

CAU in the News

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Union County Savings donates \$10,000 to Community Access Unlimited *Suburban News*

Union County Savings Bank has donated \$10,000 to Community Access Unlimited (CAU) to help support the agency's programs and services in the areas of housing, job development and financial literacy. Union County Savings and CAU have enjoyed a long relationship and this latest contribution is consistent with the nature of that partnership, according Donald Sims, bank president and CEO.

"We made this donation on the basis of the role that Community Access Unlimited plays in the City of Elizabeth and Union County in helping people with disabilities and at-risk youth," he said. "I wanted to be sure they continue to expand."

Union County Savings Bank has played a key role in that expansion in the past, providing CAU with below-market financing for property acquisition used for member housing. In one instance the bank was able to save CAU \$250,000 on \$800,000 in mortgages through refinancing. The bank also supports CAU's financial literacy programs, with Robert Auster, assistant vice president, annually conducting financial training for the agency's youth members.

In supporting CAU Union County Savings also supports the community as a whole, according to Sims, whose bank is the last to be headquartered in Elizabeth.

"As a community bank we rely on the City of Elizabeth and its residents," he said. "We're going to support anything that supports the town. We feel strongly about the mission of Community Access and helping them to ex-



pand their ownership of property for housing for their members and financial education of their youth. They do a lot for the business community, as well. A lot of their members are out there in the job market."

Mary Kurnos is a member of CAU who both owns her own home and works, thereby contributing to the community through property and employment taxes and as a consumer.

Kurnos and her husband Ed were renting a condo owned by CAU when the agency was able to sell it to them in a deal that allows them to pay about the same in mortgage payments as they had in rent.

"I'm proud to be a homeowner," Kurnos said.

CAU would not be able to provide such extensive support to its members were it not for the support of partners within the

business community such as Union County Savings Bank, according to Sid Blanchard, CAU executive director.

"The cost of housing people with disabilities in the community is a fraction of the cost of housing them in an institution," Blanchard said. "Plus by living in the community they both enjoy more fulfilling lifestyles and contribute to the community. Similarly, the cost of housing at-risk

youth, educating them and training them for employment pales when compared to the cost of not doing so. The role that our business partners play in helping us to achieve these goals is invaluable. We couldn't do it without their help."

Added Sims, "This is a partnership and has been for a long time. We expect that to continue."