

# CHOICES

Spring 2017



Community Options believes in the dignity of every person, and in the freedom of all people to experience the highest degree of self-determination. Embracing this philosophy, Community Options provides housing, support services and advocacy assistance to help empower people with disabilities.

Mothers' Day is  
Sunday, May 14



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Vaseful Flowers and Gifts is a charming flower shop that offers high quality floral services and delivery to anywhere in the world. We are committed to serving our customers with the finest floral arrangements and gifts, backed by our 24-hour guarantee. Vaseful is owned and operated by Community Options Enterprises, Inc., a non profit organization that supports people with disabilities.

## Great Start for Paducah Supported Employment

Thanks to a generous grant from the Ray & Kay Eckstein Charitable Trust, Community Options Paducah (KY) began a supported employment program designed to give individuals with developmental disabilities meaningful work and a paycheck. In just a few short months, the Paducah office staff has already made great strides in developing the program. Immediately following news of the award, Executive Director Rick Nolan and the Community Options Human Resources team went to work recruiting a Director of Employment. Andrea Hildebrandt was hired in September 2016, less than one month after the award notice. Hildebrandt quickly built relationships with local businesses and began the referral process with the Paducah Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Calloway County Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Paducah staff then went to work on securing more businesses for job training and placement. After connecting with local businesses, the team has received commitment from approximately 13 businesses in the community and another 20 businesses who are potential employers.

The next step, and the goal, is job placement. Community Options serves eight people with disabilities in supported employment, and is on track to exceed the projected total yearly number of people served. Employment has already been secured for two of these individuals, Susan and Chase, who are performing very well in their jobs and add value to their workplaces. They have given our program glowing reviews for its impact on their lives. Susan is a Backroom Associate at T.J. Maxx and loves her job helping to process inventory and organize merchandise.

"I love the work in the outside community with T.J. Maxx. It feels wonderful to me that I can work the job and make more friends," exclaimed Susan. "I am so happy that Andrea helped me find the job. I am happy for the opportunity that I feel free to work any job anywhere. It is my greatest opportunity that I love to work and to make money and to save it too."

Chase, a 21-year-old young man, has landed his first job working at Game Stop. He loves video games and says that this is the place he always wanted to work. He greets customers and helps stock merchandise as needed. Chase's experience can be perfectly summed up in his words, "I feel like I found my type of dream job."

Community Options extends its appreciation to the Ray & Kay Eckstein Charitable Trust for making this program possible and enriching the lives of people like Susan and Chase.



Susan



Chase



## Community Options Hosts 9th Annual 5K Run to Support People with Disabilities

On Saturday morning, February 11, 2017, over 4,000 runners gathered across 32 cities in nine states to participate in the 9th annual Cupid's Chase 5K run, presented by Community Options.

Every year, Community Options holds its annual 5K to raise money to help support individuals with disabilities in their local communities. This year, Cupid's Chase 5K raised approximately \$250,000. Over the last four years, Community Options has raised nearly \$1 million with over 9,000 runners in attendance across the country. 2017 marked the maiden races of two new Cupid's Chase 5K locations, Lubbock, TX and Wilkes-Barre, PA.

The 10th annual Cupid's Chase 5K will be held on Saturday, February 10, 2018. Registration will be opening soon, visit [www.comop.org](http://www.comop.org) to secure your spot!

Be sure to visit Cupid's Chase on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/cupidschase](http://www.facebook.com/cupidschase)

Dallas, TX



Binghamton, NY



Austin, TX



## Community Options Appoints New Regional VP of Texas Offices

Recently, Community Options appointed Catherine Carroll as its new Regional Vice President of Texas offices. "Catherine is very driven to maintain and improve supports for people with disabilities in Texas," said Community Options President and CEO, Robert Stack. "Cate has tremendous experience and assiduously manages programmatic development in both traditional residential and foster supports. We are delighted to add her to the senior leadership team." Carroll spent the past five years in Texas as the State Director of Intellectual and Developmental Services with Volunteers of America Texas. Prior to that, the Charleston Southern University graduate spent nine years as the Director of Quality and Compliance for The Arc of North Carolina. She also worked for eight years in the Department of Mental Health Services of Catawba County in North Carolina.

