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Contact: Wei-Han Zhou
weihan.zhou@comop.org
(551) 204-4982

Community Options Celebrates 33 Years of Supporting People with Disabilities

PRINCETON, NJ – Community Options, Inc., a leading national nonprofit organization supporting people with disabilities, is celebrating its 33rd anniversary on February 9, 2022. Robert Stack, who was then thirty-three years old, founded Community Options in 1989 leading one of the most significant social movements in United States history: the deinstitutionalization of people with disabilities.

“It is with sincere gratitude that I offer my congratulations to Community Options for 33 years of service to our state and our nation. The incredible work they have accomplished, coupled with their continued commitment to equality and inclusiveness, will impact generations of New Jerseyans,” said **New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy**. “The tireless advocacy displayed by Community Options to ensure that those with disabilities receive equal accommodation and treatment is a service for which we are forever indebted.”

Stack founded the organization opening the first three community-based homes for people with disabilities leaving New Jersey institutions. Today, with a budget of \$300 million, Community Options operates over 600 small homes nationally with over 5,500 employees emancipating over 4,600 people from large institutions.

“Congratulations to Community Options for helping people with disabilities over the last 33 years,” said **Arizona Governor Doug Ducey**. “Our state is a place where opportunity for all means just that. Thank you to Community Options for giving our state a tool to support individuals with disabilities to fulfill their housing and employment needs.”

In the late 1970s nearly 200,000 Americans with disabilities lived in state run-institutions where they were warehoused, segregated, abused, neglected, and experimented upon, all while being deprived of necessities. Community Options advocated along with parents, educators, justice officials, and people with disabilities to demand appropriate community supports.

“Not long ago, the prevailing social belief was that institutions were the best possible place for people with disabilities,” reflects **Colleen Wieck, Executive Director of the Minnesota Governor’s Council of Developmental Disabilities**. “Community Options’ groundbreaking work proved that belief wrong.”

As Community Options developed housing and employment opportunities the population of people in state institutions decreased by more than 87%. Changes in the

quality of life for people with disabilities who exited institutions were overwhelmingly positive.

With more than 650,000 people with disabilities on waiting lists, Community Options will continue to promote inclusion and integration of people with disabilities.

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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 50 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.