



The Independent Citizen

Winter 2015

CAU COMMUNITY PLAYERS STAGE, "SHREK THE MUSICAL, JR."

More than 80 actors took the stage this summer for the latest production of the CAU Community Players, "Shrek, The Musical, Jr." "Shrek" was the fifth production for the troupe, with three performances in June drawing more than 1,100 guests.

The CAU Community Players is a troupe of CAU members and actors from the broader community. The annual show allows CAU members to engage in the pleasures of acting, singing and dancing and to be judged for their talents rather than disabilities.

Director Marguerite Modero each year chooses a play that carries a message of inclusion, acceptance and believing in oneself. "That's our message," she said. "I want this to be magical for them."

"Shrek The Musical, Jr." is the story of the lovable ogre finding his swamp invaded by fairytale misfits banished by Lord Farquaad. Shrek faces Lord Farquaad and is tasked with rescuing Princess Fiona from the dragon-guarded tower to regain his swamp. Romance between the princess and Shrek ensues and the play draws to a happy conclusion. The entire troupe closed out the performance singing, "This is Our Story," featuring the lyrics, "We are different and united. We are us and we are you."

Tyler O'Neill played the lead role as Shrek. He said his character taught him to be strong and confident. "No matter how sick or how scared you are, you can be anything," said O'Neill, who attends CAU's Academy of Continuing Education.

Erin Hernon, a junior at Ramapo College, portrayed Princess Fiona. "We became a family working together on something so beautiful," she said.

The show was supported with a grant from the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities. Funding was made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State through a grant administered by the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs.



Jade Light (center) played Pinocchio in Shrek the Musical Jr. alongside CAU members and members of the community.



Save the Date!

The Music Man Jr. is set to perform:

**Friday, June 24, 2016
7:30 PM**

**Saturday, June 25, 2016
7:30 PM**

**Sunday, June 26, 2016
2:00 PM**

Location: Jonathan Dayton High School, Springfield, NJ

For more information, visit:
www.caunj.org

Or contact Luis Ayala at
908-354-3040 x216
layala@caunj.org



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ACADEMY OF CONTINUING EDUCATION OPENS ITS DOORS TO PERSONAL SUCCESS

This spring CAU concluded the first year of classes at its Academy of Continuing Education (ACE), a situational learning program for individuals with disabilities who recently graduated from public education or who are looking for a unique and exciting alternative to traditional day supports. Twenty-five students aged 18 to their 50s participated. Half of the total participants were CAU members and the other half included members of the wider community.

ACE offers students a learning situation tailored to each participant. The program's hand-on and participatory approach focuses on problem-solving, self-help, daily living, creativity, specific leisure interests and skills that can be applied in developing career pursuits, as well as expanding dreams and vision for future employment. Each ACE student learns about themselves and becomes better equipped to chart their personal path for a successful future.



CAU member Dipen Tavari, participates in the Music Appreciation class



CAU member Tonya Hopson (left) and Mary Kurnos (right) enjoy showing off and selling their jewelry at a jewelry sale put on by the Jewelry Design class.

The academy is led by Marguerite Modero, an award-winning educator with nearly four decades of involvement in education. Curricula available from the state have been incorporated to ensure a quality and comprehensive learning experience for every student.

"Our focus is to promote life-long learning and personal growth," Marguerite said. "Many times abilities or talent in academics or fine arts may go undiscovered or overlooked. ACE gives each student the opportunity to reflect and self-actualize, leading to a new level of performance due to their in-class experiences. It has been very gratifying to see the high level of effort being put forth by our students during class and their personal desire to succeed in their pursuits."

Marguerite said the first year produced many success stories.

"For example, in the reading and writing class, as a class we composed a poem about their thoughts about disabilities and overcoming challenge," she said. "This gave them a chance to express themselves and do it in a creative way."

In addition, those participating in Jewelry Design sold their jewelry throughout the year. "In addition to the aesthetic pleasure of their work they received monetary benefits," Marguerite said. "Some of them are excited to set up their own business. Through the arts we're helping them find a career path."

The 2015-2016 term began in September with a total of 40 participants, 20 being CAU members and 20 members of the wider community participating.

Interested in taking a class through the Academy for Continuing Education?
Contact us to set up an interview:
908-354-3040 x275 or mmodero@caunj.org



CAU member John Drescher (left) featured with Robert Rocco, adjunct professor at Kean University and Terrell Ross (right) demonstrating the unique invention of the Radio Baton.

"WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER" COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY CONCERT

January 7, 2016 Students from the Academy for Continuing Education (ACE) and members of CAU performed in a collaborative community concert with members of the Kean University choir and Roselle Park School District.

This concert will include performances by the combined choirs of Kean University, Roselle Park School District and Community Access Unlimited members and solo performances by CAU members and community members: Tina Witowsky, Tyler O'Neill, Jade Light, and Megan Modero.

The night also included a performance of Beethoven's 5th Symphony conducted on a unique invention called the Radio Baton by John Drescher and Terrell Ross (pictured left). There are only 10 batons of its kind so this was quite a rare and exciting experience for both!

CAU is excited to continue to explore these collaborative opportunities for members and people in the community. Stay tuned for more information!



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Now in our 36th year, Community Access Unlimited is positioned to meet another milestone, one we believe to be a launching pad for an exciting new period in our growth. As New Jersey moves away from providing contract reimbursement to agencies serving people with disabilities to a fee-for-service model, allowing people with disabilities throughout New Jersey to control their supports and solidifying their independence within the community.

Essentially, people with disabilities will be empowered with greater choices and self-determination. As they select their support services, those agencies that best fit with their personal goals and those who provide the highest quality services will be the ones they select.

After 36 years of creating and custom-designing services for our members and developing programs as we see new needs arise, CAU provides a greater array of support and does so more efficiently than other service providers, making us the provider of choice for more than 6,000 people. In addition, after 36 years of honing a successful business model, CAU stands upon a foundation of financial strength few human services agencies enjoy – with more than \$60 million in assets, with minimal debt.

This innovation in programming and unique financial independence enables us to provide this broad and diverse continuum of care and continually expand our programs and services. This gives us an advantage in supporting people with disabilities, youth, and people with affordable housing needs.. That's the CAU Advantage – one that will carry us forward.

Through valuable partnerships with state government, local businesses, and supportive community partners like you, we can provide individuals with special needs with the tools to make a smooth transition into the community, and the supports to help them live independently in our community. We are happy to be here to help so many and will continue to do so for a very long time.

Best wishes to all of our members, families, staff, friends and most generous supporters. I wish you all a very Happy Holidays!

With deepest gratitude,

Sid Blanchard



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BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: MAXINE “MICKEY” NEUHAUSER The Volunteer

Maxine “Mickey” Neuhauser’s children recently gave her a coffee mug with the phrase, “Stop Me Before I Volunteer Again.” Fortunately for CAU and our members, Mickey already had joined the agency’s Board of Trustees by then. This is Mickey’s second stint on the board, having served six years in the 1990s, three as president. Yet while family and career demands pulled her away, she never stopped being a friend to CAU.

“It’s very important to give back, to be an example to my children and my colleagues,” she said. “The most rewarding part of being a board member is being a part of helping the organization move forward.” Yet most important to Mickey is CAU’s mission.

“Community Access recognizes the fundamental personhood of all its members, that because people have disabilities does not provide a reason to exclude them from our society,” she said. “We have an obligation to work toward inclusion and recognition of personhood and to foster independence and allow people choice in how they live their lives.”

Mickey carries that passion into other parts of her life, as well. She is a member of the law firm Epstein Becker Green, where she founded the Women’s Initiative. She holds a bachelor of arts degree from Tufts University, a master’s of science from Syracuse University and her Juris Doctor from Rutgers University School of Law. Mickey also teaches English as a Second Language at the Plainfield Public Library as a member of Literacy Volunteers and is active in the Tri-Women of Scotch Plains-Fanwood-Westfield, and last year completed her first marathon.





CAU HONORS THOSE WHO HELP US HELP OUR MEMBERS

In October CAU honored three of our community partners at our 2015 Annual Gala Dinner Dance for helping CAU to fulfill our mission of enabling our members to live independent lives within the greater community.

Those honored were Union County Sheriff Joseph Cryan with the Public Leadership Award; Pastor Howard Bryant with the Humanitarian of the Year Award; and the Financial Literacy Program at Valley National Bank with the Ira Geller Award.

Cryan was sworn in as Union County Sheriff on January 1 after serving as administrative undersheriff for 11 years. He also served in the New Jersey Assembly representing the 20th district for 12 years and as Majority Leader for two years. He has been an avid supporter of CAU during his time as an assemblyman and now in his role as county sheriff.



