

**LETTER**  
*from the*  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

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Dear Community Choices Supporters,

Community Choices has experienced many changes in the last year, but in the process of those changes, it has found its stride and its voice. We have distilled a philosophy that articulates the values that bring us together as a group of optimistic, motivated people to be a force of good and change for people with development disabilities in our community. First and foremost, this is an organization that believes that **people need people**.

Together, we are able to do more, be more, and change more than any of us could individually. We have chosen to actively look for and bring out the good in each other. In doing so we are helping to shape the world into a more open and inclusive place. As a community, **we share the responsibility of our success**.

We have chosen to be part of a group that does not look to a system of dependency, but actively looks to see how we can help each other and bring our individual gifts to the communal table. The world around us can be an uncertain place and one that may at times choose to look toward cynicism and hatred, but we choose to turn away from that. **We are not afraid to try**; to try new approaches, to build new connections, and to envision a world that will be welcoming to all people.

Our growing services and supports are simply templates that allow us to put our philosophy into action. Without the people within our cooperative and in our community, these programs would have no impact. Each of you breathe life into what we do. Community Choices is better for having each of you as part of it, sharing your ideas, talents, and resources. Thank you all!

**Rebecca Obuchowski**  
Executive Director

## SUCCESS STORY:

### CONNECT: ERIC BEASLEY



*In FY16 Community Choices was excited to create the Connect department, and Eric Beasley was one of the first members in a program called Togethering.*

*After initially discovering his gift for poetry in a college class, Eric took part in one of our Open Champaign projects, and met members of local group CU Poetry. In Togethering, he began attending the group's weekly meetings, with a Connect Department staff joining him for the first few weeks to feel more comfortable. Nervous at first, he has found a welcoming and diverse group of people. Together they read their poetry, and give each other feedback and encouragement. About the group, Eric says, "I never felt like I was leader, but in the poetry group I felt like I belonged."*

*With the support of the group, Eric has explored more in his poetry. This is one that he is particularly proud of:*

#### Math

*People are created equally and added.  
Never minus nor divide.  
If you show a minus revenge can be  
poisonous.  
If we show divided prejudice will blind us  
by hate.  
But if we add, multiplies, we're never  
alone.*

# 2016 PROGRAMS

At Community Choices, we know that a full life is dynamic and filled with many people and opportunities. We were excited to continue providing supports for those with disabilities to live in the community and find meaningful employment. We were also thrilled to expand the supports we offer to help people connect with community groups and social outlets.

**COMMUNITY LIVING** - focusing on individual planning, life skills, assisting individuals with independent living, and developing alternative housing options

- 17 individuals received support to live either in their own homes or to work toward independent community living
- 5 individuals moved into a community living set-up of their choice
- 23 Individuals participated in 5 personal development classes
- 32 individuals received Home Based Support facilitation for their state-funded Home-Based services

**CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT** – supporting individuals to find employment that highlights their contributions and benefits both the employer and employee

- 14 individuals acquired paid employment at community businesses and organizations
- 3 individuals acquired volunteer positions
- 28 individuals received on-going support in their workplace to learn new skills and build self-advocacy to address workplace obstacles
- Community Choices continued its partnership with Developmental Services Center to build business support for the Employment 1st initiative

**CONNECT** – offering social opportunities, leadership/self-advocacy, family support, and connections to local clubs and groups

- Individuals participated in 51 social events
- 19 individuals participated in Leadership classes to build self-advocacy skills
- 3 Coop Clubs were started by Community Choices members with coaching from Connect staff
- 3 individuals built independent connections with community groups
- 2 inclusive, public, co-sponsored events with community groups were held as part of Community Choices' Open Champaign project
- 8 Monthly Meetings were held, providing opportunities to build knowledge of resources and networking for families
- 4 Families hosted 4 gatherings

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT**  
**July 2015- June 2016**

COMMUNITY LIVING CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT CONNECT TOTAL

**INCOME**

Individual Contributions	8,945	9,500	10,732	29,177
Fundraising Events	5,110	2,114	6,364	13,588
Grants				
CCMHB*	60,000	55,000	55,000	170,000
Employment 1st Initiative**		20,253		20,253
ICDD***			61,370	61,370
Fee for Service				
Illinois - Home-based Services	42,050			42,050
Illinois - Employment Services		55,909		55,909
Private Pay	850		1,697	2,547
Miscellaneous Income			451	451
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>116,955</b>	<b>142,776</b>	<b>135,614</b>	<b>395,345</b>

**EXPENSES**

Employee Salaries/Wages	72,051	98,854	96,061	266,966
Employee Taxes/Benefits	9,348	12,826	12,463	34,637
Fundraising Expense	2,986	3,127	2,833	8,946
Professional Fees	1,985	3,423	2,094	7,502
Staff Development	1,561	1,481	529	3,571
Supplies/Consumables	3,899	5,579	6,977	16,455
Occupancy	4,234	4,234	4,235	12,703
Community Builder Rent/Utilities	6,340			6,340
General Operating	7,479	8,009	7,722	23,210
Transportation	3,999	2,834	1,251	8,084
Investing in Independence	250			250
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>113,767</b>	<b>139,917</b>	<b>133,841</b>	<b>387,525</b>

**NET INCOME**

**7,820**

**SUCCESS STORY:**

**COMMUNITY LIVING:  
JOSH PETER**



*Josh Peter moved out of his parents' home and into a house with three roommates over the summer, and he has settled into his new house and routine quickly.*

*Between school, tutoring, and training at the gym, Josh also tries to make time for sports, seeing family in Chicago, walking at Hessel and Meadowbrook parks, video games, and his favorite TV show, Spongebob. Josh has also been working on getting his driver's license.*

*When asked to reflect on some things he was proud of over the past year, Josh said "establishing more independence- the Step Up To Leadership program helped me speak up more, voice thoughts, and get to know more people." Josh had similar sentiments about his house and roommates: "Everyone's kind and caring and we all help each other."*

\* CCMHB - Champaign County Mental Health Board

\*\* Funded through the Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board in collaboration with DSC

\*\*\* ICDD - Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

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## SUCCESS STORY:

### EMPLOYMENT: JON HORTON



In May, Jon Horton reached his 1-year anniversary of working at Walgreens on Green Street as a Customer Service Associate. Jon's previous work history included working at various libraries, and during our Employment Discovery process, we found that Jon had an excellent memory and organizational skills.

At Walgreens, Jon has put those skills to use. He is responsible for removing any expired items from inventory and keeping the store neat for customers. In his year of outstanding performance, he has taken on the additional responsibility of stocking and continues to keep up with the demands of one of the busiest Walgreens stores in our community.

Always continuing to grow as a person, Jon has been learning to take the C-CARTS bus instead of relying on his family for rides home. Jon now utilizes it to get home from every shift.