

THE **cau** ADVANTAGE

The Newsletter of Community Access Unlimited • Fall 2014

For 35 years now, Community Access Unlimited (CAU) has provided members from across New Jersey with an opportunity to live in their communities with access to essential, community-based supports.

Become a CAU member today, and see how you can benefit from the CAU Advantage.

“ We watch out for every individual’s best interests by providing life skills and vocational training, employment support, housing assistance, health care oversight, education, opportunities to socialize, and crisis intervention. Basically, we exist to give members a voice -- a voice that can be heard loud and clear. ”

- **Sidney Blanchard,**
CAU’s executive director
and founder



What is CAU?

Community Access Unlimited (CAU) offers a wide range of individualized support services, and owns more than 245 housing units in Union County. Since our humble beginnings in 1979, when we assisted three individuals in moving from developmental centers out of the back seat of a Volkswagen Beetle, CAU has grown exponentially to support and serve more than 5500 people with special needs within the community.

Serving individuals from across New Jersey, CAU’s mission is providing full support services to individuals with disabilities, at-risk youth, and those with affordable housing needs. We work side-by-side with members and together advocate for equal rights and access to service and supports. We’re strongly committed to training those we support in assertiveness and decision-making.

STORIES OF SUCCESS

One thing that makes Community Access Unlimited (CAU) special is our commitment to members' goals and successes. Following are two stories highlighting this unique level of dedication, and the determination of CAU members.

Member Ashley Lasanta and Google Glass

Google Glass may have an impressive future as a wearable technology product, but thanks to the pioneering efforts of one CAU member, it also has potential as an assistive technology for those with disabilities.

When CAU member Ashley Lasanta -- who has limited mobility in her hands and arms, and uses a wheelchair -- wanted to learn about photography, William Busch knew he faced a challenge. But Busch, CAU's director of membership development, was undaunted and soon contacted Google regarding its Glass device, which is essentially a hands-free smartphone worn on a user's head. Since Glass' full marketplace debut is still in the future, Ashley was selected to participate in Google's pre-release "Explorer Program," via a \$1500 trial fee paid by CAU. And soon, she was utilizing such apps as photography, video chat, and even cooking.

In fact, Ashley was so successful at incorporating Glass technology into her daily life that she was selected to discuss her experiences at the American Network for Community Options and Resources conference. There, she and Busch demonstrated how what was initially intended only as a consumer communications tool suddenly shows great promise as an assistive device.



Supported Employment

Americans with disabilities make up a bit more than five percent of the nation's workforce. CAU member Joy Smith is a shining example of what they're able to accomplish, thanks in part to individual employment supports services.

Joy, who has a hearing impairment and other disabilities, has worked at Marshalls' Clark location for 26 years. Her primary responsibilities include laying out clothing and stocking shelves and racks.

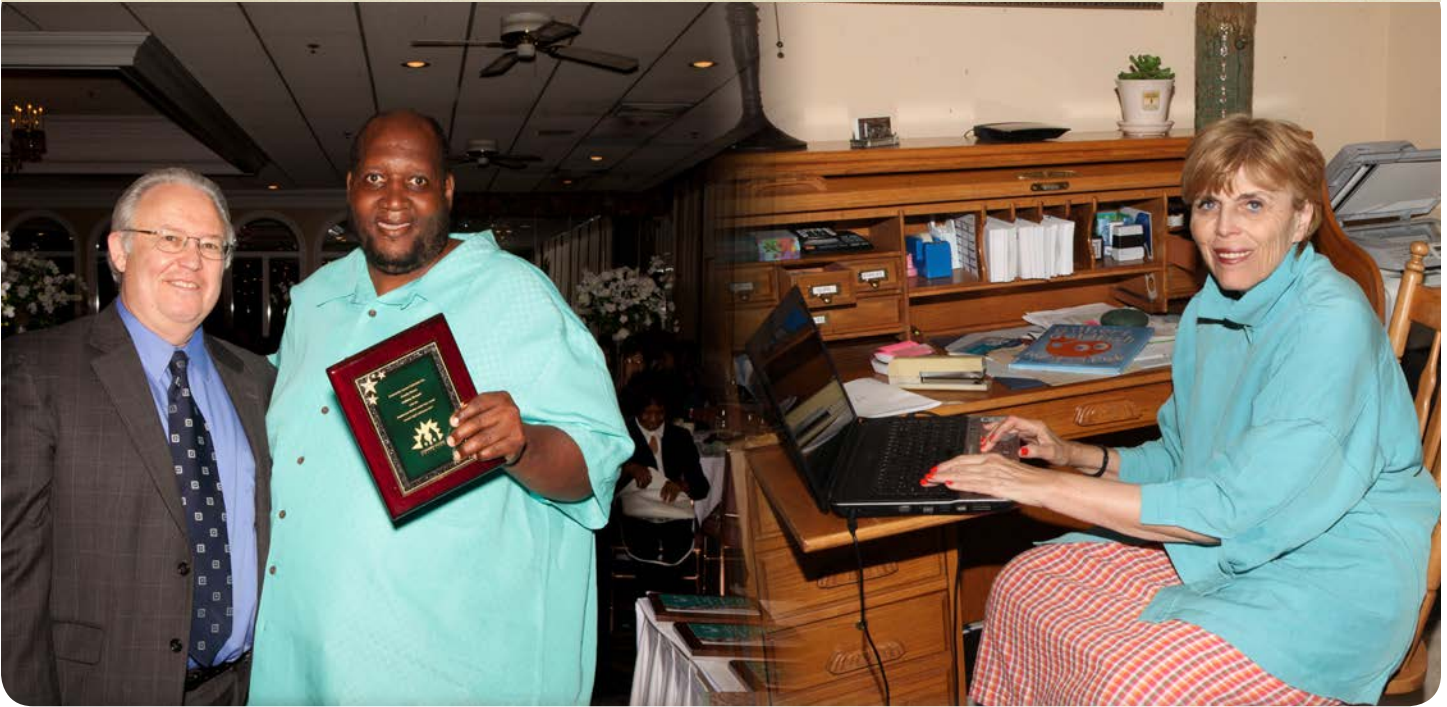
"I like bringing out the new clothes and hanging them," says Joy, who is one of many CAU members competitively employed and working within her own community. "I like putting out the new children's clothing."