Sid Blanchard presents the Public Leadership Award to Sheriff Joseph Cryan alongside CAU Board Member, Dr. Karen Ensle.



Rev. Pastor Howard Bryant (left) featured along side CAU Executive Director, Sid Blanchard.

"I am honored and humbled to receive this award," Sheriff Cryan said. "I don't think there's a greater organization in the state of New Jersey than Community Access. The people who work at Community Access do things others won't do and I'm privileged to be part of this evening."

Pastor Bryant has led multiple churches in California and New Jersey and has been the executive director of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus; the Protestant Campus Minister at Kean University; the coordinator and instructor of the Arthur Ashe Safe Passage Foundation Tennis Program; and the organizer and administrator of Achieve to Excel, an after-school program. Most recently, Pastor Bryant has taken a leadership position within the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council, which was spearheaded by CAU.

"Being associated with CAU, it reminds me what I'm called to do – be a minister of the gospel," he said. "I'm awed by how this organization reaches out to those who otherwise would not be embraced. I'm honored to be involved with the Interfaith Council, encouraging people to embrace people with disabilities. Everybody is important and needs to have a role in society."

The Ira Geller Award is presented to an individual or an organization with a significant commitment to

CAU, including its members, and best reflects the concept of volunteerism. Through its Financial Literacy Program, Valley National Bank educates youth and adults in the community about the importance of financial literacy and awareness, including members of CAU at its Academy for Continuing Education.

"It's very moving meeting CAU members and seeing the impact our work has on the people of this organization," said Bernadette Mueller, senior community reinvestment act officer and executive vice president at Valley. "We're very committed to all the communities we serve and look to enrich the lives of those around us."

The evening also featured a performance by Kayla Richardson who is blind and a student of music at the Institute of Music for Children. She received a standing ovation after her performance of "What About the Children" and "Walking."



Members of Valley National Bank Financial Literacy Program celebrated with CAU at the Gala Dinner Dance



Kayla Richardson performing at the CAU Gala Dinner Dance.



From left to right, CAU members Asia Lee, Joyce Cargle, Beverly Williams, Marcella Truppa, and Tonya Hopson, are presented certificates of achievement in advocacy at the event by Rolando Zorrilla, Senior Assistant Executive Director of DD Services



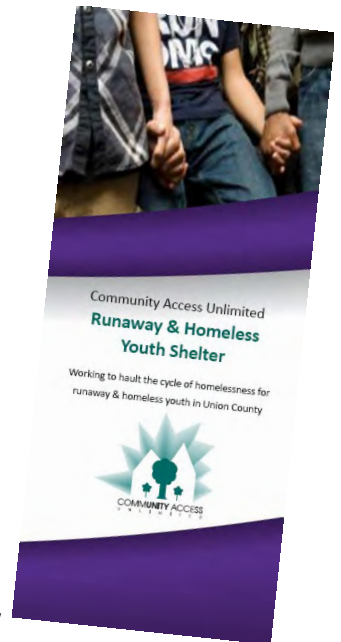
MOBILE OUTREACH: HELP FOR YOUTH ON THE MOVE

According to the National Runaway Safeline, one in five youth run away from home at some point. Between 1.6 and 2.8 million youth runaway in a year and youth aged 12-17 are at higher risk for homelessness than adults. Often, youth cite a conflict between the youth and their parent or guardian or a problem with family dynamic as the primary motivation for running away. Runaway and homeless youth often spend at least one night outside, in a park, on the street, under a bridge, or overhang or on a rooftop.

CAU has provided assistance to runaway and homeless youth at the Union County Runaway Shelter and most recently expanded services to include the Mobile Street Outreach program with the help of the Northfield Bank Foundation who awarded CAU with a \$15,000 grant, and Provident Bank Foundation who awarded CAU with a \$3500 grant earmarked for this specific initiative.

The Mobile Street Outreach program is focused on youth and young adults up to 24 years of age and works to increase the safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency of runaway and/or homeless youth in Union County. Youth identified by the program receive immediate support and access to safe residential shelter. Youth in crisis receive a variety of types of assistance, including but not limited to emergency food and water, hygiene and health & safety kits, street-based education in adopting healthy lifestyle choices, prevention materials, information and referrals, and a place to stay, shower or bathe, and launder clothes.

