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- 2018 DATES -

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JEVS launches Collingswood program

JEVS Human Services, a regional non-profit human services agency, is taking first steps to establish an independent living community for young adults with disabilities in Collingswood.

JEVS Independence Network (IN) provides young adults with disabilities the freedom to learn, experience and achieve their life's goals. JEVS organizers hope that six to ten interested families will find housing, typically individual apartments, in Collingswood as part of the initial group. JEVS members live independently, with support from the organization, volunteer locally, and often work with the goal of living full lives as part of the local community.

"The IN model is ideal for young people ready to live on their own who, with some support, want to realize their goal of independence, whether that means building their life skills, working, volunteering—or creating a full and meaningful community life", says Jill Groman, Director of JEVS Independence Network.

JEVS launched a similar program in Narberth, PA in 2011 and hopes to replicate the successes of that program in Collingswood. JEVS offers a variety of activities and opportunities for members to lead fulfilling and productive lives. Each member, along with family members, work with staff to set his/her own goals and identify interests and needs. Resources help individuals as they work through challenges of being independent, while improving life skills, social skills, recreation skills and work skills. Most of all, members are encouraged to make choices that help them improve their lives and build self-reliance and self-esteem.

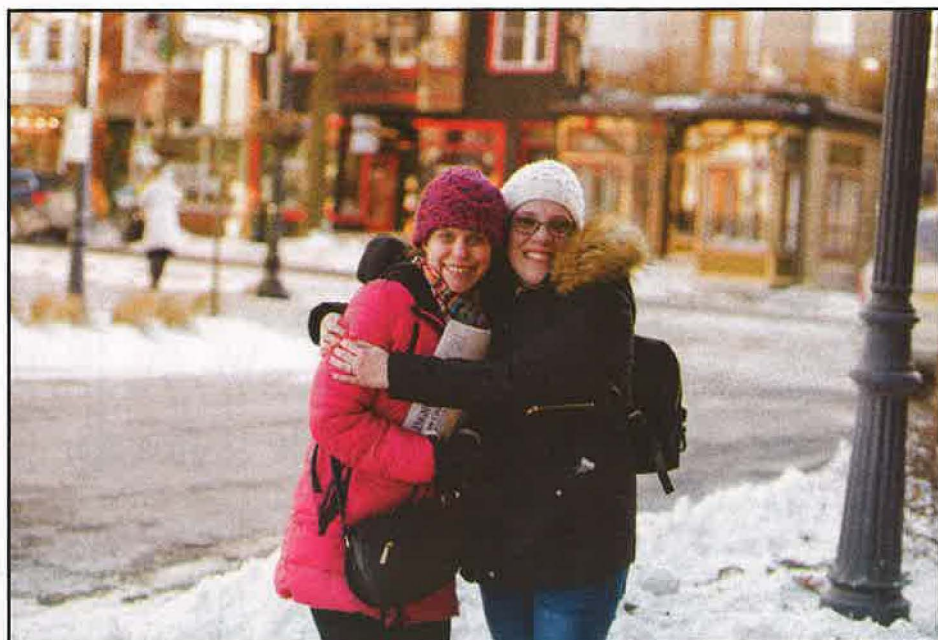
Collingswood appeals to JEVS because of proximity to transit, walkability, plentiful opportunities for engagement and employment, a busy event calendar and a welcoming community.

"The selection of a community is really important for us," says Jay Spector, President and CEO of JEVS. "It needs to be a place that is accessible and rich with opportunities for members to become a part of the community, to live, work, volunteer and build relationships—the things we all look for when choosing a place to live. We feel strongly that Collingswood is an ideal community for JEVS Independence Network."

Families and adults interested in living in Collingswood met at a January 6 information session in Collingswood to learn about this new opportunity, meet other young adults and their families who are interested in moving to Collingswood, to take a tour of the town's amenities and discuss next steps for the creation of the model program in Camden County.

We are honored that JEVS feels what we know - that Collingswood will be a supportive and welcoming place," said Collingswood Mayor James Maley. "It speaks not only to our being a walkable and accessible town but to the character of our residents that JEVS feel this is a great place for their members to live happy, supported, involved lives."

Each year JEVS touch nearly 30,000 lives, focusing on individuals with physical, developmental, and emotional challenges as well as those facing adverse socio-economic conditions including unemployment and underemployment. Operating with an annual budget of \$92.5 million, JEVS Human Services has 1,000 employees and 30 successful programs providing skills development, job readiness and career services, vocational rehabilitation, recovery services, adult and residential day services, and in-home personal assistance. For more information about JEVS Independence Network, contact Jill Groman at SupportsNJ@JEVS.org or 856-242-4710.



Families interested in a Collingswood based JEVS program toured town in January.