Executive Director’s Letter

NEW JERSEY IS ENTERING A NEW AGE, with the new Medicaid fee-for-service model in the works, the launch of DDD’s Supports Program and efforts to close some of the states’ remaining developmental centers. All of this in a post-Sandy world! With all of these shifting parts, CAU is committed to keeping you informed and to developing safety nets for you and the ones you love. Some of these shifts are very positive, like the fee-for-service model, which puts the power to choose a social service provider in the hands of those who are receiving social supports and services.

This philosophy of empowering individuals to make their own decisions is in line with CAU’s mission. Our members are an integral part of their community and are very influential in how we develop and provide services; with their voice and support we have built a comprehensive support system tailored to their individual needs. The new fee-for-service model keeps providers accountable to the individuals we support. In all honesty, some providers will not make it, unable to handle these changes. Backed by 34 years of mobilizing individuals with developmental disabilities to become self advocates, training them in life skills development, employment assistance, literacy programs and more than 235 integrated, homes throughout Union County, many of which feature wheelchair accessible living; CAU is ready!

Our experience serving you and your family members has also prepared us to be ready to become a statewide provider of support coordination services, taking the place of services previously provided by case managers from the Division of Developmental Disabilities. As of July 1, 2013, CAU became a provider to all counties in New Jersey outside of Union County.

All of these components are part of what we call the CAU Advantage: a comprehensive, one-stop shop approach to social service for individuals with developmental disabilities.

With Governor Christie on board with closing developmental centers in New Jersey, we look forward to reaching even more families, helping individuals integrate into the community, live fuller lives and become active contributors to society.

Audrey M Vasey
President, Board of Trustees

Sidney Blanchard
Executive Director

MISSION

To provide community access through effective and comprehensive support services for people with disabilities, youth aging-out of foster care and people with affordable housing needs, giving them the opportunity to live independently and to lead normal and productive lives as citizens integrated into the community.

VISION

We strive for our members to:
• Achieve economic self-sufficiency while being as productive as commensurate with their abilities.
• Achieve independent living within the community according to their abilities, resources and needs.
• Achieve a functional level of money management.
• Achieve a satisfying social life.
• Achieve a healthy lifestyle.
• Achieve personal growth.
• Achieve equal rights and self determination.

VALUES & BELIEFS

• Community integration
• Holistic interactions as valued human beings
• Equal treatment as citizens
• Equal value as members of a social activities movement
• Choice & Self determination
• Real lives in real homes
The CAU Advantage

We have had a lot of practice over the past 34 years listening to families and caregivers, tailoring our supports to fit your needs, and building relationships with major retail and banking partners that would train and hire individuals with disabilities and youth aging out of foster care.

We have sat in on town hall meetings, advocated at City Hall, secured housing in communities across Union County; encouraging integration, inclusion and independence. We have grown our assets, reinvesting dividends into scholarship programs for members who wanted to go to school or for medical equipment Medicaid would not cover; and through these efforts we have become a stronger agency.

CAU stands firm and is growing, as we expand this year with seven new locations under construction and a more than $9 million line of credit to continue offering additional housing choices, in-home supports, and qualified and experienced staff.

The CAU Advantage looks like scholarships for members:

- The Aaron Stiller Fund
- The Raymond Herrgott Fund
- The Colleen Fraser Fund
- The Endowment Fund
- The Sidney Katz Mentorship Fund

Capacity:

- Multi-language capability
- In-home and out of home Respite
- Emergency Community placements
- Generators for our homes
- In-home behavioral supports
- Nursing supports

Employment:

- Employment opportunities at CAU, ShopRite, DollarTree and numerous retail and banking partners
- Career planning
- Job coaching

Social Integration & Development:

- Couple’s Night
- Theatre Productions
- Broadway Musicals
- Travel opportunities
- Educational classes

History of Treatment of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

For generations, individuals with developmental disabilities were ostracized from society, labeled as dangerous and incapable of positively contributing to their communities. These beliefs laid the groundwork for a movement that began more than 130 years ago to place individuals with disabilities into institutions and reached its nadir in the 1930s with the extermination of thousands of adults and children with disabilities in Nazi Germany. Today a policy of separation remains in place in many parts of the United States. Though our society has moved away from the most blatant forms of exploitation against people with disabilities, discriminatory laws and practices still prevent this segment of our population from intermingling with the general public. New Jersey is one of the few remaining states that utilize institutions as a primary housing option for its citizens with disabilities, second only to Texas. These institutions are little more than holding cells which offer little to no opportunities for community integration or personal development and in many cases include restrictive daily schedules with set bed times for adults, some of whom have spent their entire lives in institutional housing. New Jersey has nearly 2,200 individuals living in seven institutions across the state.

