

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

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In honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Community Options will be publishing an article per week throughout the month of October highlighting the importance of competitive employment for people with disabilities! Below is our first article:

The Value of Long-Term Service within the Nonprofit Sector

In 1991, John Pavlovsky, Jr., was approached by Community Options, a new nonprofit that was getting off the ground in Bordentown, New Jersey to attend their first business advisory council meeting. At the time, Pavlovsky was President of the Greater Bordentown Area Chamber of Commerce and was asked by Community Options to send a representative from the chamber to attend the first meeting. Pavlovsky decided to attend the meeting himself to see what the business advisory council was all about.

Little did Pavlovsky know that the first Community Options Business Advisory Council (COBAC) meeting he would attend in October of 1991 would turn into twenty years of service to the organization. Shortly after that first meeting in 1991, Pavlovsky became the Chair of the Mercer County COBAC and has held this position ever since.

The mission of Community Options was and still is to develop housing and employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. The focus of the COBAC was to recruit local business members within the community to help connect people with developmental disabilities to competitive employment.

Pavlovsky wanted to be involved with Community Options because he believed in the mission of the organization and the work they were doing to improve the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities.

When asked what has kept him coming back for over twenty years, Pavlovsky said, "Having the opportunity to enable a person the organization is supporting to become competitively employed and then seeing the positive results of that job on that person is amazing. I have seen the spirits of people become completely uplifted and fulfilled as a result of being employed and there is nothing better than that."

Pavlovsky indicated the people he has worked with over the years who are supported by Community Options have become his friends. Pavlovsky was reminiscent of times spent at company picnics, baseball games and annual events and says, "When people I have worked with over the years continue to see me and my family over and over at events hosted by the organization, it becomes more personal and I am always thrilled to hear of the successes that each person is achieving."

Pavlovsky believes that there are great benefits for employers that hire people with disabilities. Pavlovsky has seen first-hand the dedication of someone he has helped to secure competitive employment and he believes with careful planning for that individual, the sky's the limit.

Pavlovsky utilizes a portion of each meeting to spotlight a person with a disability Community Options is currently working with to give them the opportunity to present to the COBAC on their skill set and the type of job they are looking to secure. This type of presentation by the person allows the council members to ask questions that are pertinent to the employer-employee connection process.

It is no easy task to keep a voluntary council motivated over long periods of time; however, Pavlovsky has managed to do this for the COBAC. Pavlovsky has managed to maintain members of the Mercer County COBAC for almost ten years with the admission of new members as well. Pavlovsky believes that the Mercer County COBAC is a really good group that has a diverse skill set that is constantly working together to provide and promote opportunities for people with disabilities.

Pavlovsky has high hopes for the future of the Mercer County COBAC, which includes all members participating in the organizations annual events as well as working to highlight the skill sets of people Community Options is supporting to link them to gainful, competitive employment on an on-going basis.



Community Options Enterprises:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=I14NWJL3kVc

Article Series 1.pdf:
http://www.comop.org/presskit/pdf/2011Oct_COIArticle1_JohnPavlovskyLongTermServiceWithinTheNonprofitSector.pdf