"I am very excited to be working with the very dedicated staff at Community Options, Inc., and look forward to seeing great things continue to happen in Texas," said Carroll. Carroll will oversee eight offices across the state and will work to provide the best quality service and care for the over 400 individuals supported by Community Options in Texas.



## Dina Casalaspro Named NJ APSE's Employment Leader of the Year

At the March 24th event, Facing the Future 25th Annual Conference To Employment and Beyond! at the Hyatt Regency in New Brunswick, NJ, Dina Casalaspro received the 2017 NJ Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst's (ASPE) Employment Leader of the Year Award.

Casalaspro joined Community Options in April 2016 as Managing Director of Community Options Enterprises and has over a decade of experience in the field. She oversees employment and day habilitation programming for people with disabilities currently receiving services. She works with all New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation offices in support of persons with disabilities seeking and maintaining employment, specifically in the Long Term Follow Along program that allows her staff to assist workers with disabilities and their employers.

Prior to Community Options, Casalaspro worked at several providing agencies, forming close relationships with the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities, the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and helped many school districts create paid positions/internships for people with disabilities. She has successfully obtained numerous grants that provide funding to support adults with developmental disabilities.

Facing the Future Annual Conference to Employment and Beyond! is a conference for professionals highlighting best practices in supporting people with disabilities in career planning, customized employment, and transition from school to work presented by the NJ chapter of APSE.

APSE is a growing national non-profit membership organization founded in 1988. It is the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

## SAVE THE DATE



### Community Options' iMatter Golf Outing

**Monday, May 22, 2017**

The Union League Golf Club at Torresdale  
3801 Grant Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19114

[www.comop.org/events/golf-tournament/](http://www.comop.org/events/golf-tournament/)

## Community Options Expands Utah to Serve Individuals with Disabilities

Before 2017 kicked off, Community Options established offices in Ogden and Salt Lake City, Utah, its 11th state of service.

“This is the first step for Community Options to develop supports for people with developmental disabilities in the state of Utah,” said Community Options President & CEO, Robert Stack. “It will mean greater employment opportunities for those individuals and freedom for parents and families who have adults with developmental disabilities in need of employment.”

Community Options expanded service to Arizona in 2015, and to Maryland in June, 2016 .

The Utah team looks forward to continued growth and success in serving the community.

Community Options, Inc.  
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Princeton, NJ 08540

[www.comop.org](http://www.comop.org)

## Community Options Receives Generous Donation from Long-Time Partner

On Wednesday, March 22, Haldeman Subaru of Hamilton, NJ presented Community Options with a check of \$32,430 as part of its ninth annual “Share the Love” campaign, bringing its two-year total donations to nearly \$50,000. The “Share the Love” campaign is a pledge by Subaru of America to help communities across the country. Over the last 20 years, Subaru has donated more than \$50 million to many causes, with its employees logging over 28,000 volunteer hours.

“Subaru’s “Share The Love” event gives us and our customers the opportunity to donate to local charities. We chose to continue to work with Community Options because of the incredible work they do in our community,” said Jon Gross, Sales Manager of Haldeman Subaru in Hamilton. “They truly are an organization worth supporting.”

Since its founding in 1989, Community Options has purchased vehicles to transport the people it serves through its programs from Haldeman Subaru. “We are extremely grateful for the long-time relationship we’ve had with Haldeman Subaru,” said Community Options Mercer County Executive Director Ida Bormentar. “Their generosity has been invaluable to improving

the quality of our service to the community.” Haldeman Subaru President Scott Haldeman, Vice President Greg Hritz, and Gross presented the check to Community Options President and CEO Robert Stack, Bormentar and Mercer County Community Options home resident Denise Smith.

