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Community Options To Host Ninth Annual iMatter Conference in Philadelphia, PA

PRINCETON, NJ, OCTOBER 20, 2015 – From Sunday, October 25 through Wednesday, October 28, national nonprofit Community Options Inc. will host its 9th annual iMatter Conference at the Union League in Philadelphia, PA. Community Options is dedicated to providing housing and employment support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The theme of this year's conference is "leadership". The Union League represents that theme seamlessly, as in the early 1860s, it served as a society to support the Union during the Civil War. Over the years, the Union League has hosted US Presidents, heads of state, industrialists, entertainers and dignitaries from around the globe and has proudly supported the American military in each conflict since the Civil War. Today, the Union League is the No. 1 City Club in the Country and its 3,500 members represent the Philadelphia region's leaders in business, education, technology, healthcare, law, government, religion, art and culture.

This year's featured speakers are Al Condeluci, Dr. James W. Conroy, PHD and Denise Taylor Patterson.

Condeluci is CEO of CLASS, a community based support system for folks with all types of disabilities in Pittsburgh, PA. He holds an MSW and PhD from the University of Pittsburgh, where he is on faculty in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences and the School of Social Work. He has authored seven books, including the acclaimed, *Interdependence: The Route to Community* (1991) and the newly released, *The Macro Change Handbook* (2015).

While at Temple University, Conroy was the Principal Investigator and designer of the Pennhurst Longitudinal Study, the largest study ever done up to that time on the topic of moving people with developmental disabilities from institutions to small community homes. Since then, Dr. Conroy has directed more than a dozen similar longitudinal studies in other states. He has been responsible for more than 250 formal research reports to government agencies and foundations, as well as more than 30 articles in scholarly journals and 10 book chapters.

Denise Taylor Patterson is the Director of Philadelphia Intellectual disAbility Services (IDS), a division of the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services. In this capacity she oversees the programming for two Philadelphia County Programs: Services for Individuals with an Intellectual disAbility and the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program. She has worked for the City of Philadelphia since March 2000.

Last year, 150 professionals, family members and people with disabilities participated in the 2 ½ day conference at the Nassau Inn in Princeton, NJ, which focused on innovation.

Parents and family members of people with disabilities, as well as health and human service professionals, are welcome to attend. For more information, contact Lisa Smith at Lisa.Smith@comop.org.

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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 9 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.