Joy uses her paycheck from Marshalls to pay bills and finance recreational activities. A 32-year member of the CAU family, she lives independently, in an apartment, and pays her own rent. Marshall's supervisors and co-workers cite her dependability and the high quality of her work.

"I like my job," she says. "I like the people I work with and my boss. I like working with the children."



HELPING YOU NAVIGATE THE SYSTEM



What's my first step toward getting CAU services?

Call CAU (1-800-354-3096) and we'll guide you. From qualifying for Medicaid and creating an Individual Support Plan to accomplishing your goals, we'll help with every step.

Why do I need Medicaid to receive services funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)?

A change to the state eligibility regulation, effective early in 2013, mandates that everyone receiving DDD-funded services must become Medicaid eligible. This new policy helps the state maximize the federal funds it receives.

If I'm not currently receiving Medicaid, how quickly do I need to apply to become eligible in for DDD-funded services?

Immediately. Individuals new to DDD must have eligibility before they may receive DDD services. In other words, you may not apply for DDD funding until you qualify and are approved for Medicaid.

I'm turning 21 and will need DDD services. Do I need to become a Medicaid recipient?

Yes. Anyone in need of DDD-funded services must first have Medicaid. If you need assistance applying, please contact CAU at 1-800-354-3096, x272, or call your DDD Regional Office.

What if my assets/income exceed the allowable Medicaid limit?

The allowable limit varies, depending on how you apply for Medicaid. Individuals with substantial assets/income who exceed the Medicaid limit need to pay out-of-pocket for services until they are able to obtain Medicaid approval. Upon applying, you'll need to complete the "Medicaid Eligibility Troubleshooting Form." This will allow DDD to help you find a solution. Individuals also may wish to discuss options with an attorney or financial planner.

Once I qualify for Medicaid, what other criteria must I meet to receive DDD-funded services?

You must have a severe, chronic physical and/or mental impairment that a) manifests before the age of 22, b) is lifelong, and c) substantially limits any three of the following life activities: self-care; learning; mobility; communication; self-direction; economic self-sufficiency; and the ability to live independently.

REACHING OUT TO CAU FOR HELP...

Here are the quickest, most effective ways to contact CAU for help.

1-800-354-3096

This is the main phone number for contacting CAU. In addition, a 24-hour hotline is available for emergencies after regular (8 a.m. - 6 p.m.) business hours. Direct questions regarding our supports and services can be answered by our Information & Referral department. They can be reached at extension x272 for Disability Services and x394 for Youth Services.

www.caunj.org

This is CAU's Web site, which features the latest updates on all services. CAU also has a presence on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter that you can explore for more information.

As a membership organization, CAU is dedicated to provide services that benefit both members and their families. Our Family Mentor is available to assist families at any time. You might consider attending a Family Connections meeting to gain insight from other families.

What's next?

With all the changes happening under the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), there may still be some questions regarding the impact on individuals with disabilities and their loved ones. We hope to answer some of your questions right here.

Because of the state changes in disability related services, individuals and their families in need of support services are being called upon to play an active role in directing their supports and services. At this point, there are many people who have taken the next steps in transitioning into the new system of care. If you haven't done so yet, either you -- as an individual receiving services -- or your family are required to answer a questionnaire to determine whether self-directed services or provider-managed services are right for you. Under the new system of care, the results of a single questionnaire can dramatically alter the level of support funded by the state.

We know this process is potentially intimidating, and that there are many unanswered questions. The Membership Development Department at CAU is standing by to assist you through the process. You may contact Gene Tavera at 908-354-3040, x272, or visit our Web site (www.caunj.org) for more information. You also may receive further details on the state of New Jersey's Web site, at www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/services

The Academy for Continuing Education (ACE)

The Academy of Continuing Education (ACE) is an excellent program offered by Community Access Unlimited (CAU) for individuals with developmental disabilities who recently graduated from their public education and are looking for a unique and exciting alternative to traditional day supports.

Join us for the following courses starting in the Fall.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10:00am-12:00pm	Intro to Math	Musical Expression	Intro to Improvisation & Theatre	Reading Comprehension	Self Understanding/Peer Leadership
1:00pm-3:00pm	Dance & Creative Movement	Time Traveler	Explore Your Career Opportunities	Jewelry Design & Merchandising	Finding Your Inner Calm

• ACE is a NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) qualified program and falls under:

- Goods & Services - Prevocational Training
- Supported Employment & Small Group Employment Support

- Pricing for each 8 week course is affordable
- Classes are tailored to individuals with developmental disabilities
- Classes include the most current curriculum templates available from the State of NJ

If you would like more information, or to start the application enrollment of ACE, please contact: Marguerite Modero, Director of ACE
908-354-3040 x275 – mmodero@caunj.org



To Join Our Mailing List, Please Visit our Website: www.caunj.org, and Click the Contact Us tab!

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