Community Access Unlimited is ideally positioned to welcome these emerging citizens into the community. We are one of the few organizations in New Jersey offering individuals with disabilities a full range of support services and opportunities that help them reach their optimal level of self-sufficiency and community integration.

Our History

A March Toward Community Integration

1979

Community Access Unlimited (CAU) was founded with a $90,000 grant to move 20 adults with developmental disabilities from New Jersey state institutions to community homes.

In the early years, founder and executive director Sid Blanchard operated CAU out of his Volkswagen Beetle.

After some time CAU moved to 60 Prince Street with a staff of three and began to organize initiatives throughout Union County advocating for community placement for members. To test his theory that community placement combined with social supports and opportunities to integrate with the general population would have a positive effect on the mental and physical health and abilities of people with disabilities, Sid relocated a handful of individuals from institutions to their own apartments with supports.

1984

CAU responds to the needs of youth in New Jersey’s child welfare system and parents with developmental disabilities through a provision to provide supportive transitional living programs and educational training.

1987

CAU purchases its first housing units for adults with developmental disabilities and youth members.

1992

CAU moves into its current location at 80 West Grand Street in Elizabeth, New Jersey, serving more than 400 individuals through housing, employment, independent living, budgeting and social and recreation services with 165 employees.

1999

CAU began providing respite care to individuals with developmental disabilities throughout Union and Somerset New Jersey.

Today

CAU has grown from a three-person organization serving 20 individuals recently released from developmental centers to a social movement of more than 950 staff collectively serving 5,000 members annually. CAU provides a range of barrier-free supervised and independent housing options which include round-the-clock supervised housing, semi-independent supportive housing and fully independent living. In conjunction with our housing support, CAU provides educational, social and recreational activities, advocacy and life skills training, employment assistance, money management training, personal counseling, crisis intervention and fiscal intermediary support.
Community integration, inclusion, and self-sufficiency are the foundational bricks upon which all our support services are built. Nothing exemplifies this more than our community homes. We provide affordable, barrier-free housing tailored to the physical and developmental abilities of all our members.

Housing options for our members with developmental disabilities include:

- Supervised Living – 24-hour support in one of our houses, condominiums or apartments.
- Supportive Living – Semi-independent living for members who do not require 24-hour support but still need assistance with some daily activities.
- Emergency Capacity Systems – Temporary emergency housing for individuals with disabilities who have no other stable housing options.
- Respite – In-home and out of home respite for families and caregivers to find support for loved ones.

Jason Marrero found his home at CAU in 2010; Jason discovered not only four walls and a roof, but independence, safety, camaraderie and pride.

Prior to becoming a member of CAU, Jason resided with his mother during the week and at the ARC of Essex County on weekends. Today he lives with a roommate in a supervised apartment where they share responsibilities, including cleaning and laundry, and pleasures, such as decorating their Christmas tree. Jason feels safe at home. He enjoys listening to music, tinkering with his model train set and writing letters to his parents.

When Jason’s mother visits he takes great pride in showing off his home.

“I sweep and mop the floors, making sure they look spic and span,” he beams. “I learned to take care of myself. I know how to make my bed, fold my clothes, and use the washer and dryer. Sometimes I need a little assistance but then I figure it out on my own.”

Jason receives that assistance from his support staff, who teach him to live independently and develop life skills; after learning, Jason is proud to fend for himself. This is his CAU Advantage!
Malcolm Baltimore is a busy young man. He is a senior at Kean University studying information technology. While working toward graduation in the spring of 2014 Malcolm also holds three part-time jobs to help pay for tuition.

In addition to working overnight shifts at CAU’s homes supporting individuals with disabilities, he also works as a television service technician at Trinitas Regional Medical Center in Elizabeth and a maintenance worker at St. Michaels Medical Center in Newark.

