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Community Options Recognizes Megan Crowley with Betty Pender Award

Pittsburgh, PA – If you were lucky enough to be at Heinz Field this week, you participated in two victories. On Sunday, University of Notre Dame alumni Chase Claypool brought the Steel City from a slump to a phenomenal win. Two days later, fellow Notre Dame alumnus John and Megan Crowley, father and daughter, were also celebrated at the stadium.

On October 12, Community Options, Inc. presented Megan Crowley with the prestigious Betty Pender Award in recognition of her inspiring story of self-determination. Megan received the award at Community Options' Extraordinary Measures Gala at Heinz Field, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

National nonprofit Community Options develops housing and employment supports for people with disabilities. Community Options supports over 5,000 people with disabilities across 10 states. The Betty Pender Award is presented each year to the person who best exemplifies the mission of Community Options.

“Megan exemplifies courage and self-determination. To overcome adversity and achieve the great successes that she has is truly remarkable. Megan has shown the world what people with disabilities are truly capable of and her aspiration to help others makes her the perfect recipient for the Betty Pender Award,” said Robert Stack, President and CEO, Community Options. “Betty would have been very fond of Megan, and those who are lucky to know Megan understand just how deserving she is to be recognized for her strong will to live, dream, and achieve.”

Megan Crowley was only one year old when she was diagnosed with Pompe disease, a rare genetic disorder that occurs at 1 in every 40,000 births. At the time of her diagnosis, there was no treatment or cure, and she was given only a few years to live.

In her acceptance speech, Megan recognized the impact of Community Options' home and community-based services.

“It was not that long ago that someone living with Pompe disease, or any severe disability, requiring full time nursing care and a ventilator to breathe, would have lived a life in a

nursing home or institution,” said Crowley. “What a role Community Options has played in saving and changing the lives of so many.”

Megan earned two bachelor’s degrees from the University of Notre Dame and recently received her master’s from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, overcoming what were once perceived as insurmountable disabilities. Megan is planning on pursuing social work to help other young people with rare diseases. Her father graduated from Notre Dame Law School.

“Thank you again for this great award- and again for the remarkable work that you each do in support of Community Options. Love proves itself in deeds- and your deeds are many,” said Crowley.

This prestigious award is named in honor of Betty Pendler, who fought tirelessly for the interests of people with disabilities. Having a daughter with Down Syndrome, Betty worked tirelessly to educate the public and policymakers on the capabilities of people with disabilities. She brought a parents' perspective into the national conversation.

*(Photo Attached) **Back:** Phil Lian, Chairman, Board of Directors, Community Options Enterprises; David Sweeney, Chief Financial Officer, Community Options; Robert Stack, President and CEO, Community Options; Ian Bogarty, Trustee, Board of Directors, Community Options; Svetlana Repic-Qira, Regional Vice President of New Jersey, Community Options; James Buckley, Treasurer, Board of Directors, Community Options; **Front:** Tim Dunigan, Chairman, Board of Directors, Community Options and Megan Crowley.*

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About Community Options, Inc.:

For over 30 years, Community Options has developed housing and employment supports for people with disabilities – serving thousands of people from over 40 offices across 10 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 #AllItTakes campaign, search #AllItTakes on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).