

Becca's Alternative Housing Plan

We are searching for an alternative to the traditional group home for our 24-year old daughter, Rebecca, who is very energetic and athletic. Becca also enjoys attending live musical theater shows such as *Fiddler on the Roof*; *Oklahoma* and others, in addition to, participating in other activities such as listening to vocal folk and vocal country music of all types; bowling; ice skating, taking long walks, etc.

Our desire to seek an alternative stems from our direct experience and observation over the last two years of the many issues and problems associated with the traditional group home 'model' – not the least of which is the inability as parents/guardians to have a say and some control over the daily operations and decisions affecting our daughter, and the complexity and conflicts emanating from the fact that five individuals with unique disabilities are living together and that many rotating staff are involved to provide a 24/7 operation.

Our desire is for our daughter to live with another physically active, young woman (22-30 years) with disabilities in a rental apartment or condominium in close proximity to her day program and to her parents (who live in Watertown, MA). Her day program is in Watertown, MA and she comes home every weekend (while we are healthy enough to take her home). So the geographic area for the location of her housing includes Watertown, Newton, Brookline, Brighton, and Arlington.

Staffing would be women only. There would be a core person who would live in the apartment/condominium and serve as the primary caregiver/'house' manager. Therefore, the housing unit would be three bedrooms. In this regard, our alternative housing concept has an element of the 'shared-living' model except that there would be two women with disabilities in the housing unit (with two engaged sets of parents checking in, more oversight). This core person would work the primary shifts from 3:00 PM – 11:00 PM, Monday – Friday – after the two women come back from their day programs. The core person would also serve as the overnight person, but similar to parents would be asleep but able to assist if either woman needed assistance, and in case of emergencies (e.g., fire evacuation).

A service provider would be hired by the ISO - giving both us and the parents of the other woman a degree of control following the 'self-directed' model as recognized by DDS – who would undertake the hiring, supervision, oversight, management. The service provider would provide additional staff to cover the three shifts on Saturday and the three shifts on Sunday (allowing the core person to take a weekend away), and when the core person is on vacation. Note that on any shift, there would be only one staff person to care for the two women.

Because our concept has an element of 'self-direction', the service provider could be a non –traditional human service agency, for example a *University Department of Special Education*. The housing unit could then serve as a rotating internship/laboratory for their graduate students. The core person as the direct caregiver/house manager would implement the women's ISP and develop a program plan of social/recreational activities, and activities of daily living in collaboration with her Department Supervisor and with both sets of parents. Other graduate students would staff the other shifts, and work with the core person on program planning and implementation.

If you are interested or know someone who may be interested, please contact Janet and David Spiller, Phone: 617-924-1785 and Email: davidspiller1952@gmail.com ; janetspiller1952@gmail.com

A 'Quick-and-dirty' Financial Analysis of this Alternative Housing Option

Financial sustainability is a key factor if this alternative housing concept is to be viable. Below is a summary showing that the expected revenue stream is sufficient to cover all reasonable costs, and to provide an incentive for potential service providers to bid on this proposal.

Expected Revenue Stream - ~\$70,000-\$80,000 per woman (Public Funds) for a total of ~\$140,000-\$160,000

- Expenses* -
- (a) primary core caregiver salary - \$38,000 per annum
 - (b) Service provider coverage for vacations, holidays, health insurance for primary caregiver - \$12,000 per annum
 - (c) Weekend staffing (3 shifts) - \$15.00 per hour x 24 x 2 x 52 weeks = ~\$38,000 per annum
 - (d) Food and supplies - \$12,000 per annum
 - (e) Heat, utilities, condo fee - \$6000 per annum
 - (f) Service provider supervision/oversight, management, contribution to fixed overhead - \$34,000 - \$54,000

Rent (or amortization of condo mortgage after use of Federal and State grants)

Each woman – 75% of each woman's SSI = \$555 per woman = \$1100 per month

Primary caregiver payment (from salary) - \$900-\$1000 per month

Total Rental (or mortgage) payment per month - \$2000-\$2100