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Donated Home Provides New Beginning For People With Disabilities

PRINCETON, NJ – On Monday, October 21, 2013, 16th District Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli and Assemblywoman Donna Simon visited two Community Options' group homes in Princeton on Federal Court and North Harrison Street.

Ciattarelli and Simon had the opportunity to meet two individuals who just recently moved into the North Harrison Street home. Lisa, a Brooklyn, NY native, just spent her first night in the home while Vanessa, originally a South Plainfield, NJ resident, has lived in the home for about a week. Lisa and Vanessa gave a tour of their new home. Ciattarelli and Simon were impressed by their confidence and eloquence.

Vanessa was recently on the waiting list for a group home and will be starting a day program soon. Lisa is hoping to find a job in town. Both are looking forward to exploring the downtown Princeton area. Ciattarelli and Simon wished them the best of luck on their future endeavors.

"Every community has underserved and vulnerable populations," said Assemblyman Ciattarelli. "The housing provided by Community Options, which empowers people with disabilities, is therefore a very critical element of every community's housing plan. For these reasons, it was an invaluable experience to go on the tour."

"To coin a phrase, a picture is worth a thousand words. Our visit today was educational and heartwarming," said Assemblywoman Simon. "We witnessed the high caliber of care that Community Options offer their residents and our visit proved that adults with special needs are well cared for and feel a sense of family and community. Their homes are inviting, warm, well kept and an impressive sense of belonging. We will continue to support this very vital service for individuals with disabilities in any way we can."

In 2010, the town of Princeton donated the house on North Harrison Street. The building was originally a one-story home with two bedrooms. Community Options, Inc., renovated it last year, using a 0% loan from the Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency. The home on Federal Court was purchased by Community Options in 1994.

Community Options is thankful for the support of 16th District Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli and Assemblywoman Donna Simon.

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For nearly 25 years, Community Options has developed housing and employment programs for people with disabilities. Currently the 8th largest non-profit in New Jersey, Community Options operates with a budget over \$96 million and serves thousands of people with disabilities through 38 offices across 8 states. Providing advocacy assistance to empower people with disabilities, Community Options believes that all people –regardless of disability level – should live and work in the community with dignity, choice, and self-determination. A registered PVO with USAID, Community Options is also the pioneer of innovative programs for people with disabilities in the Middle East, Russia, and South America. Please visit our website at www.comop.org.

CEO available for comment. 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.