

CHOICES

Winter 2019



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. #AllItTakes

Congratulations to our
Chief Financial Officer,

David Sweeney

for being named
NJBIZ CFO of the Year!!

SAVE THE DATE

Community Options' Annual iMatter Golf Classic

TPC Jasna Polana

4519 Province Line Rd
Princeton, NJ 08540

June 1, 2020



Flowers & Gifts

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The Judith Scheide Challenge

Grown from the seeds of Judith Scheide's Philanthropy

Community Options' Local Fundraisers Meet Their Goal

This past spring at Community Options' Spring Gala, one generous donor, Judith Scheide, volunteered to match up to \$100,000 that was raised by Community Options by the end of the year 2019. The guidelines specified that all funds matched had to be generated through fundraisers orchestrated by Community Options' local offices. 41 cities had events from July to December and at last count \$126,000 was raised!



Community Options' Executive Directors have shined in the planning and execution of these events by showing off their creativity and understanding of their local regions. Events have ranged from purse bingos, luncheons, softball tournaments, and much more!

Community Options' Chief Development and Compliance Officer had the following to say about the local fundraisers "I am extremely pleased that the Executive Directors in all of our regions have been so dedicated to putting in the extra work to make these fundraisers successful. The funds will make a notable impact on the people we support."



Columbia, South Carolina



Austin, Texas



Phoenix, Arizona

An Open Letter of Appreciation from Sharon and Kobe Hood

November 2019

Thank you, for everything!

You gave so much more than the excellent healthcare Kobe needed to help him live a safe and happy life while in your care. The great care you gave, gives us much needed hope in a world that may seem void of hope. But, you gave freely! You are all

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Marc has found the perfect job

Marc, from Westmoreland, Pennsylvania, has experienced a lot of successes over the last year! He started working with Community Options' Supported Employment services and after much hard work, he found a job in the community that he loves. He is thrilled to be able to earn his own money!

Beginning in August of 2019, Marc began employment with Wendy's and has been shining there ever since. He is responsible for wiping the tables in the dining room, collecting and cleaning trays, keeping the condiments, straws, napkins, and cups stocked, and taking out the garbage. Marc's effort has been crucial in allowing the restaurant to run smoothly during the busy lunch rush. **His coworkers say his positive attitude is contagious and that they love working with him!**

Cupid's Chase 5k Saturday, February 8, 2020

The 2020 Cupid's Chase 5K will be held in
31 cities across 9 states.

To find a run near you and to register
online visit

www.comop.org/cupidschase

Meaningful Life/Meaningful Love

The Arizona Council on Developmental Disabilities recently awarded Community Options a \$50,000 grant to employ three self-advocates to train other Phoenix-based individuals with developmental disabilities, about healthy relationships and sexuality. The curriculum is called Meaningful Life/Meaningful Love.

One of Community Options' residents, Jodi, has already been selected as the first self-advocate to be trained in this curriculum and has started training others at the Center for Independent Living. She is thrilled about the opportunity to teach others!

This new curriculum, which was originally developed in Michigan, will be introduced in other states after it is proven successful in Arizona. The program will also serve as an employment opportunity for individuals with disabilities as well as provide them with experience in beneficial life skills such as public speaking.



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Employment Transition Services in Nashville

Community Options in Nashville, Tennessee was selected by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to train students at the Tennessee School for the Blind on Pre-Employment Transition Services. Examples of the different class subjects include, work readiness, career exploration, post-secondary college counseling, and self-advocacy. Ten students have already started attending these classes.

Corpus Christi Employment Transition Program

Community Options in Corpus Christi, Texas applied for and was granted approval to provide an employment transition program to students in the Corpus Christi Independent School district. This program will provide vocational adjustment training through Texas Workforce to eighteen students at three different high schools in the Corpus Christi Independent School District. There will be six students in each class. Cheryl Durham, who has been with Community Options for over nine years, will be leading the program. Four different topics will be offered through the program including, Explore the "You" in Work, Entering the World of Work, Soft Skills to Pay the Bills, and Money Smart.

David Sweeney Awarded CFO of the Year by NJBiz

David Sweeney, Chief Financial Officer of Community Options, Inc., was awarded the 2019 CFO of the Year Award for Large Nonprofit Organizations by NJBIZ. Sweeney received the honor at the annual awards breakfast ceremony in Somerset, NJ.

