

PRESS RELEASE

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St. John's Community Services Recognizes December 3 as International Day for Persons with Disabilities

Washington, D.C. – St. John's Community Services (SJCS) recognizes December 3, 2008, as International Day for Persons with Disabilities. The theme for this year's annual observance is "dignity and justice for all of us," coinciding with the 60th anniversary of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Celebrating its 140th year of support to people with disabilities, St. John's Community Services remains committed to the principles of dignity and justice for people with disabilities and the realization of basic human rights for all people. St. John's also recognizes the enormity of the challenge, not only domestically, but worldwide.

There are an estimated 650 million persons living with disabilities in the world today. If one includes the members of their families, there are approximately 2 billion persons who are directly affected by disability, representing almost a third of the world's population. Thus, persons with disabilities represent a significant overlooked development challenge, and ensuring equality of rights and access for these persons will have an enormous impact on the social and economic situation in countries around the world. (enable@un.org)

St. John's Community Services is dedicated to the full participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life—political, social, economic and cultural. People supported by St. John's are empowered to make choices about how and where to live, what work to do and skills to develop, and which activities to participate in. SJCS' inclusionary and activist approach reflects a commitment to full citizenship and equal rights for people with disabilities.

In addition, SJCS provides technical assistance and training to public and private organizations in such areas as strategic planning, program evaluation and corporate compliance. These consultations contribute to greater awareness and understanding to build better communities, as embodied within this special international day of recognition—"with dignity and justice for all of us."

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, and Pennsylvania.

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