

The Independent Citizen



Fall 2013

Richard Wilkinson Humanitarian of the Year



Richard Wilkinson is the 2013 recipient of Community Access Unlimited's Humanitarian of the Year award, which lauds a person who has provided ongoing support for and has had continued influence on behalf of people with disabilities and at-risk youth.

Richard is an international author who has played a formative role in international research on the social determinants of health and on the social effects of income inequality. He is professor emeritus of social epidemiology at the University of Nottingham Medical School, honorary professor at University College London and a visiting professor at the University of York.

Richard is coauthor of "The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better," which maintains that that societies with more equal distribution of incomes have better health, fewer social problems such as violence, drug abuse, teenage births, mental illness, obesity and others, and are more

Karen Dinsmore Public Leadership Award



Each year Community Access Unlimited presents the Public Leadership Award to a person or organization for outstanding support and advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities and youth aging out of foster care. Karen Dinsmore, assistant director, Department of Human Services, Union County, is this year's winner of this award.

Karen has 30 years experience in management in the private and public sector, with experience in organizational development and strategic planning. She has administered both private and public contracts and managed both small and large teams.

For the past 23 years Karen has served as the assistant director of the Union County Department of Human Services,

Marguerite Modero Ira Geller Award



The Ira Geller Award is presented to a person or group of people who have made a significant commitment to their relationship with CAU and have notably impacted the agency through their association with CAU and its members. Marguerite Modero has done all of that and much more.

In 2011 Marguerite expressed her interest in creating a theatrical opportunity for members of Community Access Unlimited to team with members of the community in what became the first fully integrated theatre troupe in Union County, the CAU Community Players. With a 36-year background in performing arts education, Marguerite served as director and brought in choreographer Alyson Monaco. In June 2012 Marguerite's vision came to life as

In this Issue

From the Desk of the Executive Director.....Page 3

Board Member Lisa Geider ...Page 3

TD Bank Sees Fruits of SupportPage 4

A Road Less Traveled ...Page 5

CAU Named Statewide Support Coordination Agency....Page 5

Prom Night 2013Page 6

TOP Annual Youth Conference: Waiting on My Moment...Page 6

Fore!.....Page 7

Beauty & the Beast Shines.....Page 8

2013 Awards Night.....Page 9

Celebrating Performance & Achievement.....Page 10

Marion Keeps Rolling..Page 11

*Wilkinson... continued from page 1*

cohesive than ones in which the gap between the rich and poor is greater.

Wilkinson also is cofounder of The Equality Trust, which he launched in 2009 with Bill Kerry and Kate Pickett. The idea for the Trust was developed in 2007 after Richard and Kate secured a publishing deal for "The Spirit Level" and Bill recognized the potential for a campaign based on their evidence. They established an advisory group to help them shape the organization and worked with the Sheila McKechnie Foundation to develop their vision and strategy. In 2008 the Trust was awarded two-year funding by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

In November 2009, a new short campaign called One Society was set up in association with The Equality Trust to highlight the negative effects of income inequality, showcase research and policy solutions and bring together people and organizations in support of a more equal society.

Wilkinson has said, "The average well-being of our societies is not dependent any longer on national income and economic growth... But the differences between us and where we are in relation to each other now matter very much."

Dinsmore... continued from page 1

with day-to-day oversight of 750 employees and five divisions. Services include programs for older adults, youth at risk, persons living with disabilities and individuals and families facing economic challenges. She has developed and implemented community needs assessments, facilitated consensus-building with public and private service providers and implemented inclusive, community-driven processes for distribution of a variety of social service funds. Karen exemplifies a commitment to service and believes that working for the public is both an honor and one of the greatest responsibilities.

Karen is noted for her skills in strategic planning, community outreach, government, community development, program development, grant writing and fundraising.

Karen holds a master of public administration degree from the Robert Wagner School of Public Service at New York University and a bachelor of psychology degree from Drew University. She is a member of the American Society for Public Administration and of Union County NJ Non-Profits and Partners. Karen was raised in Westfield, where she developed a devotion to football, hard work and lifelong friendships.

Modero ... continued from page 1

the theatrical group produced its first musical, "Seussical Jr.," with a cast of 56 of CAU members, staff and members of the community. The production drew more than 800 attendees during its three performances.

