



# The Independent Citizen

Fall 2018



COMMUNITY ACCESS  
U N L I M I T E D

## *"Annie" Finds a Home at CAU*

The CAU Community Players brought magic to the stage this summer with their production of "Annie, Jr.," performed before nearly 1,000 guests over three nights at the Rahway High School Center for Performing Arts. A cast of more than 100, comprised of CAU members and actors from the wider community, performed the heartwarming story of Little Orphan Annie, who with equal measure of pluck and positivity overcomes the odds to find happiness.

Formed in 2012, the CAU Community Players empowers our members to perform alongside people from the general community and to be seen for their talents rather than their disabilities. Each year the troupe's Director, Marguerite Modero, selects a production represents CAU's message of inclusion, acceptance and advocacy, as well as everyone's worth regardless of ability.

CAU member Andrew Barry played a Hooverville resident and carpenter. He said he enjoyed being part of a cast with others from outside the agency. "It's a lot of fun," he said.



THE CAU COMMUNITY PLAYERS

PROUDLY PRESENTED JUNE 2018

*A cast of nearly 100 took the stage in June to perform Annie Jr.*

*Photo compliments of Images by GDVH*

"We sometimes go out together or have a party in the cafeteria. They're really nice to me. This is my first time performing with people who are not (from) CAU."

Kim Rosato, another CAU member who also played a Hooverville resident, was a little nervous before the first show but quickly overcame her anxiety. She said she really enjoys performing.

"I become myself," she said. "It makes me feel good and gives me confidence in myself."

*Continued on Page 2*

"Helping you achieve independence in the community... that's

**THE CAU**  
ADVANTAGE



## A Message from our Executive Director



The past year has been one of significant transition on the human services landscape in New Jersey. As always, CAU has been out front positioning ourselves to ensure the interests of our members are protected and best served. The state began implementing its transition from annual contracts with service providers such as CAU to a fee-for-service model, which allows people with disabilities and their families to "shop around" and select those providers who best meet their needs.

CAU has long been a pioneer in serving people with disabilities, and we are navigating the transition to fee-for-service quite well. In fact, many of our members and their families didn't even know when the transition occurred. While the payment system has changed, our commitment to our members and the quality of our supports has not.

Currently CAU supports 5,000 people with disabilities and their families throughout New Jersey, with new members and their loved ones turning to us every day. Given our broad array of specialized supports, the breadth and depth of what we do is unparalleled in the state. CAU provides more all-encompassing, individualized supports than any other agency of our kind.

We are experts at delivering comprehensive, individualized supports and often introduce new services before other agencies can even think of them. We employ experts in the field and our staff training is the best bar none. Our commitment to our members is as strong today as the day we opened our doors in 1979, ensuring that all the needs of our members are met.

CAU has a track record that cannot be matched and we are well-positioned for continued success going forward. This journey and evolution as an agency has been and remains a collective effort that we welcome all to join.

Sidney Blanchard, Executive Director



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### Honorary Members

**Walter Kalman, Martin Poltrock  
& Nicholas Scalera**

Ryan Durkin is a non-CAU member of the troupe who has performed in every CAU Community Players production. He played multiple roles in "Annie, Jr."

"I like the moments that not many people see," he said. "At the end of each performance, we close the curtains and the audience doesn't see the smiles and emotion of the performers. It's a very emotional few seconds, very heartwarming, because we all did this work together and finished it together."

"Annie, Jr." was the CAU Community Players' seventh annual production.

Modero continues to be moved by the accomplishments of the troupe.

"This was our best production ever," she said. "We have gone so far and



*Photo compliments of Images by GDVH*

*The CAU Community Players perform "We'd like to Thank You Hubert Hoover"*



# ANNUAL IRA GELLER WALK-A-THON SEPTEMBER 15, 2018 OAK RIDGE PARK, CLARK, NJ

**REGISTRATION: 11:00 AM  
EVENT TIME: 12:00 PM—3:00 PM**

**GAMES, ACTIVITIES, LIVE MUSIC,  
WALK AROUND THE PARK,  
FOOD & COMMUNITY**

**FREE REGISTRATION AT  
[WWW.CROWDRISE.COM/2018IRAGELLERWALK-A-THON](http://WWW.CROWDRISE.COM/2018IRAGELLERWALK-A-THON)**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT:**



