

## **Cookeville Native Starts His Own Lawncare Business**

Last year, Kyle Harmon started his lawn care business with two yards and a push mower. He expanded his services with a borrowed weed whacker from Community Options Quality Assurance Coordinator Ryan Vinson. With such quick success and a desire to give high quality service, Kyle saved enough money to purchase a new one.

A lover of the outdoors, Kyle has enjoyed mowing lawns from a very young age. He would often mow the lawn for his foster parents. Kyle was referred to Community Options by the Department of Children's Services, as he had come of age where he could no longer be in the foster care system. Since coming to Community Options, he has received supported living, community-based day and supported employment services with the national nonprofit organization.

Kyle obtained his first yard due to his neighbors needing someone to mow their lawn at a reasonable rate, as they could no longer handle the manual labor or yard maintenance. Kyle and his lead staff, Ashley Gentry, submitted a bid to the neighbors and earned the opportunity. The second yard was secured when a Community Options employee was looking for someone to mow their sloped yard, as they lacked the time to handle the responsibility. Kyle was offered the chance and happily accepted.

"I love to make money and see how good the yard looks after I've mowed the grass," says Harmon.

He was given a John Deere riding lawn mower by a staff member this year, aiding him in securing two additional yards. With business going so well, Kyle purchased a trailer to help Vinson (who drives him to work) transport his riding lawn mower.

"Kyle is still learning the art of mowing and needs direction. As he continues to provide mowing services to his customers he will gain more knowledge and eventually be able to do the mowing with little to no direction from his job coach," said Jeanette Preece, Community Options' Executive Director of Cookeville, TN.

Harmon currently has a total of four lawns and is hoping to increase that number to six by the end of the year. Community Options' Cookeville office serves 20 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, provides residential support with 10 area homes and six individuals are currently employed in the workforce.

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### **About Community Options, Inc.:**

For 28 years, Community Options has developed housing and employment programs for people with disabilities – serving thousands of people through over 40 offices across 11 states. Community Options provides advocacy assistance to empower people with disabilities because all people – regardless of ability level – should live and work in the community with dignity, choice and self-determination. For more information please visit our website: [www.comop.org](http://www.comop.org) and to follow along with the ComOpCares campaign, search #ComOpCares on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.