This January over 80 people auditioned for the CAU Community Players' 2013 performance, "Beauty & The Beast Jr." Due to Marguerite's vision, months of hard work, dedication and her enthusiasm for working with the cast, the performances this past June were even more successful.

Marguerite has more than 45 shows to her directing credits, performed by schools, church groups and community theatre groups. She taught vocal and instrumental music along with performing arts and gifted and talented classes in the Garwood Public Schools for 36 years. Marguerite received the Governor's Teacher Recognition Award in 1992 and was selected as a member of the New Jersey Symphony's "Master Music Teacher" of 2010. Marguerite also received the Governor's Award for Excellence in Arts Education later that year. She has served as an evaluator for the Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star Awards Program for the past 11 seasons.

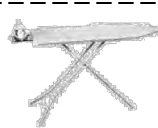
After retiring from public school teaching this past June, Marguerite plans to spend more time advocating for arts and performance opportunities for those with disabilities on the local and state level.

Make a Difference in the Life of a Youth!

With the assistance of a Hope Chest, our youth are able to live independently and setup their own households

If you can donate one or more of the following items, our members would greatly appreciate it

Your generosity will give those just starting out an important first step on the road to self sufficiency in the community!



Kitchen Essentials

- Plates
- Silverware
- Knives
- Glassware
- Pots & Pans
- Cooking Utensils
- Kitchen Towels

Bath/Shower Essentials

- Assorted Toiletry Items
- Towels
- Bath Mats
- Shower Curtain
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste

Bedroom Essentials

- Bedding (single, 2 sets)
- Pillows
- Curtains
- Alarm Clock

Miscellaneous Essentials

- Luggage
- Laundry Basket
- Microwave
- Iron
- Ironing Board
- Toaster Oven
- Trash Can

For more information or to make a donation, please contact:
Cara Pavia,
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908-354-3040 x376
or at
cpavia@caunj.org



From the Desk of the Executive Director

We are at a very important juncture in New Jersey. The state is moving away from providing contract reimbursement to agencies serving people with disabilities to a fee-for-service model that better reflects the value of the services being provided. This is wonderful news for our members and people with disabilities throughout New Jersey because it will further empower them in controlling their supports and solidifying their independence within the community.

As people with disabilities shop for their support services, those agencies that provide the best value will be the ones they select. At CAU we provide a greater array of support and do so more efficiently than other service providers, making us the provider of choice for more than 4,000 people. In addition, our financial strength – CAU has more than \$40 million in assets and only \$2 million in debt – combines with our wide continuum of care to enable us to custom-design the support we provide our members while continually expanding our programs and services. This gives us an advantage in supporting people with disabilities and youth – the CAU Advantage.

And we have an advantage in nearly every category of support.

Housing – In the last three years we added 27 new housing properties, bringing our total to 206, and we have 29 more properties in progress. No other agency in New Jersey provides this level of community housing.

Supports – We believe that all our supports should enable our members to lead independent, productive lives in the community. Comprising vocational and life skills training, money management, education, social life and personal growth, advocacy and self-directed services, our support programs provide a continuum of care that is unmatched in the state.

Staffing – At CAU we have stability in staffing that is unheard of in the human services sector. Eighteen percent of our staff has been with CAU for more than five years and 40 percent of our supervisory personnel have been promoted into their positions.

Added Value – CAU provides benefits to our members that no other agency offers, including computer and car donations and funds and scholarships for everything from a new suit for a job interview to advocacy to life stability.

That is the CAU Advantage and you'll be hearing more about it in the future. Stay tuned.

With deepest gratitude,



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Board Member Profile: Lisa Geider ... an old friend coming home

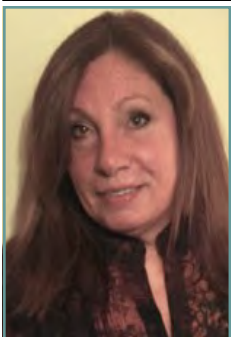
When Lisa Geider joined the CAU board of trustees late last year she was coming home. Lisa worked for CAU as director of human resources for 10 years before moving on to her current position as a business partner to the Girl Scouts USA. Yet in a way, she never really left.

Lisa has worked in the nonprofit sector her entire career. She served as a youth therapist, a rehabilitation therapist for substance abuse and a crisis intervention worker. At the Girl Scouts she provides strategic and practical support to Girl Scout councils throughout the Southwest. The councils support the scouts and volunteers.