Malcolm had been living on campus at Kean but with such a busy life he needed a place to call his own. He became a member of CAU three years ago and today shares a condominium with a roommate within CAU’s Supportive Housing arm of the Transitional Opportunities Program.

“I love it. I like my peace and quiet and peace of mind, especially when dealing with work and school,” he said. “I was in the child welfare system and my case worker pointed me in the direction of CAU.”

Human service professionals throughout New Jersey know CAU offers the advantage of a continuum of care not available elsewhere, including vocational and life skills training. Yet often the most important advantage CAU provides is the peace of mind of a home.
Wellness
Healthy body, mind... and heart

We are a community comprised of members all working together to improve each other’s lives and the wider community around us. Through a comprehensive network of social supports a holistic approach to total wellness becomes a reality. These include:

- Independent Living Training that strengthens interpersonal relationship skills, assisting members in personal hygiene, health awareness and housekeeping.

- Recreation and Social Education that includes opportunities to participate in cultural and social events such as overnight trips, dining out, sporting events, dance classes, annual CAU events and Special Olympics.

- A Health and Wellness Curricula developed with each member based on their needs, interests and abilities.

- Health Care Education that includes extensive education in hygiene, nutrition and sexual health and links to partner with health providers such as Amerigroup and Planned Parenthood.

- One-on-One and Self Help Groups provided by dozens of nurses, behaviorist and education specialists who work directly with our members on a daily basis.

- Respite services that provide full in home or out of home supports for individuals who need care while their caregivers take some time off. This unique opportunity allows caregivers to shift responsibility of their loved one to CAU so they can take care of life’s unexpected events. Caregivers can feel secure knowing their family members are receiving the best quality care and learning opportunities in their absence.

Joyce Sigue lives a very healthy life, balancing her responsibilities of living independently with her medical needs, social interaction and recreation. A longtime member of CAU, Joyce lives in a home with four roommates, supported by 24-hour onsite CAU staff.

“The staff treat me very nicely,” she said. “They take good care of me and make sure I get my medicine on time.”

“My counselor sat with me, that is how I learned,” she said. “It wasn’t too hard.”

Joyce works at CAU and also spends time at an offsite program that promotes exercise and relaxation, education, grooming and hygiene and health awareness, supporting those same skills she develops at CAU.

Joyce loves all genres of music especially Gospel. She knows that all work and no play is not healthy and balanced. So Joyce makes sure she has plenty of fun.

“My counselor takes me to the mall,” she said. “I like to go to TGI Fridays for dinner. I went to Atlantic City. I walked around the boardwalk and took pictures and bought an Atlantic City t-shirt. I’m saving for another trip, something different, and for Gospel CDs.”
You might think Joyce Cargle is a financial wizard. But she has a formula – and the results prove it works.

First there is intake. Joyce has been working for many years, the last nine on the cleaning crew at CAU. She also receives state support, for example for her utilities, and food.

“I budget with staff,” she said. “First rent and then cable.” Staff members also helped Joyce open a bank account.

“I’m learning to be responsible and pay my bills, learning how to save for things I need more than I want,” she said.

But Joyce’s formula also allows for fun.

“I’ve been very good at saving my personal money,” she said. “I saved enough to go to a dude ranch and to Atlantic City for a concert, to see David Cassidy. I know he’s from the 70s but I like him. I’m also able to buy nice things for myself; I bought a laptop last year for my birthday.”

The formula also has a future. Joyce is currently attending Union County College for remedial classes as a start toward earning an associates degree in social work. She is paying for the tuition with grants she applied for online with the help of CAU staff.

Joyce has the advantage of having CAU as part of her formula.
Anthony Howard has been training for his career passion for many years—and does not plan to stop any time soon. Anthony works as a security guard at CAU; resolutely watching over the parking lot while extending friendship to everyone he meets.

Anthony began his training in security while living in a developmental center and embraced his formal training at CAU—“They take you around and show you what to do,” he said. “It’s a whole process.”

Anthony enjoys the rewards of working. CAU staff trained him on banking accounts and savings.

“I’m saving for a car,” he said. “That’s why I put all my work checks in the bank in my savings account.”

Yet Anthony also cares about others and looks to share his earnings.

