

CHOICES

Winter 2022



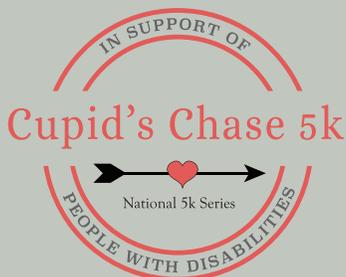
Community Options believes in the dignity of every person, and in the freedom of all people to experience the highest degree of self-determination. Embracing this philosophy, Community Options provides housing and employment supports to people with disabilities. #AllItTakes

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NBA Foundation Employment Spotlight

Community Options is providing meaningful job preparation and workforce inclusion opportunities to Black and African American youth with disabilities across seven NBA markets: New York Knicks, Brooklyn Nets, San Antonio Spurs, Phoenix Suns, Dallas Mavericks, Philadelphia 76ers, and Utah Jazz.

With support from the NBA Foundation, we are providing work readiness experiences to youth like Jasiah Lima, a senior at Eagle Academy for Young Men of Harlem. Jasiah was interested in helping youth in his community but had no work experience. When presented with the opportunity, he knew Community Options was his best prospect. Today, Jasiah participates in a paid work experience at an afterschool program through Catholic Charities. The program provides a safe, supervised place for recreational and cultural activities, homework help, tutoring, and counseling for youth.

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The NBA Foundation supports Jasiah to explore paid workplace opportunities in New York City

From Intern to Athletic Director

NEW YORK - Richard came to Community Options as a referral from Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation during his 2022 spring semester at Brockport University. Unfortunately, Richard tore his ACL while competing on the wrestling team there. This made navigating day-to-day life challenging. Still, he remained determined to find an internship in the Sports Management industry.

With support from Employment staff, Richard obtained an internship at the Tioga County Boys & Girls Club to help with athletic management. There, he shadowed the Executive Director and assisted with the daily operations of the club like scheduling gym use for camps and sports teams and supervising youth programs. Though he started his internship on crutches, he

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Jill Teeter, CEO of Tioga County Boys & Girls Club, with Robert

Celebrating Five Years of Employment Success

NEW MEXICO - Sarah joined Community Options in 2015 with hopes of working in the food service industry. All of her previous attempts to obtain her dream job were unsuccessful. However, this only motivated Sarah to look for other ways to accomplish her goal.

In 2016, Sarah began working with a Community Options Employment Specialist to develop the skills needed

to gain competitive integrated employment. Staff facilitated job task simulation sessions, mock interviews, and taught self-management techniques as well as problem-solving skills.

Following a successful interview at Dion's, she achieved her dream when she gained employment as a Lobby Attendant in 2017. To this day, Sarah holds a part-time position at the pizza restaurant.

With Community Options' support, Sarah prevailed through her challenges. She is an exemplary employee and an integral part of the restaurant. According to her supervisor, Sarah is "very outgoing and also very caring and enthusiastic when it comes to providing customer service." Her performance at work resulted in exceptional reviews and pay raises.



Sarah working hard to support the day-to-day operations at Dion's.

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NBA Foundation Employment Spotlight

"We are proud to support Community Options in their endeavors to increase access to support and job preparation for Black youth with disabilities," said NBA Foundation Executive Director Greg Taylor. "Community Options' longstanding dedication to empowering individuals with disabilities has already provided many the resources to choose how they live and work within their communities and we look forward to the impact this new expansion of their services will have on young people in NBA markets."

The goal is for underrepresented youth to be placed in competitive integrated employment opportunities in a field that they love. We are thrilled to partner with the NBA and share more about the grant's impact.

Finding Success At the Sweetest Place on Earth

PENNSYLVANIA - Cody typically has a big smile on his face while working. Approximately five years ago, he came to Community Options with hopes to develop skills to obtain competitive integrated employment in an active environment as he enjoys playing sports and being outside. Despite some medical challenges, Cody remained committed to pursuing employment opportunities.

While working with a Community Options Employment Specialist, Cody received a job offer at the first place he interviewed. He has now been employed at Hersheypark for more than four seasons. There, Cody takes care of trash removal and cleans the park. He is a valuable member of the team who has a great sense of humor. He always looks for ways to help fellow employees. Managers ask him to come back each season.

With seasonal work at Hersheypark paused, Cody hopes to find work as a sign holder at a local tax company, or a local “mom and pop shop” or grocery store. We know Cody will be a great asset in any role.