The supports offered through mobile street outreach and shelter services will provide youth with safety and structure, a sense of belonging and membership, and a chance for independence. More information about the Union County Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelter can be found at www.caunj.org.



WALKING FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Members of CAU were joined by friends, family, volunteers, staff and community partners this September for the 17th Annual Ira Geller Memorial Walk-a-Thon, held at Warinanco Park in Roselle. The event drew more than 400 walkers and donors, who raised over \$50,000 to support CAU's programs.

In addition to the walk itself, the day featured plenty of games and family-friendly activities, as well as healthy food. And the weather could not have been prettier. The Ira Geller Walk-a-thon is dedicated to former member Ira Geller, who was always enthusiastic about the annual walk-a-thon and advocating for adults with developmental disabilities.

"The annual Walk-a-Thon is a wonderful opportunity for our members to spend a few hours outside with each other, our Trustees and staff, family and friends," said Sid Blanchard, CAU executive director. "It's also an opportunity for our community partners to join us and support the event by either walking or sponsoring."





CAU OPENS CUTTING-EDGE MIXED-USE PROPERTY IN FANWOOD

In September CAU held a grand opening of our newest property, located on Terrill Road in Fanwood. The cutting-edge mixed-use property will be home to both CAU members and people from the wider community, including low-income residents, and two commercial businesses.

The grand opening was attended by Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr, Union County Freeholders Bette Jane Kowalski, Alexander Mirabella and Vernell Wright, and representative of TD Bank and Valley National Bank, which helped finance the project through grants.

The new property mixes barrier-free affordable housing units for people with developmental disabilities with those available to residents of all incomes. "CAU housing is based on the belief of integrating people with and without disabilities so they may develop a system of natural supports, such as neighbors," said Sid Blanchard, CAU Executive Director. "We also believe in income integration, which is why we offer units to the wider public. This helps the community realize the positive impact of living with people with disabilities and lessens the discrimination CAU members face.

Sid noted the project was constructed through a partnership of nonprofit, government and private banking. "It is a model we have used in other towns through Union County, which helps the county," he said. "You have a mixture of incomes, uses and types of people. That solidifies a community and adds to its diversity and strength."

The government of Fanwood was extremely supportive of the project.

"This is one of the proudest moments as my tenure as mayor, and I'm in my third term," Mayor Mahr said. "I believe so deeply in the mission of Community Access Unlimited. No matter where you are, we need integrated housing. This is a wonderful example of a public-private partnership with no tax payer dollars involved."

TD Foundation provided CAU with a \$100,000 Housing for Everyone grant for the building. The bank has been a repeat partner with CAU on several of its properties.



Members of the Fanwood government, TD Bank, Valley National Bank, and the local community joined together to welcome home residents at the new Fanwood property.



The new Fanwood mixed-use property features 10 residential units and 1900 sq ft of commercial space.



CAU is happy to be opening our new headquarters in 2016!

"We look for community partners," said Mimi McDonough, vice president, senior commercial lender at TD Bank. "We look for organizations that are doing great things, operating efficiently and filling the needs of the community and CAU meets all those requirements. We want to make a difference in the community and CAU is making a difference in the community."

Valley National Bank provided a \$15,000 grant for the project.

"We have a depth of experience with the nonprofit sector so we have a lot of best practices that were portable to CAU," said Steven Vitale, first vice president, team leader commercial loans at the bank. "These best practices help CAU to grow. CAU is a phenomenal organization. The fact we can help them grow is a banker's dream."

CAU has a number of additional properties throughout Union County under construction to support CAU's ongoing expansion, including a new 5-floored headquarters in Elizabeth, and a new mixed use property in Cranford that will house two new day programs and additional offices.



LEARNING TO STRETCH YOUR HOLIDAY DOLLARS



Featured above is Lynn Swain, Angela Cruz, Aileen Boyle, Mary Ann Beltz, and Mwaura Muroki who are all members of the Valley National Bank Financial Literacy team which conducts Financial Literacy Workshops to members of CAU.

Members of CAU recently learned about budgeting their holiday dollars with the help of a team from Valley National Bank. Valley representatives have been teaching financial literacy at CAU for quite some time and this November they focused on teaching members how to get the most for their holidays dollars.

"We gave them a budget and had them make a list of people they wanted to buy gifts for," said Mary Ann Beltz, vice president and territory sales manager for Valley National. "They had to budget how much they wanted to spend on each person. Then we provided them with catalogs for selecting gifts. If they wanted to go over budget for one person they had to take away from someone else."

