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**Ambassador Nikki Haley to Receive Community Options' Betty Pendler Award at National Conference**

September 25, 2017, Princeton, NJ - Community Options, Inc. will present its prestigious Betty Pendler Award to Ambassador Nikki Haley at the organization's 11<sup>th</sup> annual iMatter Conference, which will be held in Ambassador Haley's home state of South Carolina from September 24<sup>th</sup> to September 27<sup>th</sup>.

The award is named in honor of Betty Pendler who was reknowned for her tireless efforts in helping those with disabilities. Each year the award is given to those who exemplify the mission of Community Options and demonstrate their commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities live their best lives in communities of their choosing. Recent recipients of this award include Governor Tom Kean, Elaine Katz of Kessler Foundation, Senator Joe Kyrillos, and Gail B. and Senator Robert Gordon.

Ambassador Haley is being recognized for her contributions to individuals with disabilities and programs that provide homes and employment to people with disabilities throughout her career as a public servant. As governor, she signed numerous proclamations in support of the rights of disabled persons and signed the ABLE Act into law in South Carolina, allowing people with disabilities the opportunity to contribute to a tax-exempt savings account without losing necessary benefits. Community Options had the good fortune of hosting then-governor Haley at a tour of one of its homes for disabled individuals in Columbia, SC in late 2013. At the time of her visit, she said, "It was an honor to tour the Community Options' home in Columbia. They offer quality care and provide adults with special needs the opportunity to live an independent life style. We will continue to support these kinds of services for individuals with disabilities."

Robert Stack, president and CEO of Community Options said, "Ambassador Haley's visit to one of our homes for people with disabilities had a tremendous impact on the public perception of people with disabilities living side by side in a neighborhood, just like anyone else. She has been relentless in her advocacy of helping people with disabilities. We are excited to honor her support with this award."

On Tuesday, September 26, 2017, Stack, along with Community Options' board chair, Phil Lian, of Princeton, NJ, will present the award to Ambassador Haley. It will be accepted on her behalf by her former chief of staff, Swati Patel, at the Community Options iMatter Conference on Supported Employment held at the Francis Marion Hotel in downtown Charleston.

**About Community Options, Inc.:**

For 28 years, Community Options has developed housing and employment programs for people with disabilities – serving thousands of people through more than 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.

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