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## **NJ Congressman Frelinghuysen Visits Community Options' Red Ribbon Academy**

PRINCETON, New Jersey – On Friday, September 13, 2013, Community Options, Inc. welcomed 11<sup>th</sup> District New Jersey Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen to the Red Ribbon Academy for a visit. Community Options, a national nonprofit organization, operates this program for young adults with profound disabilities.

The Red Ribbon Academy is the first organization in New Jersey that aids adult individuals who have the most severe, medically fragile disabilities in a way that fosters growth and progress.

Congressman Frelinghuysen met with Community Options President and CEO Robert Stack as well as Regional Vice President Svetlana Repic-Qira to learn about this program and the therapeutic services it offers. Two parents of the programs participants, Linda Thomas and Marsha DuBose-Wilks, gave Congressman Frelinghuysen a tour of the building. He had the opportunity to visit the program's state of the art sensory therapy room and meet the individuals receiving daily support as well as their physical and occupational therapists.

"It was an honor and pleasure to tour the Red Ribbon Academy in Wayne," Frelinghuysen said. "The facility boasts state-of-the-art programs with loving staff, which enhance the emotional and physical growth of those with severe developmental disabilities. I thank the Red Ribbon Academy and Community Options, Inc. for their hard work and dedication in development of such an inspiring plan to serve New Jersey families."

Frelinghuysen and Stack's relationship dates approximately 30 years. While employed with the state of New Jersey, Stack gave a tour to Frelinghuysen of a state-run institution for people with severe disabilities. At the time, Frelinghuysen was serving his first term as Assemblyman. This is where the two gentlemen forged a relationship based on improving care for people with disabilities. This relationship was founded on a fundamental belief that people with disabilities who want to live in an environment in which they can flourish, should be given the opportunity.

The Congressman ostensibly showed that he cared by visiting two of the grateful mothers who fought hard for the program. Before he left, they thanked him for the visit. He hugged them and said, "You are the powerhouses".

For more detailed press releases about the specific aspects of the Red Ribbon Academy, please visit our media page:

[http://comop.org/presskit/pdf/2013Mar28\\_COIPressRelease\\_RibbonCuttingCeremonyFollowUp.pdf](http://comop.org/presskit/pdf/2013Mar28_COIPressRelease_RibbonCuttingCeremonyFollowUp.pdf)

Please visit our Facebook page for more photos of Congressman Frelinghuysen's visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151852030460600.1073741841.114481025599&type=1>

Photo Caption:Community Options Executive Director Ayesha Patrick, Community Options Program Manager Leslie Flores, Elizabeth Wandelmaier, Marsha DuBose-Wilks, Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen, Community Options Regional Vice-President for NJ Svetlana Repic-Qira, Community Options Founder, President & CEO Robert Stack & Linda Thomas.

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**About Community Options Inc.** 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. CEO available for comment.