

PRESS RELEASE

July 24, 2007  
For Immediate Release

**Media Contact:**

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

**St. John's Community Services Recognizes Importance of the  
Americans with Disabilities Act**

**Washington, DC**—The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), now considered one of the most significant civil rights acts for people with developmental, social, and physical disabilities in our nation, celebrates its seventeenth anniversary on Thursday, July 26. This law “recognized that discrimination against people with disabilities in the form of purposeful unequal treatment and historical patterns of segregation and isolation was the major problem confronting people with disabilities and not their individual impairments” (National Council on Disability, 1997). The law further barred discrimination in employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications.

Under the aegis of the ADA, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA), St. John's Community Services (SJCS) adheres to the fundamental belief that people with disabilities must be given the opportunity to choose the communities they live in and the activities they participate in. SJCS believes that competitive work is the best route to personal empowerment and a good quality of life. Thus, we support individuals with disabilities to prepare for and select jobs that suit their skills, expectations, and long-term goals. This belief put into action is consistent with the intentions of the ADA for equal opportunities.

For nearly 140 years, St. John's has changed and adapted to meet evolving community needs. In the 1980s, we diversified our services, changing from a focus on children only to include adults as well. SJCS was among the first to create homes in the community for the former institutional residents of Forest Haven.. We began providing supported employment services in the District twenty years ago at a time when institutionalized sheltered workshops were the prevalent model. In 1989, we embraced a new mission and a commitment to support people in typical community settings, while at the same time moving completely away from facility-based services. Today, SJCS-DC staff supports over 150 individuals and their families.

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 500 adults and children in Tennessee, Washington, DC, Virginia, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

###