"I've always worked in nonprofits," Lisa said. "I believe in contributing to the community." That led her back to CAU.

"I enjoy working with people," she said. "Being around people I am able to utilize my strong competencies and I really want to make a difference. That's why I'm so happy to be on the board of CAU. It's a board and organization that makes a difference in the lives of people with disabilities and youth who might not have that advantage otherwise. I get to see the difference that my contributions and the contributions of others can make in the lives of people."

Lisa received her bachelor of arts degree in psychology from Fairfield University in Connecticut and her master of arts degree in personnel psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University.





TD Bank Sees the Fruits of their Support

Representatives of TD Bank, a key business supporter of Community Access, were able to see first-hand how their support has helped CAU create the CAU Advantage when they visited two agency properties this summer. The bankers toured CAU's 12-unit complex being built in Elizabeth that was partially funded by a \$100,000 Housing for Everyone affordable housing grant from the TD Charitable Foundation. At CAU's Chestnut Street property in Roselle bank officials formalized a new \$1.5 million line of credit that will enable CAU to continue expanding its housing services.

The visit came at a time when New Jersey is closing two of its developmental centers and moving away from providing contract reimbursement to agencies serving people with disabilities to a fee-for-service model that better reflects the value of the services being provided.

TD Bank visitors were able to see how CAU is ideally positioned for this change. CAU provides a fuller array of supports and services and does so more efficiently than other organizations. This CAU Advantage makes the agency the provider of choice for more than 4,000 people and will serve to draw more and more people with disabilities to the agency.

"The CAU Advantage includes our core services of employment and income development, housing, social life, health, money management and personal growth," said Sid Blanchard, CAU executive director. "These programs are supported by our financial strength. In addition, unlike many other nonprofits, CAU owns all our properties, financed through lending institutions such as TD Bank rather than government bonds."

This financial independence and wide continuum of care enables CAU to custom-design the support it provides each member while continually expanding programs and services, Sid told the visiting bankers.

"We help people live real lives in the community and provide the support they need when they need it," he said. "And our financial model enables us to continually reinvest in programs and staff and provide more support to more people. That's the CAU Advantage. We're there to build supports one person at a time."

"TD is proud to support CAU in these efforts," said Nicholas Miceli, market president for TD Bank.

"They are a dedicated organization that really gets a lot done," he said when visiting the property funded by the TD Charitable Foundation grant. "We're delighted to be able to support them and this project is going to be a long-term asset to the community."



CAU Executive Director Sid Blanchard and Mary Jane, vice president at TD Bank sign a \$1.5 million line of credit TD Bank is providing CAU while the others look on.



Sid Blanchard reviews the plans for a 12-unit housing property being built by CAU and partially funded by a grant from the TD Charitable Foundation with TD Bank's (left to right) Nicholas Miceli, market president for the Greater New York City Area; Michael Carbone, regional president of TD Bank's Metro PA/NJ Market; Martin Melilli, regional vice president for commercial lending; and Mary Jane McDonough, vice president, senior commercial lender.

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www.caunj.org/forms/subscribe.php

For any questions, please contact:
Cara Pavia, Marketing & Fundraising Coordinator
at cpavia@caunj.org



A Road Less Traveled Now has a New Rider

A dream come true was turning into a nightmare. Michelle Purri had been accepted into the exclusive Career and Community Studies (CCS) program of The College of New Jersey. The CCS program is a selective, four year post-secondary education opportunity for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to further explore their academic and career opportunities which enrolls only 10 students each year. Michelle resides in Hunterdon County and wanted to live at home and commute to college, as so many other young people opt to do each year.

That's where Michelle's dream turned scary. Michelle had never received supports provided under the age of 21 from the Division of Developmental Disabilities yet her mother, Anne Marie J. Sima, discovered now when she most needed help, no transportation supports were available. Transportation for people with disabilities does not cross county lines. So Anne Marie contacted the governor's office, Republican and Democratic state representatives and many government agencies yet to no avail. She considered quitting her job to enable Michelle to live her dream.

The irony is that as New Jersey transitions into a period where people with disabilities are being given greater control of their supports, Michelle and Anne Marie were finding no transportation supports that were available to Michelle.

