

CHOICES

Community Options, Inc.

Supporting People with Disabilities Since 1989.

Summer 2005

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On June 24th, COI celebrated summer with its annual company picnic at Liberty Lake in Columbus, NJ.

Community Star

Dan Connell has been an active member of the Mercer County Community since 1992. Dan's home is one of the first three opened by Community Options making Dan one of the first individuals supported by the agency.

Dan enjoys living in Mercer County and has been there for over 10 years. He takes great pride in offering advice to his housemates. Any visitor that comes to the home will be escorted to the basement to play a game of pool or air hockey; Dan saved his money to purchase both games. He has been employed at Mon Cheri Bridal in Ewing, New Jersey for several years. He performs maintenance duties at the bridal store. With the help of dedicated staff, Dan has learned to manage transactions and purchase items



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COE Gains Accreditation

Community Options Enterprises, Inc. has been awarded its second consecutive three-year accreditation from The Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission (CARF) for its Supported Employment programs in NJ.

The accreditation outcome represents the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded to an organization and shows Community Options' conformance to the standards established by CARF. The accreditation process is a rigorous peer review. The Three-Year Accreditation outcome demonstrates that Community Options Enterprises' programs and services are measurable, accountable of the highest quality.

CARF is an independent, not for profit accrediting body whose mission is to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process that centers on enhancing the lives of the persons served. Founded in 1966 as the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and now known as CARF, the accrediting body establishes consumer-focused standards to help organizations measure and improve the quality of their programs and served.

Congratulations to Corey Hribar and the COE team and good luck to the New Mexico team as they await the results of their recent accreditation survey.

Executive Director Spotlight

Natalie Bogdanowicz has been the Executive Director in the Syracuse office since August 2004. She has a Bachelors of Science in Psychology from Syracuse University. She lives in Montague, NY, a small rural community in Northern NY, with her husband and 12 year old daughter.



Natalie has 20 years experience in supervising residential programs that support adults with developmental disabilities, beginning her career as a direct care staff. She was the Community Support Coordinator in Syracuse, NY for 7 years before being promoted to Executive Director. She has extensive knowledge of regulatory requirements in NY State. She remains committed to individualized services supporting people with disabilities in their quest for independence.

EVENTS

Pittsburgh, PA
Sunday, July 10th

COI had a very successful fundraiser at the West Mifflin Sam's Club entranceway to sell grilled hot dogs and kielbasa along with pop and water to local shoppers. This was not only a fundraising effort but also an opportunity to introduce Community Options to the community.

El Paso, TX
Big Al's Festival
August 2005

Big Al's will be holding its first festival and COI El Paso will receive 50% of the festivals profit. For more information, contact Melinda Taggart at 915 771-7764

Princeton, NJ
13th Annual Golf Classic
Monday, August 15th
Olde York Country Club

Community Options is proud to announce its 13th Annual Golf Classic to be held at the Olde York Country Club. Contact Christine Larkin at 609 951-9900 or e-mail Christine.Larkin@comop.org.

Pittsburgh, PA
Thursday, September 22nd
South Park Theater

COI Pittsburgh is proud to present Theater Night. COI supporters can spend an evening tasting a variety of wines, nibbling on fabulous hors d'oeuvres and enjoying the production of Misery (based on the Stephen King novel). For more information, contact Courtney Kazmeraski at 412 431-7079.

El Paso, TX
Friday, October 14th
5th Annual Wine & Cheese Gala

COI El Paso is happy to announce their 5th Annual Wine and Cheese Gala. Participants have the opportunity to enjoy area wines while supporting Community Options. For more information contact, Melinda Taggart at 915 771-7764.

"Flight of the Kites"

On Your Mark, Get Set, Go! And they're off...Runners, Walkers, and Rollers from the Pittsburgh area, as well as residents from West Virginia, gathered at the South Park Fairgrounds for the first annual "Flight of the Kites" 5K Run, Walk, & Roll.

Community Options, Inc. Pittsburgh and the South Hills Chamber of Commerce hosted the event. Net proceeds generated ensured COI Pittsburgh's continued support of people with disabilities and the Chamber of Commerce's continued support of local students pursuing higher education through their Education Foundation scholarships.

In the winner's circle, a few familiar Community Options faces could be found. Our very own Kevin Mimnaji, pushed by staff member Andre Johnson, took 1st Place in the Roller Division and Sallie Pagano, COBAC Member, took 2nd Place in the Over 18 Walkers Division. Congratulations Kevin, Sallie and all who aided with the success of the event!

Community Star *Continued from page 1*

independently at the store. Though he is legally blind, Dan overcame this obstacle by feeling the sides of the coin to identify its worth.

