

PRESS RELEASE

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Media Contact:

Mark Tannenbaum
Director, Marketing and Communications
(202) 274-3409
mtannenbaum@sjcs.org

St. John's Community Services Kicks Off 140 Years of Driving Social Change

Washington, D.C. – St. John's Community Services (SJCS) is holding a reception at the Willard Hotel on Thursday, October 25th from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m., to launch a year of events leading up to the celebration of its 140th Anniversary in the fall of 2008. The reception will feature remarks by Mark J. Gold, SJCS Chairman, Reverend Luis León, Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, Vincent C. Gray, DC City Council Chairman, and Thomas F. Wilds, President/CEO, SJCS.

St. John's was founded in 1868 by a group of concerned parishioners at St. John's Episcopal Church at Lafayette Square. For nearly 140 years, St. John's has served the needs of some of the most vulnerable citizens in our nation's capital, first as an orphanage in the aftermath of the Civil War, then a school for children with severe mental retardation, and today supporting both children and adults with disabilities in community-based settings only.

Throughout the year, SJCS will conduct a series of activities to raise awareness of and support for its work and change perceptions about people with disabilities. Some of the events being planned include:

- Winter 2008 Symposium on Protection and Rights for People with Disabilities, co-sponsored with Georgetown University's Center for Child and Human Development and the District's Department on Disability Services.
- SJCS Awards Ceremonies in all SJCS locations to recognize staff and community members for service excellence.
- ARTview 2008, our 6th annual art auction, featuring many artists with and without disabilities.

The year will culminate on the weekend of November 1, 2008 with a gala, including special recognition for individuals both internal and external to the agency who have made a significant contribution to advancing lives of people with disabilities.

St. John's Community Services is a non-profit, non-denominational and multi-state agency that is dedicated to *advancing community support and opportunities for people living with disabilities*. SJCS provides community living, supported employment, community participation and educational services to over 400 adults and children in Tennessee, Washington, DC, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

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