



**Community Support Services Receives a Sub-Grant Award for Transitioning Youth from School to Adult Life from The Arc of the United States, funded by the Walmart Foundation**

Community Support Services (CSS) is pleased to be one of 45 local chapters of The Arc of the United States (The Arc) nationwide selected by The Arc to share in a \$3 million grant from the Walmart Foundation in support of a new initiative designed to help youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

These Sub-Grants have been awarded as part of the Walmart Foundation School-to-Community Transition Project. The project aims to increase transition outcomes and to build inclusion and involvement of youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities in independent living, employment, post-secondary education or vocational training, and community, social and civic affairs.

Our Program, called *Pathways*, is a three-year Transition Program designed to provide a series of seminars and supports to students ages 14-22, in collaboration with Proviso Area for Exceptional Children (PAEC) School for Special Education in Maywood, Illinois. The goal is to help ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities of high school age, and their families (parents/guardians and siblings) are prepared - as part of their educational experience - to take the steps necessary to find and retain employment and public benefits once they finish high school at age 22.

CSS will work with each Program participant to develop a personal plan comprised of a skills, knowledge, and interest assessment. This information will be used to help ensure that the individual's personal goals are being met over the three-year Program period. Some of the seminars will be specifically for the students. Topics will include social skills, transportation training, and other strategies for maintaining successful community employment. Other seminars will be for siblings, and parents/guardians, including a session on how to plan for Guardianship.

The goal of the Pathways Program is to create a whole long-term Transition process that can be replicated in any community, with any group of individuals with DD and their families, based on the premise that success in transitioning from school into the community starts with early intervention.

For further information, contact Sandra Ryan or Rocio Perez at (708) 354-4547.