Sponsored by the Union County  
Board of Chosen Freeholders  
**UNION COUNTY**  
*We're Connected to You!*



**Questions? Contact Cara Clair  
908-354-3040 x4376 or [cclair@caunj.org](mailto:cclair@caunj.org)**



## Upcoming Events

### - SEPTEMBER -

**September 4, 6:00 PM—8:00 PM**  
Helping Hands Self Advocacy at the CAU Main Office

**September 15, 11:00 AM—3:00 PM**  
Ira Geller Walk-a-thon at Oak Ridge Park, Clark NJ

**September 20, 8:00 AM—10:00 PM**  
Community Networking Breakfast at  
Suburban Golf Club

**September 29, 9:00 AM—3:00 PM**  
Women of Faith Conference  
Hosted by the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council  
at the CAU Main Office

### - OCTOBER -

**October 2, 6:00 PM—8:00 PM**  
Helping Hands Self Advocacy at the CAU Main Office

**October 9, 7:00 PM—8:00 PM**  
Union County Day of Prayer  
Hosted by the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council  
At St. Bartholomew of the Apostle Church, Scotch Plains, NJ

**October 11, 6:00 PM—8:00 PM**  
Connecting Families at the Suburban Golf Club, Union

**October 18, 6:00 PM—10:00 PM**  
CAU Gala Dinner Dance at the Newark Liberty  
International Airport Marriott

**October 20, 10:00 AM—3:00 PM**  
CAU Members Day at the CAU Main Office

**October 24, 8:00 AM—3:00 PM**  
6th Annual Union County Youth Networking  
Conference at the CAU Main Office

### - NOVEMBER -

**November 6, 6:00 PM—8:00 PM**  
Helping Hands Self Advocacy at the CAU Main Office

**November 7, 6:00 AM—8:00 PM**  
Celebration of Life and Tree of Life Vigil  
at the CAU Main Office

**November 17, 10:00 AM—2:00 PM**  
Who Wants to be Independent?  
At the CAU Main Office

**For More Information on Upcoming Events  
Visit our website at [www.caunj.org](http://www.caunj.org)**



## Teeing Off for CAU

Our community partners took to the links to support CAU and our members at the 2018 CAU Golf Classic at Suburban Golf Club this spring, helping to raise more than \$55,000 for our programs. Nearly 100 attendees representing 53 business partners participated. The event sponsor was Valley National Bank.

"As a concerned corporate citizen with long-standing ties to the community, we are dedicated to helping improve the quality of life of the neighborhoods we serve," said Mwaura Muroki, Vice President at Valley National. "That's why we are proud to support Community Access Unlimited in their mission to provide community access through effective and comprehensive services to people with developmental disabilities, youth aging out of foster care and individuals with affordable housing needs."

We'd like to thank each and every one of our sponsors for their support! Visit our website to see our full sponsorship list and stay tuned for next year's outing information!

CAU Executive Director Sid Blanchard (second from left) welcomes (left to right) Mwaura Muroki, Mary Ann Beltz, Lynn Swain and Robert Leung from Valley National Bank.



We welcomed 74 golfers to this year's event!

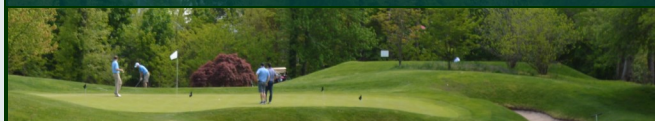
Make sure to reserve your spot for next year.

