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Man with Autism Makes Strides in Independent Living

Princeton, NJ (December 12, 2017) - Adults with developmental disabilities, like autism, often face challenges with employment and living on their own. When provided with the right supports, those challenges can be met and overcome.

Damian Schuler, 26, has done just that. Damian, who is on the autism spectrum, has resided with Community Options in Pompton Plains, NJ since 2010, where he lived in a fully supported Group Home, and then moved to a Supported Living Apartment where he lives on his own. Damian works 30 hours a week at Burlington Stores as a cashier, where he has been employed since June 2016. In conjunction with Community Options Supported Employment services, Damian has held jobs with AMC Theaters and Quick Check, in addition to his current job at Burlington Stores.

“Damian has been a customer service cashier at Burlington for over a year. He makes sure to greet every customer and offer them a warm smile. He is exceptionally friendly and polite he goes out of his way to ensure that our customers receive the best service possible during their shopping experience,” says Sharon, store manager at Burlington - Wayne. “Damian truly exhibits all of the Burlington core values and is a role model associate. Both trustworthy and honest, Damian is always a team player and extremely helpful to everyone. Most recently Damian became one of our top three earners for our store donation drive. He has also been recognized as employee of the month. We are very proud to have Damian on our Burlington team!”

“Success stories like Damian’s are the result of his hard work and the right supports at the right time,” says Tracy Mendola, Executive Director of Community Options – Morris, Essex, Sussex Counties. “Damian works hard every day to overcome the challenges he has that are inherent with an autism diagnosis, and he lives and works in the community with his typical peers. The staff at Community Options provide individualized support services so Damian, and others like him, can have the success of being an integrated part of their communities at work and at home.”

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 and to follow along with the ComOpCares campaign, search #ComOpCares on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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