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“Blooming To Work”

Community Options Inc. Receives \$30,000 Grant From Kessler Foundation For Project

PRINCETON, New Jersey – On September 16, 2013, Community Options, Inc. received a \$30,000 Community Employment Grant for its “Blooming To Work” project from Kessler Foundation.

“Blooming To Work” is a 12-month job-training project for Community Options’ Vaseful Flowers and Gifts shop in New Brunswick and Hillsborough that will provide valuable marketing and telemarketing skills to the participants with disabilities. Vaseful is the only non-profit full service flower shop in New Jersey that provides employment supports to people with disabilities in an integrated setting.

The trained participants will help to improve email, online, and print marketing for the shop as well as receive hands-on training to enhance telemarketing and direct mail activities. The grant supports staff and partners’ time on the project, equipment, supplies, printing and job seminars. “We believe your project will make a unique and valuable contribution to our community in the effort to provide high-quality employment opportunities for people with disabilities,” Kessler Foundation stated in their approval letter to Community Options, Inc.

As part of the project’s goals, the participants will create one training manual and increase sales 20 percent by the end of September 2014. As a result, the participants will gain confidence with technology (such as social media), improve self-esteem, empowerment to overcome societal barriers for employment and prepare for more advanced skills training. Community Options will supply job development activities to augment the individuals’ opportunities to obtain competitive employment in their community.

“Community Options is proud to be partnering with Kessler Foundation to provide employment to people with disabilities as we enter our 25th year of serving the community,” said Community Options Founder, President and CEO, Robert Stack.

Vaseful Flowers and Gifts shop opened in 1998. The New Brunswick location is at 172 Hamilton Street. The Hillsborough location is at 2230 Camplain Road. Vaseful Flowers and Gifts shop is online as well, at www.vaseful.com or toll-free 877 VASEFUL.

Kessler Foundation is a public charity dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with disabilities through research, innovation, demonstration, application, and dissemination.

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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.