"True self determination is based upon the individual's choice, not preconceived options derived from government agencies directives," Anne Marie said. "In true optimism, I believed there had to be viable options available and readily accessible."

Michelle and Anne Marie found that option at Community Access Unlimited. After Anne Marie explained her frustrations to CAU's associate executive director, Mercedes Witowsky, an intake team visited Michelle and her mother at home. Now, Michelle will commute to the CCS program in CAU transport.

"(CAU) quickly set into place a series of events to successfully implement Michelle's transportation," Anne Marie said. "The genuine understanding of our unique supports needs and the professional and knowledgeable staff should be commended. As Michelle begins her new journey of attending TCNJ, it will be on the road less traveled, across county lines with Community Access Unlimited."

CAU Named DDD Support Coordination Agency for all New Jersey Counties outside of Union County

CAU has recently been named as one of a handful of agencies that will provide Support Coordination services for individuals with disabilities across New Jersey as part of the State's new Supports Program. This is a entirely new process for individuals with disabilities and their families to self direct supports and services.

CAU has been providing support coordination type services to individuals with disabilities for over 10 years through our Personal Preference Program (PPP) and we are excited to be able to expand our statewide assistance in support coordination for individuals within DDD. Many of our multi-lingual staff of over 30 highly trained coordinators are ready to assist in accessing the most comprehensive support to help individuals with disabilities and their families decide how to plan for today and well into the future.

CAU support coordinators will assist in discovering the potential of each individual, how supports and services can be utilized to reach that potential, how to develop an individual support plan, coordinate and monitor the plan and services. We are dedicated to making sure that through teaming with our support coordination team, every individuals receive a plan that helps them live a healthy and happy life.



Ready to buy a new car?
Not happy with dealer trade-in values?
Consider Donating Your Car to the CAU

Vehicle Donation Program

Your tax-deductible donation (to the extent provided by law) of a used car in good condition will help an individual with special needs get to a job or school and live more self sufficiently, expanding their opportunities in employment, education, and socialization.



Unlike other car donation programs, CAU does not take cars and sell them, receiving only a percentage of its value.

100% of your donation goes to a person with transportation needs and you can claim 100% of the fair market value of your donation!

If you're interested in donating your car or would like more information about this program, please contact:

Cara Pavia, Coordinator of Marketing & Fundraising
908-354-3040 x376 cpavia@caunj.org



Prom Night at CAU

While prom night for high school seniors lasts just one evening, at CAU prom night allows members to return to their youth and enjoy an evening of celebration again and again. This year's prom, which is sponsored by Helping Hands, drew more than 100 members and agency staff.

"It's just a chance for everybody to get dressed up and relive their youth by attending our prom," Rolando Zorrilla said.

Rolando noted the prom is an evening when couples at CAU can celebrate their relationships while other members feel comfortable coming alone.

"We believe it's important to celebrate relationships and lives our members share with their significant others," he said. "At the same time everyone is welcome so not everyone attends as a couple. They come together as a group and put everything else aside. They're just there to have a good time."

Mark Bloom and Marcella Truppa attend the prom every year. This year they combined the outing with Marcella's birthday.

"The food was good and we had two cakes," Mark said. "They had great music and everybody was dancing."

"We look forward to the prom all year," Marcella said. "We enjoy it. It's really nice."

Both encourage other members to take advantage of not only the annual prom but also the array of social activities and programs CAU offers members throughout the year.

"If members go to the prom they'll know what it feels like to take part in the events," Mark said. "We're trying to get more members to enjoy everything CAU has to offer."



Rose Veale and James Emann, members of CAU, attending the Prom



CAU Member Stephen Drake has captured Megan Modero's heart at Prom



(above) CAU Staff from the Transitional Opportunities Program (TOP) gather as they kick off the Annual Youth Conference.
(left) Keynote speaker Romane Paul, posing with CAU director of shelter services, Julia Leftwich.

Success to teach the attendees about being successful, Let's Talk About Sex and Substance Abuse Awareness. Listen Up Staff was a workshop for adults who work with youth.

"I got a lot out of it," said CAU member Deja Benjamin. "We did a lot of workshops about empowerment, job seeking and aging out. You have to come wanting to change and wanting to be a better person. You have to know what your goals are and want you want out of life and that is what this conference is about, empowering ourselves."