The Valley team also taught members about holidays clubs, or savings accounts that enable people to save all year for the holidays – "...so they know they can have more money next year," Mary Ann said.

The holiday budgeting class was just the latest effort by Valley to teach financial literacy to CAU members. Representatives from the bank have been regularly teaching members about an array of financial topics, including general household budgeting, opening and managing checking or savings accounts and money management – for example, how much more food one gets with \$40 shopping at a grocery store and cooking or eating at home versus a deli or restaurant.

They also teach members about starting and running a business – for example, setting up a business, inventory and pricing merchandise.

The latter has become especially popular, as CAU members who take the Jewelry Creation and Merchandising class at CAU's Academy of Continuing Education (ACE) have started their own businesses with the goods they create in the class.

"That was a real eye opener for our students in the jewelry class," said Marguerite Modero, who runs ACE.

The financial literacy classes are open to any member of CAU or ACE, including our youth members – "...because they are getting ready to go out into the world and have to prepare," Marguerite said.

Make a Difference in the Life of Youth!

With the assistance of a Hope Chest, our youth are able to live independently and setup their own households. By donating, you will give people just starting out an important first step on the road to self-sufficient living in the community!!

Hope Chest Needs:

- **Kitchen Essentials**
(Plates, Silverware, Glassware, Knives, 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, Coordinator of Marketing & Fundraising at 908-354-3040 x376 or at cpavia@caunj.org





FORMER GOV. JIM MCGREEVEY SPEAKS AT ANNUAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

Former Gov. Jim McGreevey served as the keynote speaker at the Third Annual Union County Youth Services Networking Conference, hosted by CAU in October. He spoke about the importance of reentry into society by those leaving the criminal justice system and the success Jersey City has had reducing recidivism, or the return to criminal behavior.

"After America's long love affair with incarceration, there is a light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

McGreevey was referring to the success Jersey City has enjoyed enabling those leaving incarceration to reenter society and avoid a return to crime and the growing support for such programs throughout New Jersey and the nation. Today McGreevey serves as the executive director of the Jersey City Employment and Training Committee.



Featured above are members of the Union County Youth Services Steering Committee, keynote speaker Jim McGreevey and Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski.



Featured above is UC Director of Human Services Karen Dinsmore and Maureen Segale Glenn, Director of Community Services for Union County DHS

McGreevey noted that currently 60 percent of those leaving incarceration nationally are re-indicted within three years. Jersey City has reduced that number to 23% by focusing on treatment, housing and employment training for jobs in high demand.

McGreevey applauded those in the audience, which was comprised of more than 250 youth services professionals from the government and nonprofit sectors, for playing an essential role in the effort to reduce recidivism by working with young people within the child services system who are so much at risk.

The conference also featured presentations by Jessica Trombetta, director of the Office of Adolescent Services, and Antonio Lopez, administrator of the Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships, both within the state Department of Children and Family Services. Attendees also were able to take part in workshops covering topics such as employment and housing, after-school recreation and mentoring, domestic violence and gangs, and behavioral health and transitioning to adulthood.

"The purpose of this conference is to network and connect the dots," said Tanya Johnson, senior assistant executive director of youth services at CAU. "To fill in gaps in service, inform attendees about current services and put faces to names. All so we can provide better services to youth within the child services system."

"There is a need for these types of services," said De Lacy Davis, executive director of the Family Support Organization of Union County. "There are people working in agencies providing services who don't know what other providers are offering. You get to hear people say who they are and what they do and you say, 'Ah, I need that service.'"



Presentations were made by Jessica Trombetta (right) and Antonio Lopez during the conference.



The annual conference is the culmination of year-long work by the Union County Youth Services Steering Committee, which comprises 17 public and nonprofit youth services agencies, child advocates, volunteers and faith-based organizations. The committee works during the year to create resources and opportunities for individual professionals and organizations within the Union County child services sector to collaborate, and plans the annual conference..

The conference featured many round-table discussions include those on employment, housing, after-school recreation, mentoring and more.



UNION COUNTY DAY OF PRAYER DRAWS TOGETHER MULTIPLE FAITHS

Amidst a time of international, national and local violence and crises, leaders from more than 40 houses of faith throughout Union County came together this fall for the second Union County Day of Prayer.

