Inc. (COI) launched its new website, [www.communityoptionsonline.org](http://www.communityoptionsonline.org).

**Corey Hribar**, Executive Director of COE said, "We undertook this initiative in an effort to develop a website that's more than an online brochure. Our new Internet site appreciates the challenges faced by people with disabilities and highlights their abilities. We want to make a lasting impression to the many individuals who visit our website while providing useful resources for the whole community."

Visitors to the site will find it easy to navigate and full of useful information and tools including resources for employers and jobseekers, an online disabilities dictionary, specialized links, success stories, newsletters, an eAdvocacy system, ways to help and much more. The site also includes detailed information about COI and its mission of **providing housing, support services and advocacy assistance to help empower people with disabilities.**

## Community Options and Gentle Teaching

**Trustee Marge Brown, Director of Training Lisa Smith, and Gentle Teaching Mentor Jessica Short** were proud to represent Community Options at the 6<sup>th</sup> Gentle Teaching International Conference held in Chicago. Participants from around the world (Mexico, Canada, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Portugal, and the US) shared their experiences in supporting marginalized people of all ages using the approach developed by Dr. John McGee.

Jessica made a presentation about her first years of trying to implement Gentle Teaching in New Jersey, the highs and lows of working in a traditional behavior management system and the support she has received from Community Options to focus on positive approaches.

Marge was also a presenter, sharing techniques for including Gentle Teaching in grant proposals to local, state, federal, and private donors. Her audience included several family members who want to start their own programs because they have not been able to find provider agencies who will use Gentle Teaching. Marge offered to assist with applications and opportunities to use Community Options resources for training and administrative support.

Community Options will be hosting a **Gentle Teaching Seminar in New Jersey on November 30, 2005 in Morristown.** The seminar will be an opportunity for family members, people with disabilities, professionals, and policy makers to discuss **current support issues in New Jersey and the benefits of positive approaches and Gentle Teaching.**

Contact **Lisa Smith** for more information at 609 951-9900.

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

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

## SENATOR JON CORZINE Supports Community Options

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Stack describes the Senator, as a true advocate who shares Community Options' belief that anyone who wants to work should be supported to find and maintain a job. Stack said they also talked about the importance of training and supporting caregivers, and building strong community connections for people with disabilities. On the important issue of institutional depopulation, Stack said "It was

obvious to me that he understands that a strong administration with good leadership and an array of community support systems must be in place to assure an effective and quality transition from the old institutional model to the community based model of support." He emphatically said, "Robert, it's got to be done right."

Community Options will continue its daily efforts to make sure that things are "done right" for people with disabilities. We know that we can make a positive difference in individual lives by doing our jobs to the best of our abilities. It is clear that we can depend on Senator Corzine to continue doing his best for all of us.

## Community Options RAISES MONEY FOR HURRICANE RELIEF

The staff at Community Options, like so many other companies, wanted to do their part in aiding the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Almost immediately the individuals we support expressed sincere interest in joining the relief effort.

**Michelle Stone, Special Events Coordinator** said that, "We have always asked for donations for people with disabilities but now they are asking how they can help the Hurricane victims, who are less fortunate than they are."

A consumer in Albuquerque's Community Membership Program has taken on the challenge of conducting a fund drive for those individuals who have been displaced to the Albuquerque area. Community Options' friends donated food, clothes and money to fill the donation boxes. The boxes have been donated to the local American Red Cross to be distributed to the families.

The National Office along with Haldeman Ford, a long time supporter of Community Options,

has joined together to raise \$50,000 for the American Red Cross relief efforts. Along with the support of local newspapers and radio stations \$10 tickets will be on sale until October 31<sup>st</sup> with a chance to win a fuel efficient 2006 Ford Focus.

Thank you to all employees, consumers and friends of Community Options who supported these two programs.