Just Waiting on My Moment

A moment can be a lifetime. That was the message of Romane Paul, keynote speaker at the 2013 TOP Annual Youth Conference. The theme of this year's conference was Just Waiting on Your Moment yet Paul spoke about how living your moment can translate into a lifetime of rewards.

The Youth Conference brings together at-risk youth from throughout the state and provides them with a day of workshops and events to unite and teach them, according to Julia Leftwich, CAU's director of shelter services. This year's conference drew 159 youth and 32 adults who work with young people.

"What we wanted them to get out of the conference is that there is more to life than what they have gone through to this point," Julia said. "Success is just around the corner."

Paul pointed to celebrities Oprah Winfrey and Jay-Z who knew a lot of trouble in their youth, as examples of those who have "lived their moment" throughout their lives. Yet a person does not need to be rich or famous to have succeeded in living their moment, Paul told the audience.

"It has everything to do with you deciding I'm ready to live in my moment," he said.

The conference workshops were designed to help attendees do that, according to Julia. They comprised Man Up, Girl Talk and Next Steps to



CAU Staff from the Transitional Opportunities Program gather with Romane Paul after he addressed the youth attendees at the annual youth conference.



CAU Supporters Score High at 2013 Golf Outing

The scores were low but the results high as friends and community partners of CAU gathered to support the agency's members and programs at our 19th Annual Golf Classic this May at Suburban Golf Club. The event raised more than \$44,000.

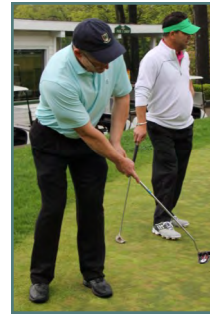
Once again topping the leader board of support for the event was Innovative Benefit Planning, an employee benefit planning and financial services company, which was the outing's reception sponsor.

"We support CAU because of the work they do in the community," said Mark Sulpizio, the firm's cofounder. "We support not-for-profit-related clients. Also, my wife's sister lives in a group home (so) we have experience with the work CAU does and the guidance they provide people in the community."

Other event sponsors included TD Bank; The Spire Group, PC; So-phier Financial Group; Elizabeth Pharmacy; Union Avenue Pharmacy; Woodruff Developers; James R. Guerra, Architects & Planners; WM S. Rich & Son; and Y.Com Security Systems.

"CAU cannot fulfill our mission of enabling people with disabilities and at-risk youth to live fulfilling lives in the community without the support of our community partners," said Sid Blanchard, CAU executive director.

Thank You to all of our Sponsors & Players!



Wayne Kenny (left) joined by Martin Poltrock, Eric Reitter, and Gordon Blake



(left) Bob D'Alia, Bob Fischbein, Board of Trustees Member Harold Poltrock, and Assemblyman Jon Bramnick enjoying a great day outside!



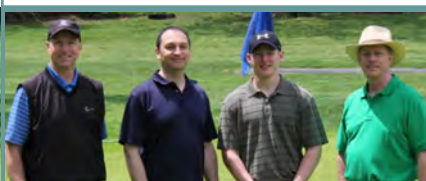
Stephen Hehl, Joe Paparo, and Michael Minitelli join Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr at the Golf Outing.



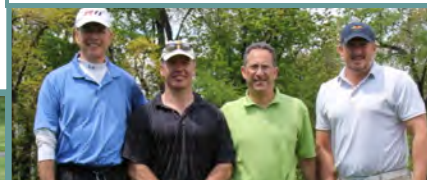
CAU Exec. Director Sid Blanchard poses with CAU member Tim McLorin and TD Bank Senior Vice President, Mimi McDonough at the reception immediately following a great day on the links.



Thank you to our reception Sponsor, Mark Sulpizio of Innovative Benefit Planning (right) joined by colleagues Ryan Kastner, Patrick Kameen, & Fred Davis.



(right) Board of Trustee member Robert Griffin joins Brian Griffin, Deam Semer, and James Griffin for a round of golf.



Long time supporter Dr. Juan Grana of SarahCare Adult Day Health Center joins colleagues Robert Thomaier, Travis Sittig and Mark Lalin to help support Community Access Unlimited

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“Beauty and the Beast Jr.” Moves Audiences

The 2013 production of the CAU Community Players, “Beauty and the Beast Jr.,” was powerful and moving not only because of the performances on stage but also due to what went into the three-night presentation – love and compassion, understanding and patience, respect and a belief in one’s abilities to achieve and succeed. The CAU Community Players is a combined troupe of CAU members with disabilities and performers from the wider community and “Beauty and the Beast Jr.” was its second production.