In May he received the Community Star award from a New Jersey state association. He received the honor for overcoming adversity to live a more dignified life. Whatever direction life takes, Dan welcomes new experiences and making new friends. He truly is a "Community Star".

In his free time, Dan loves to travel. Last year Dan took a trip to Florida, where he fulfilled his dream to go horseback riding. This year he looks forward to his vacation to Tennessee to check out all the great country music sites.



Good News Stories

EL PASO, TX - Andrew Fatuch has been receiving services through Community Options for the last eight years. Andy was previously with the Mental Health Authority in El Paso, before he chose COI as his provider. He now lives in his own apartment with the support of COI. For the past two years, he has been gainfully employed with Albertson's Supermarkets as the grocery sacker and assisting customers with their groceries. He is considered a hardworking, dedicated and punctual employee. When he started his employment, he was receiving job coaching through COI. We are happy to say that he has not received any job coaching in about a year. We are proud of his accomplishments and salute Andrew for his continued employment and dedication.

Rigoberto Perez is 24 years old and has been receiving Texas Home Living Services through Community Options since July 2004. He attends the Day Habilitation Program and enjoys helping other consumers in solving math problems. The staff reports that he has accomplished his goal of gaining social skills. According to his mother, Rigoberto's attitude has improved since he started receiving services from Community Options. Rigoberto is also a member of a bowling team, where he has become a leader. We are very proud of Rigoberto's achievements in such a short period of time.

PITTSBURGH, PA - Dwight Woods joined the staff of Sam's Club this past January. As part of the maintenance team, he ensures that Sam's Club patrons have a clean environment in which to shop. Currently, you will find Dwight at Sam's Club on Tuesdays, but not for long. Due to his outstanding work ethic and dedication, management increased his hours, providing him with the opportunity to work four days a week. This is not his only reward for doing a

job well done; after working at Sam's Club for 90 days, he is eligible for additional compensation. According to Ryan Dively, Dwight's Manager, he is looking forward to giving Dwight a pay increase. A portion of his success is attributed to two very dedicated Community Options employees. Emily Stotler, Employment Supports Coordinator, worked diligently with Sam's Club to ensure that Dwight would have the opportunity to work for the organization. Dwight is one of the first individuals with a disability to be employed by Sam's Club in Pittsburgh. Joe Cokel, Employment Specialist, accompanies Dwight to work, making sure that he arrives on time and has assistance when he needs it. Everyone in the Pittsburgh office knows that Dwight will continue to excel as a member of the maintenance staff due to his strong work ethic and enthusiasm!

OCONOMOWOC, WISCONSIN - A new home in Franklin, Wisconsin was purchased to enable four citizens with disabilities to live and participate in their community. The four women living there are extremely delighted with the house that was found by the CEO Robert Stack and renovated with oversight and input from A.J. Jelks, Executive Director of Wisconsin. One of the most important events was when Beverly Davis was able to exodus a nursing home that was segregated and inappropriate for her and move into this beautiful house. Beverly commutes to St. Anne's during the day from her new home to pursue a variety of interesting hobbies and interests. She loves to sing and works hard to maintain her meticulously spotless home. With the assistance and input of her sister, Beverly has completed decorating her bedroom with unique and eclectic designs and well positioned artifacts. It is so obvious that everything is really going well with the friendships that have developed in this wonderful home.

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



Community Options Rallies

The Annual Cost of Care Rally in Trenton, NJ brought 4,000 individuals from the NJ Human Services community together to fight for a 3.3% cost of providing care increase for the 2006 Fiscal budget. People with disabilities, mental health community, and families at risk came together at the Statehouse. COI came with a strong contingent of over 50 consumers, staff and board members. Legislators spoke in favor of the increase because the quality of services delivered is being jeopardized because of lack of agency funding due to the rate of inflation and escalating costs.

What's Going on...

Ocean County, NJ

This location has started its own bowling league called "The Jersey Shore Strikers." The Jersey Shore Strikers can be seen competitively bowling every Thursday evening at Beachwood's Thunderbowl.

Cookeville, TN

This location supports five persons with significant disabilities: David, Jeff, Mike, Frank and Chris. They commute to an athletic program in Cookeville. They are active in the bowling, basketball and soccer leagues. Chris and David also volunteer twice a week at the Putnam County Animal Shelter by walking the shelters dogs. David also volunteers at the Van Buren County Rescue Squad, participating in weekly meetings and trainings. He has gone on several rescue and recovery attempts. As if that wasn't enough, he also works security at the local high school's sporting events.