## Thank you to this year's sponsors, golfers & donors!

A&S Carpets • Adventure Aquarium • AFLAC (Ray Lapinski & Nick Mirandi) • Al-ways Advertising • Arleo & Donohue Attorneys at Law B&B Press • BCB Community Bank • Bob D'Alia, Merrill Lynch • Bob's Furniture Charitable Foundation • Borden Perlman Salisbury & Kelly Butler Human Services • Care Station Medical Group • Corbett Exterminating, Inc. • Dotted Line Closings, LLC • EKA Associates Elizabeth Pharmacy • Epstein, Becker & Green • Grand Stand Sports & Memorabilia • Griffin Alexander, P.C. • Guardian Title Service, LLC • Hansa USA—Fox Jewelers • Harold J. Poltrock, Esq. • H&J Security Systems • Hehl & Hehl, P.C. • Innovative Benefit Planning • Innovative Compensation & Benefits Concepts • Investors Bank • Italian Products, Inc. • James R. Guerra, Architects-Planners • J. Belford Tire & Auto • Kaufman Borgeest & Ryan, LLP • Kramer Portraits • Liberty Mutual Insurance • Maffey's Security Systems • Northfield Bank • Phoenix Specialties, LLC • Prince Auto Collision • Roselle Savings Bank • Royce Brook Golf Club • Sarah Herman • Somerset Patriots • Sopher Financial Group • Spire Group, P.C. • Summit Soundz Entertainment • TD Bank • Trinitas Hospital • Valley National Bank • Watson's Adventures • Woodruff Developers • Worldwide Holdings & Logistics, LLC • Viva Z Club



Save the Date!  
**CAU Annual Golf Classic**  
**Thursday, May 9, 2019**  
**Suburban Golf Club, Union NJ**  
 Visit our website for more information  
[www.caunj.org](http://www.caunj.org)





## A Prom Like No Other

For most teenagers, prom night is a magical evening of tuxedos and gowns, fine dining and dancing. Yet many people with disabilities never get to experience prom as teenagers, either because they are not asked, feel unwelcome or attended high schools that did not observe the tradition.

At CAU, prom comes every year, and our members are able to dress to the nines and dance the night away while creating new memories each summer.

"Prom gives people a chance to socialize, catch up and really have a good time," said Belinda Malave, 1st Vice President of Helping Hands, which sponsors prom each year. "A lot of our members are really shy, so we try to get their personalities out. Most of them weren't able to go to prom when they were young, either for social reasons or because their parents were overly protective. This gives them a chance to shine."



*CAU members crowded the dance floor all evening.*



Sharon Mohry and Buddy Barde (*left*), who attend prom each summer and have been a couple for 16 years, said they enjoy the dancing and the music.

"The prom gives our members a chance to get out," Sharon said.

Gary Rubin launched Prom eight years ago with former CAU member Sid Katz. "People with disabilities aren't welcome at prom in high school," Gary said. "This allows our members to feel welcome and not be excluded."



*Belinda Malave, 1st Vice President of our Helping Hands self-advocacy group, which sponsors Prom.*

## CAU Music Rings Nationally

CAU's ongoing collaboration with Kean University's music department was recognized at the 2018 Research Conference of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) in Atlanta. The effort is led by Marguerite Modero, our Director of the CAU Community Players, and Lyn Schraer-Joiner, Coordinator for Music Education at Kean University.

Marguerite and Lynn have been collaborating for three years on a continually evolving program that teams CAU members with music education students at Kean, who teach their mentees how to play instruments and create compositions. Each year, they also stage a collaborative concert at the Wilkins Theater at Kean University — they even formed bands called CAU Rocks and The Keaniacs!

"Music is the great unifier," Lynn said. "It connects all people equally and brings them together. Music bonds and that's what happened to us."



*CAU Members joined Kean University students to perform at this year's collaborative concert in January 2018.*



## Youth Learn Challenges and Rewards Independence

More than 70 youth from CAU's Transitional Opportunities Program (TOP) and the wider community learned about the challenges and rewards of independence at this year's Independent City held at CAU's headquarters in July.



*Jacob Gawlikowski (left) & Alejandro Amaya (right) enjoying the event.*

Independent City is a mock-community set up in CAU's auditorium consisting of simulated banks, apartment buildings, grocery stores, utilities and institutions and amenities that allow participating youth to make – or break – their futures. The youths are given a portfolio that tells them what job they have, how much money they make and whether they have a family. They then are given a check and tasked with making their own life decisions as they navigate Independent City.



*CAU members and staff had an amazing day learning more about how to seek and maintain independence.*

TOP member Chantee Royam attended the event and found it very rewarding. "I learned that people will have difficulties in life because they don't budget or behave responsibly with their money," she said. "You need to work to earn money and plan properly so you can have a balanced life."

TOP member Jacob Gawlikowski was assigned a persona of someone who had been convicted of a crime. "Having a criminal record is hard," he said. "I never get in trouble but the character I was given did and I couldn't get a house. I was basically homeless even though I had a budget. I was living out of my car with my (hypothetical) child, and that is about all I spent my money on." Jacob said he learned he needs to manage those things in his life he can control.