The play was a triumph for the cast and audience, a joy to behold during three performances at Jonathan Dayton High School in Springfield June 28-30. This year’s cast included 84 members, a cross-section of seasoned community theater veterans, high school and elementary school students and CAU members. The troupe was established in 2011 to encourage CAU members to collaborate with the community and to stage theatrical performances.

“Beauty and the Beast Jr.” is the tale of very different people finding strength in one another and learning how to love. In the story Maurice becomes lost in the woods. He seeks shelter in an old castle but the master of the castle is a horrible beast that takes him captive. Maurice’s daughter, Belle, must give up her freedom to save his life. Belle’s interaction with the other characters, which are very different from her, and her eventual taming of the unfortunate Beast and his ultimate transformation back into a handsome prince teach a lesson of accepting and embracing those who are different.

“This is an ideal production for the CAU Community Players because it parallels the message embedded in everything we do at Community Access Unlimited,” said Sid Blanchard, CAU executive director. “The CAU Community Players, both those with disabilities and those without, interacting, working together and staging this wonderful production demonstrate the value that comes from acceptance.”

“I love the play. It gives me a good feeling that I was chosen for the part and that I have talent,” said CAU member Joyce Cargle, who portrayed the Aristocratic Lady.

CAU member Willie White said he enjoyed rehearsals and was inspired to refine his acting skills. He has enrolled in an acting class that will be taught by fellow cast member Keith Radzion, who portrayed Cogsworth in the production.

“I want to try and advance and do more things as an actor,” Willie said.

Matt Kommeyer was a non-CAU member of the cast who portrayed Lumiere. He praised the entire cast.

“There’s just so much love in this group,” he said. “I truly feel we are a family.”

The production was attended by more than 900 people and raised more than \$8,600 to support continue this great effort.



(Left) Matt Kornmeyer as Lumiere, Kelsey Durkin as Belle, and CAU staff member Keith Radzion, as Cogsworth in “Be Our Guest” musical number.



(Left to right) CAU Board of Trustee Member Myrta Rosa, Annie Paloff assisted by Jetaya Clayborne, and Tina Witowsky assisted by Silvana Viera as they portray a salt shaker, tea cups and saucers in the “Be Our Guest” scene.



(above) CAU Community Players (from left) Willie White, James Crawford, Keith Louis and Joyce Cargle, who are people with disabilities, perform in the opening scene.

(Left) 35 members of CAU members and staff were a part of the Beauty & the Beast Production



All photos courtesy of Greg & Flor Holmes of Images by GVDH.

Additional pictures can be found at:
<http://gdvh.smugmug.com/>



Saying Thanks...

CAU's 29th Annual Awards Night Celebration once again honored our community partners and celebrated the accomplishments of our members and staff. This year we recognized 10 community partners who play integral roles in supporting our members and/or helping CAU achieve our mission while sharing in our values.

This year we honored individuals and organizations that help us fulfill our mission of enabling members to: integrate into and live independently within the community; enjoy the rewards of employment; achieve full educational opportunities; and live healthy lives, both physically and spiritually.

The 2013 award winners were:

The Westlake School in Westfield – Educator of the Year for providing CAU members with a nurturing educational experience.

Yoga instructor Donna Bacich – Community Service Award for providing yoga services to CAU members and donating time and energy to the agency.

TD Charitable Foundation – Supported Housing Service Award for ongoing financial support in creating housing to enable members to live independently within the community.

Reverend Dr. Larry Dixon, senior pastor at the Mount Teman AME Church in Elizabeth – Citizen of the Year for embracing CAU members within his congregation and advocating for justice for all people.

Jamie Roberts of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency – Youth Advocate of the Year for his commitment to and rapport with CAU youth members.

Dr. Kate Haller of the Developmental Disabilities Center – Health Care Professional of the Year for her personal attention to CAU members.

Savita Persaud of the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities – Distinguished Social Service Award for her partnership with CAU in helping residents of New Jersey's closing developmental centers transition into community living.

