

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 Recognizes October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Washington, D.C. – As it approaches its 140th Anniversary, St. John's Community Services (SJCS) continues its commitment to create competitive employment opportunities for individuals with developmental and other disabilities. Over the past 20 years, Supported Employment has remained a centerpiece to SJCS services. For many individuals living with disabilities, employment helps develop new skills, provides greater economic empowerment and self-reliance, creates friendships, and offers opportunities to contribute to one's community.

Through St. John's Supported Employment services, over 100 individuals are currently working and pursuing their career goals and opportunities. SJCS Employment Specialists work collaboratively with both the employees and the employer to build positive work relationships. Through these efforts, individuals with disabilities secure jobs that meet their needs, skills, and interests so that they will succeed and be productive. SJCS specialists provide on-the-job training and coaching to the individual, the employer and co-workers. The overall goal is to gradually foster greater independence and reliance upon the individual's natural support system.

According to the National Council on Disability in its October report entitled *Empowerment for American with Disabilities: Breaking Barriers to Careers and Full Employment*, the employment opportunities and living wages remain significantly less for people with disabilities than for people without disabilities. We support the Report's underlying premise that expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities benefits all—individuals with disabilities, employers, co-workers, the community and society as a whole.

St. John's Community Services, founded in 1868, is a non-profit, non-denominational 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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