



Community Living
And Support Services

empowering people
Creating Communities

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CLASS Develops International Partnership with Mamre Association

International Partnership will Promote the Importance of Inclusive Communities for all Regions

Pittsburgh, PA –Community Living and Support Services (CLASS) will partner with Brisbane, Australia based Mamre Association, to promote inclusive communities internationally. CLASS will welcome Rachel Drew, Director of Mamre Association, to Pittsburgh on May 11, 2015 for a CLASS Board Meeting at 1400 South Braddock Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15218. Both CLASS and Mamre have years of experience in their respective communities, supporting individuals and families who experience disabilities to identify and locate ways to be active members of their communities.

Meeting by chance, Dr. Al Condeluci, CEO of CLASS met Drew at an international conference on disability issues in New York of 2014. Recognizing the missions of the organizations were similar, Dr. Condeluci and Ms. Drew began to foster a partnership to promote the importance of developing inclusive communities for all people, regardless of ability. Initial phases of the partnership were conducted via Skype to discuss research opportunities, development strategies to foster inclusive communities, and comparisons between the disability community in Australia versus that of Pittsburgh, which have benefited both organizations to develop strategic planning initiatives.

Dr. Condeluci visited Brisbane last year to share ideas and best practices that CLASS has utilized in Pittsburgh with the staff and board of Mamre. “Our countries, cultures, and experiences are similar, yet different. These differences allow us to explore and grow in ways that are constructive and exciting,” stated

Al Condeluci. "We are excited to continue this relationship which can only benefit the men, women, children, and families we both serve."

The continued partnership hopes to develop international advocacy efforts to develop communities where all people, regardless of ability, have the opportunity to actively participate. By building and nurturing natural support and social relationships, individuals with disabilities will be able to live as independently as possible in their communities, experiencing a higher quality of life. Both CLASS and Mamre believe communities truly flourish when all members can participate.

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About Mamre Association

Mamre Association was established in 1982 and is based in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. A nonprofit organization, Mamre supports families who have a child with a disability. The word "Mamre" is a Hebrew word meaning "mountain of friendship." This is the core of Mamre's guiding vision to foster and advocate for inclusion, friendships, and relationships for all people, so that people with a disability and their families can have rich, full, and meaningful lives within their communities. To learn more about Mamre Association, visit www.mamre.org.au.

About CLASS

CLASS, is a 501c3 not for profit organization founded in 1951 with the mission of working toward a community where each belongs. CLASS continually seeks innovative approaches that foster the independence of adults and children with disabilities and promote their full participation in communities and activities of their choice. For more information, visit www.classcommunity.org.