“We are fortunate to have David on our team and are proud of him for this well-deserved recognition,” said Robert Stack, President and CEO of Community Options. “David’s strategic thinking and financial acumen have been integral to Community Options’ success in our efforts to provide housing and employment for people with disabilities across the country.”

The NJBIZ CFO of the Year Awards program celebrates New Jersey’s financial executives at all levels who contribute to the success of New Jersey’s economic growth and stability. When Sweeney first joined Community Options in November 2012, the budget was approximately \$70 million. Since then, the budget has tripled to \$218 million.

“It is truly an honor to receive this award,” said Sweeney. “This is a testament to the hard work of our entire fiscal department as we navigate through extraordinary growth. What makes me most proud is that the people that benefit the most from our success are the thousands of individuals and families we support.”

Prior to joining Community Options, Sweeney spent twenty years as a financial management professional in the healthcare sector. Sweeney is a certified public accountant and holds a bachelor’s degree from Rutgers Business School and an MBA from LaSalle University.



Featured in the photo is Robert Stack and David Sweeney. Photo Courtesy of NJBiz.

Lacie Parker Appointed as Pennsylvania State Director

Community Options recently appointed Lacie Parker as State Director of Pennsylvania. In this role, she will be responsible for overseeing all operations in Pennsylvania. Lacie Parker is an experienced leader in the non-profit industry. With her progressive experience over the course of ten years with Community Options Inc., Lacie has gained foundational knowledge, skills, and expertise in the field of human services with a keen focus on the intellectually and developmentally disabled population.

Lacie began her career as a Direct Support Professional in the Westmoreland region and gradually took on multiple leadership roles within the organization. Her most recent promotion to State Director of Operations of Pennsylvania was due to her dedication and mission-driven work ethic. These qualities manifest themselves in her skills in budget management, strategic planning, critical

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An Open Letter of Appreciation from Sharon and Kobe Hood

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compassionate, kind, tolerant, understanding, and worked tirelessly to make things better every day the same way family and friends do. Words cannot express how glad we are to have been a part of the loving environment at Carney Group Home. Your jobs and the services you provide are challenging to say the least. Not everyone is cut out for that line of work, but we would like to commend your organization for putting together a staff to be very proud of! While we were blessed to have received excellent care from all of the staff at Community Options, we would like to thank you for providing care that makes families feel a part of their loved ones’ planning and growth. Thank you for encouraging Kobe and pushing him to a greater level of independence. Thank you for being patient

when he was difficult. Thank you for wiping his tears and making him feel safe in my absence. Most importantly, thank you for loving my child. We would like to give special thanks for the sincere kindness showed to Kobe and our family by Nancy Ward,

Andra Parsons, Sabasca, Josh, and Inez,. These people are a true credit to the profession and we wish them the best in all of their future endeavors. Ultimately, all of you at Community Options are the BEST!! You make a difference and will be remembered forever.

Sincerely, Sharon and Kobe Hood

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Creative Services, a subsidiary of Community Options Enterprises, designed and produced this newsletter employing persons with and without disabilities.

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Lacie Parker Appointed as Pennsylvania State Director

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thinking, project management, and decision making. Lacie has demonstrated her success by presenting at the past two Annual iMatter Conferences hosted by Community Options. Lacie's presentations focused on workforce development projects within the organization, concentrating on management, scheduling, recruitment, and retention initiatives.

Prior to her time at Community Options, Lacie worked as a family-based mental health worker and teacher's aide in a private school for children with autism. Lacie received her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Shippensburg University and intends to graduate with her Master's Degree in Organization Development and Change from The Pennsylvania State University.

When asked about her new role as State Director, Parker said the following "Since starting with Community Options in 2012 as a Direct Support Professional, I have been immersed in the company culture of working diligently to help provide a meaningful life to adults with developmental disabilities. As I've grown with this company my role has continuously evolved and I look forward to taking on the roles and responsibilities that will allow Community Options to continue to provide innovative supports to our stakeholders. I am thrilled at the prospect of expanding my reach as the State Director of Pennsylvania."



Community Options' iMatter Fall Golf Classic a Huge Success

"It was wonderful to see our guests having a great time golfing and even more wonderful to see their enthusiasm for supporting people with disabilities," said Brian Dion, Chief Development and Compliance Officer for Community Options. "The event was a huge success and we are looking forward to our next golf outing which will take place once again at TPC Jasna Polana in Princeton, NJ on Monday, June 1, 2020. We are thankful for our event chairman, Phil Lian and his continued support that makes events like this possible."