"This event gives these youths the opportunity to experience a day in the life of an adult," said Howard F. Wingard, Supported Housing Coordinator. "They learn about all the things an adult has to do to live independently,

**5th Annual  
Day of Prayer and Reflection  
Unifying Our Community  
Through Prayer**

**Union County Day of Prayer  
October 9, 2018  
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

**St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church  
2032 Westfield Avenue, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076**



*Working to facilitate the building of bonds within the interfaith community, promoting the respect, inclusion and welcoming of others.*



**Register Now!**

**Sign up for Day of Prayer and**

**RSVP by October 5th at**

**<https://5thannualdayofprayer.eventbrite.com> or  
call 908.354.3040 x4371**



**6th Annual Union County  
Youth Networking Conference**

**October 24, 2018**

**8:00 AM—3:00 PM**

**Community Access Unlimited  
80 West Grand St.  
Elizabeth, NJ 07202**

**Sponsored by:**

**For More Information Contact**

**Rolando Zorrilla at**

**908-354-3040 x4305**

**[rzorrilla@caunj.org](mailto:rzorrilla@caunj.org)**



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### Love Was in the Air

Romance, good food and music mixed in the air this spring as dozens of CAU members in committed relationships celebrated their love at our annual Couples Night dinner and dance at Suburban Country Club in Union.

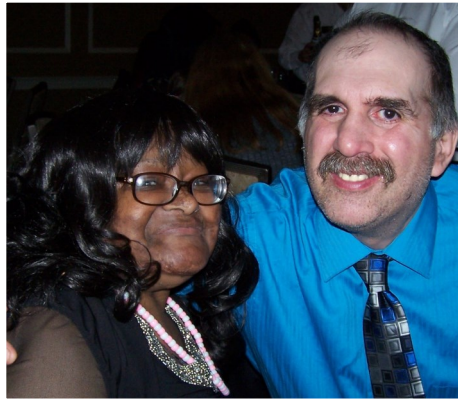
"Romantic relationships are important, regardless of ability or disability," said Tina Hansen, CAU's Director of Behavioral Services. "Healthy and happy romantic relationships are something that everyone has a right to enjoy and we encourage it. Relationships are complicated for everyone, and experiencing romance is how people grow emotionally."

Rosemary Veale and James Emon have been in a romantic relationship "a very long time," Rosemary said. Prior to coming to CAU more than 25 years ago, both were residents of the same developmental center, but their romance didn't blossom until they came to CAU.

"I like to ride horses with her," James said. "The first time I rode I fell right off," Rosemary laughed.

Marion Wade and John Barker also found romance after coming to CAU. "We like to take walks and watch TV together and just have fun," Marion said.

Nicole Nagel and Emmett Smith have been in a relationship for four years and attend Couples Night each year "because we are in love," Emmett said. "We go to Devils hockey games," Nicole said. "We like to travel, like to Florida. This year we're going to the Poconos."



(Left) Nicole Nagel and Emmett Smith celebrate their love at the annual Couples Night dinner and dance hosted each year by Community Access Unlimited. (Center) Marion Wade and John Barker (Right) Rosemary Veale and James Emon.



*Gather with us to celebrate the lives of those we miss and love.*

### *Celebration of Life and Tree of Life Vigil*

**November 7, 2018 6:00—8:00 PM**

*Live Music & Dinner to be served*

*Please RSVP to this complimentary event to Cara Clair at 908-354-3040 x4376 or [cclair@caunj.org](mailto:cclair@caunj.org)*

*Find out more about our Tree of Life & Memorial Giving by visiting our website at [www.caunj.org](http://www.caunj.org), "Giving"*





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**Community Access Unlimited's Mission:** *Our mission is to provide community access through effective, systematic, comprehensive support services for people with disabilities and their families, giving them the opportunity to live independently and to lead normal and productive lives as citizens integrated into the general community. Services also include the provision of decent housing preferably income integrated and affordable to low and moderate-income people.*

# Annual Gala Dinner Dance

**October 18, 2018**  
**6:00 PM—10:00 PM**  
Newark Liberty  
International Airport Marriott

*Please help us  
congratulate  
this year's honorees*



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