



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Community Options Direct Support Professional Honored by National Organization

CHATTANOOGA, TN – Community Options, Inc., a leading national nonprofit organization supporting people with disabilities, announced that Elijah Aluoch has been named the recipient of the 2023 Direct Support Professional of the Year Award by the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR).

“We are proud to congratulate Elijah for this recognition, but more importantly for his dedication and commitment to people with disabilities,” said Mercedes Owens, Community Options Executive Director in Chattanooga. “Elijah has been part of our family for over ten years and has consistently gone above and beyond in his role. We are grateful that ANCOR has recognized him with this high-profile honor.”

Community Options develops housing and employment supports for 5,000 people and families in over 50 cities across 11 states. Elijah works in a home in Chattanooga, TN. Recently, when the area was impacted by a tornado, the home where Elijah works lost electricity and trees were down blocking the roads. Elijah handled the unforeseen situation calmly and smoothly. He single-handedly was able to get the people he supported out safely and taken to a hotel. For the next week, he supported them in the hotel and constantly traveled to the store and their home for needed items.

“For 17 years now, ANCOR has presented the Direct Support Professional of the Year Awards to recognize the outstanding professionals who power community inclusion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities,” said Barbara Merrill, Chief Executive Officer of ANCOR. “The outstanding DSPs being honored this year deliver life-enhancing supports amid no shortage of significant challenges, not the least of which is a long-standing crisis in the ability of providers to recruit and retain qualified DSPs. Through it all, these professionals demonstrate an unwavering commitment to community inclusion and to the people they support. That’s why we feel honored to celebrate Elijah and more than to other DSPs who exemplify excellence in our field.”

Since 2007, ANCOR’s annual DSP of the Year awards recognize outstanding Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who deliver long-term services and supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The awards celebrate the important role DSPs play in ensuring people with I/DD have what they need to thrive and be included in the community.

The 2023 DSP of the Year awards were presented in a ceremony at ANCOR's 2023 Annual Conference in Chicago.

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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 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 us on social media on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).