

CONNECTIONS CAME TO THE LEAGUE, FEBRUARY 18, 2013



Connections CEO
Cathy McKay

A rapt audience of League members and visitors listened intently while Cathy McKay, Director of the social service agency Connections, spoke to them on Monday, Feb. 18, 2013, at the League's monthly Fun Lunch. She told how the group was formed in order to reintegrate into the community residents of Delaware State Hospital and others who were homeless because of de-institutionalization. Today Connections has 700 employees, with a budget of over \$40 million. They work in 70 locations throughout the state. Connections provides a comprehensive array of healthcare, housing and employment opportunities to individuals that many other social service organizations routinely turn away. They own their own catering and janitorial businesses where they train and employ people who need help in reentering the workplace. Prison health and reentry services are also part of their service to the community. Last year alone roughly 20,000 Delawareans received benefits from Connections.

During a Q and A session after her talk, Ms. McKay addressed the issue of neighborhood complaints against Connections clients. She said that her organization has 24/7 onsite property management, with 24-hour camera coverage. Because Connections accepts people that other organizations turn away, she feels that her challenges are enormous, and that claims of mismanagement are not justified. One of the members of the audience commented that 80% of the people coming out of prisons have some sort of ADHD, drug, or mental health issues, so that these challenges are understandable. Ms. McKay expressed concern that with the Affordable Care Act money to fund her programs may come up short. To find out more about Connections, visit their website at <http://www.connectionspsc.org>.