

## **Katelyn King, Regional Manager for Senator Patrick J. Toomey Visit with Community Options Residents in the Forest Hills Neighborhood of Pittsburgh**

Katelyn King, Regional Manager for Senator Patrick J. Toomey, displayed her support of disability awareness when she toured a Community Options home located in the Forest Hills neighborhood of Pittsburgh. There she met with the residents of the home, along with Executive Director Bridget Haney and spoke about increasing funding to move people out of state-run institutions and serve individuals on the emergency waiting list.

Katelyn, who worked for an agency similar to Community Options, is familiar with residential supports for people with disabilities. Katelyn shared Senator Toomey's enthusiasm and efforts to advocate for additional funding; by focusing on repairing the health care system, which they feel confident, will generate much-needed funds.

Robert Stack, President and CEO, founded Community Options in 1989, to provide housing and employment supports to individuals with disabilities in integrated community settings. Housing supports are single-family homes and are designed to serve individuals with disabilities usually with no more than 3 residents in a home and continual assistance from trained caregivers.

Katelyn and Mary (intern for Senator Toomey) toured Community Options home in the Forest Hills neighborhood of Pittsburgh. Michael Perret, a resident since 2012, provided a tour of the home proudly showing off his room and enthusiasm for the Pittsburgh sports teams. Three men live in the home, Michael the most recent, and Charlie and Donnie who have lived there since 2009 when the home first opened. All 3 men have strong family support and a network of caring and dedicated individuals, participate in daily work programs or volunteer work, and enjoy a variety of community events.

Katelyn was receptive and eager to share information with Senator Toomey following her tour. Bridget Haney discussed Governor Tom Corbett's initiatives over the next year to move 100 people out of state-run institutions and support an additional 1,000 on the community emergency wait list. She asked that Senator Toomey share statistics with Governor Corbett on the number of people who remain institutionalized and on the community wait list. Over the past 2 years less than 100 people have moved out of institutions, and 14,000 remain on the list for community-based services. Community Options remains committed to helping people with disabilities live fully integrated lives in their communities.

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*Community Options Inc. (COI) is a national nonprofit organization incorporated in 1989 and headquartered in Princeton, New Jersey. The organization provides residential and employment supports to people with disabilities. The agency philosophy is that all people can and should live and work in the community, regardless of their level of disability. COI currently operates in Kentucky, New Jersey, New York, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. For more info please visit [www.comop.org](http://www.comop.org).*

CEO available for comment. Photos available upon request. If you would like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview, please call (609) 352-5280 or e-mail Kathryn at [Kathryn.Sampson@comop.org](mailto:Kathryn.Sampson@comop.org).