“I like to help people,” he said. “If I have a dollar I give it to them. I give money to charities to help people on the street.”

Anthony is planning his future career, as well. With the help of CAU staff he identifies job development programs available to him through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

“I’d like to get trained again in case I get an outside job in a supermarket as a security guard,” he said.

Anthony’s work ethic and performance earned him one more reward this year. He was named Employment Member of the Year at CAU’s Award’s Night Celebration.
Sidney Katz was born in Newark, New Jersey, October 13, 1950, and nearly half his life. He was one of the CAU board of trustees, Sid was president of Helping Hands, Coordinator for NJUSA-Northern Region and the New Jersey alternate representative for Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SAABE). Sid was active in the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), attending and speaking at many national and regional AAIDD conferences.

Sid was a board member of Jump Start, a consulting company supported by Helping Hands that has been instrumental in performing advocacy workshops in the community at schools, CAU and most recently the Boy Scouts of America. Sid also taught sensitivity training in public schools and developmental centers and passionately educated the community about the needs of individuals with different abilities. He conducted training on Person Center Planning and Individualized Support Plans for CAU members and staff and each year coordinated efforts to ensure a well planned CAU Member’s Day to recognize everyone for all their personal achievements throughout the year. Most recently, Sid was elected unanimously as the Chairman of Council 2 among the State of New Jersey Advocates.

Sid’s lifetime goal of witnessing unparalleled equality for every individual in this country roused the passion of advocates nationwide. He was not just a colleague but a mentor in and out of the advocacy realm. He made us laugh intensely every day and offered solid wisdom, solicited or not, Sid never hesitated when sharing his criticism or praise about our work and his voice has and will continue to shape the future of our movement.

Sid’s many accomplishments and associations are beyond listing. He was profoundly a lifetime achiever of educating, promoting and advocating for the rights of individuals with different abilities, ensuring everyone’s voice is heard and everyone is a member of the community with equal rights and responsibilities. Sid’s strongest belief was that every citizen should have the same opportunities for freedom, pursuit of happiness and to be an integral part of the community and society as a whole. Sid will be deeply missed by his many friends, fellow advocates, co-workers and admirers in New Jersey and around the Country.

OMAR ANTHONY CARTER

Omar Anthony Carter came to CAU three years ago after seven years in the child welfare system confident in who he was and where he was going... then he discovered more!

Omar is vice president of CAU’s Member Action Committee and Youth Advisory Board, the advocacy arms of our youth members. He enjoys serving as a mentor for other members while also reaping the benefits of membership himself.

“CAU is really a great program,” he said. “They stay active with the youth and continually push us to go out there and do whatever we’re not doing. They push you further. People discover they have the potential to do things but there’s always going to be a discovery of potential you didn’t know you had.”

When he first came to CAU Omar was teaching and doing a lot of good things – “I refused to be a liability,” he said. Yet CAU helped him find even more room for growth.

“They forced me to look at life a different way and strategize and learn and see that sometimes you have to close your mouth and listen,” he said.

Now Omar is speaking out, visiting other youth advisory boards across the state and making presentations at national conferences about youth advocacy.

“Our youth are challenged and we need to overcome that, figure out why they choose the wrong path,” he said.

Omar had the advantage of finding a better path at CAU.
Volunteerism
Changing the world one step at a time...

Traveling from darkness to devastation following Hurricane Sandy, three CAU youth members and their mentor volunteered to help feed those in need at the Chestnut Street Community Church in Roselle. Jair Bodnar, Zahir Muhammad and Felix Panique served meals to the poor, senior citizens, people with disabilities and others impacted by the storm that came to the church for help.

“We had no power but I told the guys we should help our neighbors because they were worse off than we were,” Jair said.

“I was very affected by their story,” Zahir said.

“I was thinking about my mom and how I would want someone to help my family in that situation, too. I helped out by serving their needs.”

“They were very generous,” Jair said. “They also were very thankful. I felt good about myself.”

“We think we are in a tough situation but we were able to help other people in their time of need,” said Sid Blanchard, CAU’s Executive Director. “It’s one thing to see things on television. It’s another thing to drive through the neighborhood and see the devastation that happened here. For that reason I knew it was going to be a great experience for them.”

