

Elaine Katz to receive Betty Pendler Award

Jeff O'Connor 8 a.m. EDT May 10, 2015

Every year, Community Options presents a citizen with the Betty Pendler award. This year's recipient is Elaine Katz, the senior vice president of Grants and Communications for the Kessler Foundation.



(Photo: Courtesy of Community Options)

PRINCETON – Every year since 1991, Community Options presents a citizen with the Betty Pendler award. This year's recipient is Elaine Katz, the senior vice president of Grants and Communications for the Kessler Foundation.

Each spring, Community Options selects a distinguished person who exemplifies the mission of Community Options as the Betty Pendler Award recipient. Betty Pendler was a member of the board of directors for the AHRC in New York City. Pendler was committed to people with disabilities, their families, and those who served them, in addition to raising a daughter with a developmental disability. Pendler passed away in 2001.

"I am pleased to be recognized by Community Options, which shares the Foundation's commitment to empowering people with disabilities through employment," said Katz. "Betty Pendler — by seeking new ways to improve the lives of individuals and their families — set an example for all of us in the disability community. Her advocacy and dedication made a difference in the lives of so many. It is an honor to share in her legacy."

Community Options is a national nonprofit, founded in 1989 by Stack, which provides housing and employment services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Katz oversees, implements, and monitors grants that directly fund programs supporting innovative services to advance employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Katz's work has had a profound effect on Community Options, as the nonprofit has received grants from the Kessler Foundation to start the School to Employment Program (STEP) in 2008. STEP is a job training and transition program for high school students and young adults with special needs. STEP provides students with transferable vocational education and relevant social skill development. STEP has provided transition services to over 200 people with disabilities around the country. In 2013, Kessler funded Community Options with an additional grant to create an innovative marketing training program for our social enterprise Vaseful, a nonprofit flower shop in Edison, that offers high-quality floral services and successfully integrates people with disabilities into the workforce.

Katz has more than 25 years of consulting and experience working with non-profit organizations in areas of board development, fund-raising, marketing, social enterprise and business development.

Katz currently serves on the board of directors of Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE), the Disability Funders Network, Board Chair for JESPY House, and on the program committee of the Council of NJ Grantmakers. Katz is also an appointed member of the Disabilities Issues Committee of the NJ State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) and Union County New Jersey Human Services Advisory Council. Katz is also a member of the Essex County Workforce Investment Board Disabilities Issues Committee, and former National Research Advisory Panelist for NTAR Leadership Center at Rutgers University.

Past recipients of the Betty Pendler Award include New Jersey's 48th governor, Thomas Kean (2014); state Sen. Joseph Kyrillos (2011); U.S. Department of Education and disability advocate Madeleine Will (2000) and chairman of NJ Republican State Committee David Norcross (1997).

Through her years of continued advocacy and support for people with disabilities everywhere, Community Options is proud to honor Elaine Katz with the Betty Pendler Award.

About Community Options

For over 25 years, Community Options has developed housing and employment programs for people with disabilities. Community Options operates with a budget over \$107 million and serves thousands of people with disabilities through 38 offices across nine 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. Visit www.comop.org.

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