Michael Pollack – Volunteer of the Year for tutoring and mentoring CAU member Pearl Elias.

Community Food Bank of New Jersey – Employer of the Year for providing CAU members with employment opportunities.

The Community Living Education Project – Community Education Partnership Award for enlightening people with disabilities, their families and staff of organizations serving them about their options for transitioning into community living. The Project has been working closely with CAU to enable residents of the closing developments centers and their families to learn about CAU programs and properties.

"Of the many people and organizations we meet and work with, some truly share the values we hold dear to us and stand out among the rest," said Tanya Johnson, CAU's senior assistant executive director, youth services, and the evening's emcee. "The community partners we are recognizing tonight provide support to our members that is essential to our mission and so important to their fulfillment."

CAU also honored the accomplishments of its members at the dinner, including independent living, recreation, education and employment. The agency recognized 65 employed members marking a combined 677 years of employment service. Staff members from CAU's various areas were honored, as well, including those marking a combined 366 years service.



CAU Executive Director, Sid Blanchard awarding the CAU Employee of the Year to CAU member Anthony Howard for his exemplary work as a security guard at the CAU main office.



CAU Director of Intake, Billy Busch beside Savita Persaud of the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities awarded the Distinguished Social Service Award



CAU Members Mary Kurnos and Mark Straka receiving awards and much thanks for 20 years of hard work and dedication as full time employees of CAU



Over 30 employees receive much thanks for their 5 year dedication to adults with disabilities and at-risk youth in Union County.



(Back Row Left-Right) Union County Freeholders Alexander Mirabella and Mohamed Jalloh; (Front Row Left-Right) Union County Freeholder Bruce Bergen, CAU Executive Director Sid Blanchard, Lisa Knothe, director of human resources for the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski, and Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi.



(Left CAU Exec. Director Sid Blanchard, Renee Rattigan, vice president for field marketing manager for TD Bank, and Martin Melilli, regional vice president for commercial lending.



Celebrating Member Accomplishments

Once again this summer CAU celebrated the achievements of a number of our members who made noted progress during the year, honoring them at Performance Recognition Night and Youth Achievement Night.

Eleven members were honored at Performance Recognition Night for achieving set goals designed to strengthen their independent living skills. Winners are selected based on advancements made during the year in categories that include behavioral, physical and social skills and advocacy.

Thirty-two CAU youth members were honored at Youth Achievement Night. Categories ranged from Most Likely to Succeed and the Valedictorian Award for academics to the Wall Street Award for budgeting and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Award for advocacy.

Melissa Perkins is a part-time counselor at CAU who served as the keynote speaker at Youth Achievement Night yet her message was applicable for all CAU members.

"Don't let your history hold you hostage to your circumstances," she said. "Embrace the truth of your greatness. It doesn't matter where you started. It only matters where you finish."



CAU member Ronnie Moses receiving his award for Supportive Living Apartment Program from Assistant Director of Residential, Godfrey Onyinkwa.



CAU Member Elizabeth Welch posing with Senior Assistant Executive Director over Youth Services, Tanya Johnson



Sheila Palmer (left) receiving her award from presenter Carline Dumay (right)

Supervised Apartment Program Awards

Beverly Williams Timothy McLorin
Joseph Johnson Jason Marrero
Marjorie Pryor

Supportive Living Apartment Program Awards

Sara Jane Feinblatt Sheila Palmer
Ronnie Moses Amanda Strond

CSP Program Award

Howards Daniel Speer

Recreation Program Award

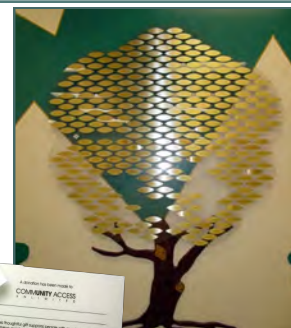
Megan Modero

Youth Achievement Night Winners

Most Likely to Succeed – Phillip West, Deja Benjamin
Class President – Saheela Jones-Crews, Jair Bodnar
Wall Street for Budgeting – Joshua Peters, Britney Coleman
Butterfly for Improvement – Isbrionna Mitchen
Dr. Martin Luther King for Advocacy – Kenneth Archie, Omar Anthony Carter
Creativity – Jacob Bezama, Tanta-Nasha Coles
Best Foot Forward – Elizabeth Welch
Valedictorian – Jonathan Kindle
Solitarian – Quameerah Anthony, Brittney Brown

Remember a Loved One or Special Occasion - Purchase a leaf on CAU's Tree Of Life

Personalize a message on the Tree of Life located at CAU's Main Office Write your message below and mail back to order a leaf ... Cost of a Leaf: \$50



Tell Someone You're Thinking of Them...