Community Integration
...and joining the community

In 2012, CAU partnered with long time educator and community theatre director Marguerite Modero to launch a brand new theatre group in Union County. The CAU Community Players was born from Marguerite’s and CAU’s passions of equality in theatre and creative expressions and was the first group of its kind to invite individuals with disabilities to audition and perform side by side community actors in a full show.

Our recreational activities, which include dance, singing and painting classes, became the spring board for our pilot theatre production of “Seussical the Musical, Jr.” in June 2012, which addressed issues of discrimination against individual differences and promoted education to prevent bias. It was unclear how this adventure would unfold, but the idea ultimately would expose members to another side of the arts and quickly grew into a troupe of 60 performers and crew members who eventually became known as the CAU Community Players theatre group.

The CAU Community Players has become a vehicle of advocacy, inclusion and education for the wider community about people with developmental disabilities and their creative abilities. The cast of 60 took the stage for the first time in June 2012 performing, Seussical Jr. for over 800 people. The message, that everyone has their own place in this world, no matter how small, touched the audience and inspired the choice of Beauty & the Beast Jr. for 2013, a show with a similarly powerful message. Interest in the program has expanded the cast to a group of 80 participants for the 2013 show.

Other Recreation
Other recreation supports ensure that all members have the opportunity to participate in social and educational activities at CAU and within the community.

A variety of activities and classes are offered on a weekly, monthly and annual basis to individuals and small and large groups, including supervised weekend getaways and vacations. Classes include skills such as basic math, reading and computer skills.
One day, every week, a man standing 6 feet 7 inches marches in long strides to his local library, hungry for the chance to meet new people and learn something new. These were the same long, determined strides Wayne Petuck used to reach his job at the former Union Hospital for 15 years, where he relished in helping others and interacting with staff and patients.

Wayne has been a member of CAU for 13 years but a member of the wider community forever. He combines his hunger for learning with his enjoyment of being around others.

“I like to go book shopping,” he said. “I like to go to the library and go on to the Internet and do word games. I also like baseball and bowling.”

Wayne enjoys seeing new places, as well, and has visited Niagara Falls and Wildwood. As a member of CAU he has the advantage of a full slate of activities – from trips and nights out to parties and music and dancing – and rarely misses an event.

Wayne’s love for life and the community this year earned him the Community Living Member of the Year award at CAU’s Awards Night. As one staff member said, Wayne never misses a chance to leave his mark on the world.

Have You Been Inspired?

Throughout the course of the year, CAU has a number of volunteer opportunities available for businesses and individuals to give back. We seek to provide an experience that is mutually beneficial for our volunteers. Come and learn a new skill, network and, most importantly, help those who need it most.

- Mentor youth
- Conduct workshops on financial literacy, technology, etc.
- Intern with one of our departments
- Help us organize our events
- Make care packages for our members
- Provide administrative support
- Advocacy

For more information, please contact our Information and Referral Specialist at (908) 354-3040, ext 272.
**Financials**

**Growth & History**

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* as of 12/31/2012 in millions

**Operating Expenses**

- Community Support: $10,859,287
- Employment: $5,713,353
- Administration: $2,918,841
- Property: $2,998,759
- Training: $12,736
- Other: $998,662

Grand Total Expenses: $38,343,985

*85% of total expenses directly benefited individuals supported in 2012

**Operating Income**

- Government Grants: $34,079,729
- Contributions: $241,489
- Fee for Service: $4,342,457
- Rental Income: $1,601,467
- Other: $1,503,481

Grand Total Income: $41,768,623

**Assets**

- Cash & Cash Equivalents: $14.4M
- Investments: $11.8M
- Land, Building & Equipment: $6.2M
- Other Assets: $17.7M

Total Assets: $50.1M

**Liabilities**

- Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses: $16.7M
- Deferred Credit - L.P. Purchase: $2.2M
- Mortgage Payable: $2.1M
- Other Liabilities: $0.3M

Total Liabilities: $21.3M

*85% of total expenses directly benefited individuals supported in 2012
We thank all of our supporters for their commitment to our mission!
“CAU handles everything... enables me to be productive, to be part of the community. Luckily there is an agency like Community Access.”

– MARY ELLEN MARMO, COMMUNITY ACCESS MEMBER