"Praying for peace in the midst of violence" featured readings and comments from religious leaders of a number of faiths, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism, as well as music.



More than 300 people were in attendance at this year's Day of Prayer in Westfield, NJ

The Union County Day of Prayer is an interfaith gathering of the faith-based, nonprofit and government communities to unite people from throughout the county regardless of race, religion or disability and to bring greater awareness of the support services available to them.

The event is sponsored by the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council, an organization of 40 interfaith congregations and community-based nonprofits, including CAU, promoting inclusion and creating a clearing house of faith-based, nonprofit and government community services available to the public.

"We come together to help bring the community together," said Sid Blanchard, CAU executive director. "You can't have community unless all people are included in that community and are respected for their worth as humans."

Among those in attendance were Cantor Matthew Axelrod of the Congregational Beth Israel in Scotch Plains; Pastor Carmine Pernini of the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rahway; Father Jack Martin, Priest Emeritus; Ven. Duhk-Song Sunim of the So Shim Sa Zen Center in Plainfield; and Imam Ali Jaaber of the Masjid Darul Islam Mosque in Elizabeth.

"I think these interfaith events are very important," said Cantor Axelrod. "They bring the community together and give us access to each other's traditions. It de-emphasizes what divides us and shows us what we have in common."



CAU members, CAU staff, and members of the UCICC joined the NJ Clergy Coalition at a protest in Trenton in November calling for legislature that will protect members of the community.

Added Sid, "It's great to have a Thanksgiving dinner. It's great to have a holiday collection and a Day of Prayer. But there are 362 other days of the year we have to be here for each other."

A month later representatives of the council, followers of their houses of faith and members of CAU joined the New Jersey Clergy Coalition at a protest in Trenton calling for legislation mandating police body cameras, bias and cultural training and the appointment of an independent prosecutor to investigate police shootings.

The group met with members of the state legislature, including Senate President Steven Sweeney, and made progress, according to Pastor Howard Bryant. "Community Access members were very active in raising questions," he said.

Remember a Loved One or Special Occasion by purchasing a leaf on CAU's Tree of Life



You can personalize your message on the Tree of Life located at CAU's Main Office in Elizabeth.

Cost of a Leaf: \$50

Tell Someone You're Thinking of Them...

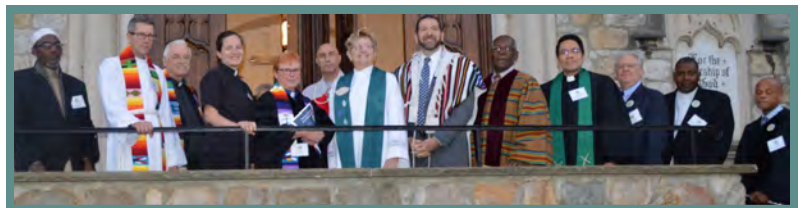
Consider sending a Tribute Card from CAU!

Cards can be purchased:
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 either CAU's Tree of Life or Tribute Cards, please call

908-354-3040 x272.



Members of the UCICC Steering Committee and invited speakers gathered before the event in preparation for the Day of Prayer.



Pastor Howard Bryant spoke at the protest in support of the event.



BRINGING THE BEAUTY OF ART TO UNION COUNTY

CAU member Maurice Stephens is a very talented artist specializing in drawing and painting. Recently that talent landed him as a finalist in the Union County "Art Outside the Box" contest. The county held the contest to solicit art that will decorate the many power boxes that line the streets.

"They wanted to put artwork on the boxes because they're ugly," Maurice said.

Maurice's submission was a painting of President Barack Obama in a variety of colors – something that is a trademark of his art. His was named one of the top 12 submissions from Plainfield and his work was hung at the Union County Performing Arts Center in Rahway.

"I was nervous," Maurice said. "I've never been in a situation like that but it felt good."

Maurice didn't stop there. The county next held a contest for artwork to decorate benches. He submitted three pieces, working in oil pastels, a medium he loves.

"I love art," Maurice said. "I've been drawing art ever since I was small. And I'm getting better and better."

So much better, in fact, that Maurice teaches art class at CAU. And maybe you will see his art decorating Union County benches soon.



DONATE YOUR CAR—CHANGE A LIFE

At fair market value, your tax-deductible donation of a gently used car will help a young adult or person with disabilities become self-sufficient, giving them the ability to attend school, and go to work, and to live independently.