Consider sending a Tribute Card from CAU!

1 card for \$1, 3 cards for \$10

Cards can be purchased and personalized and we will take care of the rest, or we can send you the supplies if you'd like to attach your own message!

For more information on CAU's
Tree of Life or
Tribute Cards, please call
908-354-3040 x272



Community Access Unlimited will host the

15th Annual Ira Geller Walk-a-thon!

Saturday, September 21, 2013



Event Starts: 12:00 Noon
Warinanco Park, Roselle NJ

Grab your family & friends and join us for a day of fun!

Walk with us in honor of CAU member, Ira Geller

Followed by BBQ—Boardwalk Games—
Face Painting—Sand Art—Live DJ—Prizes
AND SO MUCH MORE!



Form a Company Walk Team or Volunteer with us!

Form a Company Walk team—Teams can have an unlimited number of participants & are asked to raise \$100 per member of their team! Volunteer the day of the event as well!

Corporate Sponsorships are available! Get your name out in the community while supporting a great cause!

All proceeds from the event go directly to assisting adults with developmental disabilities & at-risk youth in Union County live independently in the community.



Contact Cara Pavia, Event Coordinator with questions
cpavia@caunj.org or at 908 354 3040 x376
or visit us at www.cauj.org



Marion Simmons Keeps Rolling

Last we saw Marion Simmons she was graduating Lincoln University in Pennsylvania with a double bachelor's degree in sociology and human services. She was preparing for a summer internship at the New Jersey Office of Adolescent Services before beginning her post-graduate work toward a master's degree at West Chester University in Pennsylvania.

Let's see how her summer went.

At the Office of Adolescent Services Marion joined a team of 16, working on the educational stability side of the office.

"I worked on a lot of different projects," she said. "My partner, Kaysie Getty, and I created a program called Reality Check to help kids who have aged out of care. It's a way to encourage them to stay in care as long as they can, as well as to teach them life skills. We had to create a proposal and objectives. That was a great learning experience because I had never done that before."

Their proposal was accepted and now Marion and Kaysie are creating a business plan to promote the program to organizations such as CAU.

Marion also did some traveling this summer, although not leisurely. She attended two youth advocacy conferences in Washington, D.C. and is quickly gaining national recognition for her accomplishments and expertise.

Marion now is part of the National Resource Center for Youth Development Young Adult Training and Technical Assistance (YATTA) Network and attended the National Foster Care Coalition, Financial Literacy Listen Session, which focused on financial issues of youth in care. Marion spoke about her financial experiences and what she has learned.

In attendance were representatives of Child Focus, Inc., a Connecticut nonprofit serving children and their families. They were so impressed by Marion that they sponsored her attendance at the Pathways Conference that brought together youth and caregivers to share ideas and strategies for helping youth make the transition out of foster care. Marion served on a panel.

"I think about what I've been through and where I came from and I've done a 180," Marion said. "I really feel blessed by the experiences and the ability to network with people from all over. It's an amazing feeling."



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ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 225
Elizabeth, NJ

80 West Grand Street
Elizabeth, NJ 07202
Phone: 908-354-3040 TTY/TTD: 908-354-4629
Fax: 908-354-2665 www.caunj.org

Community Access Unlimited's Mission: *To provide community access through effective and comprehensive support services for people with disabilities and at-risk youth, giving them the opportunity to live independently and to lead normal and productive lives in the community.*

33RD ANNUAL *Gala Dinner Dance*



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		Quarter Page (3.75"wx 5"h)-	\$50

Ads must be submitted in either 300 dip JPEG or print optimized PDF and emailed to cpavia@caunj.org by **October 4**

For More Information or to reserve your tickets, please contact:
Cara Pavia, Event Coordinator
80 West Grand St. Elizabeth NJ 07202
Phone: 908-354-3040 x 376 Fax: 908-354-2665 Email: cpavia@caunj.org
Reserve Tickets online at www.caunj.org