Cody grinning on the job (per usual)!

Special Needs Pooled Trust Reaches \$3M

We are pleased to announce the Community Options Special Needs Pooled Trust has exceeded \$3 million!

The Special Needs Pooled Trust allows people with disabilities to save income without the risk of losing public benefits. When individuals earn a paycheck, they can deposit income into the trust. Funds can be used for a variety of purchases including but not limited to leisure items, home modifications and vacations. For example, David from Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, began depositing earnings when he began a new job. Within one year, he had saved enough money to purchase his first car.

The Special Needs Pooled Trust is open to any individual receiving services from Community Options. For more information or to enroll, contact your local Executive Director.

Combining Two Passions

UTAH - Kelly was one of the first individuals supported by Community Options in Utah. He worked a series of underpaying jobs in the past, and none were in a field that he truly loved.

Earlier this year, Kelly began working with a Community Options’ Employment Specialist who discovered that he loves to drive and is passionate about advocating for people with disabilities. When an employment opportunity to drive for the Utah School for the Deaf and Blind was presented, he applied. With support from staff, Kelly practiced interviewing. He was offered the job on the spot and was elated!

Today, Kelly works 32 hours a week in a field that combines both his passions for driving and disability advocacy. He receives praise from his supervisors and is saving to buy his own car.



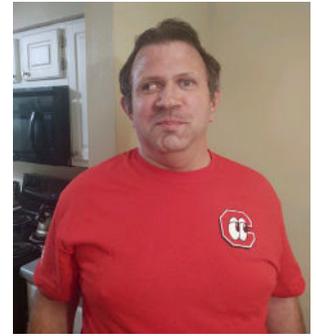
Kelly standing tall and proud in front of his work vehicle.

Home Run Partnership

TENNESSEE - No one knows the value of teamwork better than the Chattanooga Lookouts! Since 2019, we've partnered with the minor league baseball team to support individuals in employment. Individuals employed as runners gather concession items during games, make popcorn, hot dogs, and pizza for fans, and collect tickets from game goers.

Some program participants had the opportunity to throw the first game pitch. Stepping foot on the field under stadium lights with the team and fans cheering is an unforgettable experience.

When asked what he loves most about working for the Lookouts, Jason said, "I work with some really great people, and we all get along so well. They're all able to assist me when I need it, and they are constantly teaching me new things. One thing that they taught me was how to use the cash register; It was my first time ever using one and I was excited to learn!"



Jason is proud to show off his Lookouts uniform

Our partnership means more than just workplace experiences at the stadium. Meaningful and lifelong friendships developed between those with and without disabilities.

Impact 100 Garden State Grant a Success

NEW JERSEY - Our Workforce Education and Development grant program proved impactful for both program participants and businesses across Passaic, Morris, Somerset, Sussex and Union Counties.

Over the one-year grant period, we:

- Developed 99 partnerships with employers open to hiring or hosting program participants
- Identified employers across a diverse group of industries in 22 municipalities
- Identified 59 employers with job vacancies open to taking applications

As a result, individuals like Steven had more choices. Prior to joining Community Options, Steven strictly worked in retail and was never asked about his career interests. Community Options staff supported him to pursue a job more aligned with interests. Today, he proudly works as a physical therapy aide, which makes more sense for Steven, who is an avid gym goer and Special Olympics weightlifting gold medalist.



Steven, proudly standing in front of his employer, "Professional Physical Therapy."

Partners like Impact 100 Garden State make it possible for people with disabilities to work, job sample or volunteer in an integrated workplace setting.

From Intern to Athletic Director

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played a critical role in the club's success this summer. After completing his internship, Richard was offered a position as Athletic Director.

"I am so grateful to Community Options for connecting us with such a wonderful Intern. Community Options was professional and made the process very simple" said Jill, Chief Executive Officer at Tioga County Boys and Girls Club. "We had been finding it challenging to secure a quality candidate to fill our vacant Athletic Director position. It was apparent after just a short time that Mr. Knapp would be a great fit and addition to our team and culture

here at the Boys & Girls Club."

"I am thankful to have been connected with Community Options to assist me in finding an internship," said Richard. "I was concerned as my field is saturated and we were in the midst of COVID that I would not be able to do so. Carter made the process easy and paired me up very quickly with The Boys & Girls Club. Toward the end of the internship, I was offered a Full-time position with great benefits and pay. If it were not for this program, I do not feel I would have had such a successful outcome."