Unlike other car donation programs, CAU does not take cars and sell them, receiving only a percentage of their value. By donating to CAU, 100% of your donation will go to a person with transportation needs.

HOW TO DONATE A VEHICLE

CALL US! 908-354-3040 x376 OR EMAIL CPIA@CAUNJ.ORG

Your potential donation will be inspected by our certified mechanic and the decision to accept the donation is made based off of the condition of the vehicle and the current needs of our membership.

Vehicles must be in good working condition and have limited cosmetic damage. The owner of the vehicle must possess the title of the vehicle being donated. Once the vehicle is donated and delivered to CAU, the owner will receive a donation letter which can serve as a charitable donation, which is tax deductible to the extent provided by law.



SUPPORT COORDINATION PROGRAM HELPS RECIPIENTS MAXIMIZE BENEFITS

Eric Wicker, Megan Timbie and Kelsey Maloney have guardians angels. All three have trained support coordinators watching out for them – helping them and their families get the most out of the support resources available to them throughout their counties and beyond.

Rose Kuprianov is Eric's Guardian Angel. Charlene Waltz is Timbie's. Jennifer Aronson is Maloney's. All three are dedicated support coordinator in CAU's Support Coordination Program. CAU is one of only seven social services agencies approved to serve as a statewide support coordination agency for support services authorized by the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) under its Supports Program. CAU does not serve as a support coordination agency for Union County because CAU is a service provider in Union County and that is a conflict of interest requirement of the state program.

The program enables adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities after they graduate high school to manage the financial support they receive from the state and allows them choices in selecting support service providers. Support coordinators help match individuals in the program to support services that can be afforded in their state-approved financial support.



Jennifer Aronson (second from right) talks with Kelsey Maloney and Kelsey's parents, Jackie and Larry, on one of her visits to the Maloney household.

"It's all about choice and empowerment," said Alison Goodrich, CAU's director of support coordination. "I have a choice of my service provider, whether it's the painter who paints my house or the mechanic who fixes my car. Why shouldn't people with disabilities choose their providers?"

"Yet managing their annual budget, sifting through all the services and service providers available to people with disabilities and dealing with the paperwork can be daunting. So the Supports Program provides a trained support coordinator to help."

The support coordinators help their support recipients in a number of ways. Everything starts with an Individualized Service Plan (ISP), a customized plan driven by personal choice that identifies intended outcomes for each individual and the goals needed to attain those outcomes by using the resources available.

"We put together plans for them based on what their needs and wants are," Jennifer said. "We see what resources are available for them and research other programs that are out there that might be a fit for them."

"We make sure everything in their programs are running smoothly and if they have any issue with a program we try to give them advice," said Rose. "We give them pointers on ways she can take advantage of available resources, such as webinars."

"Our focus is to find ways that enrich their lives," Charlene said. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

"Jennifer checks in with us regularly," said Jackie Maloney. "She comes to our home. She checks on Kelsey at the program. If we have questions she answers them right away or researches them and gets back to us quickly. She'll do research and give us recommendations of what she's found. She's a wonderful support coordinator."

"Charlene is very important to me," said Megan. "If I have questions, she answers them. If she doesn't know, she gets back to me. If I have a problem or need additional services, I just have to contact her. Charlene works in my best interests."

"I like Rose a lot," said Andrea Parker, Eric's mother. "She knows a lot of what's around here and is helpful that way. She works extremely hard to get things done. There isn't a question I can ask her that she wouldn't know the answer to or wouldn't get back to me if she didn't."

Community Access Unlimited is ideally situated to be a support coordination agency because we have been supporting people with disabilities for 36 years, including through self-directed services. While there are only seven agencies approved to provide support statewide, an additional 45 organizations are authorized on county or regional bases. CAU has been distinguished by the State of New Jersey to self-approve its support plans, allowing CAU to expedite results for service recipients and their families.

"That variety of choice provides us with a lot of incentive to do a great job," Allison said. "But with our decades of experience and our quality coordinators, we have an advantage."



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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.*

Save the Date!

Annual CAU Golf Classic

Thursday, May 5, 2016

Suburban Golf Club

**Sponsorship & Playership
Opportunities Available**

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Join us for the Cocktail Reception
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Visit www.caunj.org to join us at the event!



For more information contact Alyssa Mistretta, Fundraising Coordinator
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