



# Autism Housing Pathways: Building Roads to Home

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Autism Update 2010 Conference

April 8, 2010



# Access to housing: tight and getting tighter

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- Nationwide, most adults with autism live with family members
- Turning 22 in Massachusetts
  - Adult services are not an entitlement
  - The numbers needing residential services are growing, even as funding is decreasing
  - 25-30% have no family involvement, and have top priority for residential funding
- ➔ Increasingly, families will have to figure out (and help fund) their own housing solutions



# The traditional group home

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- The way in which DDS traditionally supplies residential services to those who *do* qualify for 24/7 funding
- 4 residents
- Home owned or leased by a service provider
  - Money assigned to the provider; if the individual leaves, no guarantee funding will follow
- Less than 1:1 staffing, although an aide can be allocated in certain cases
- Not necessarily a good fit for those with intense behaviors or special diets



# Self-directed housing: A new paradigm

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- Separates provision of housing from provision of services
- Allows individuals to decide where to live and with whom, and to change providers if necessary
- Can be selected even by those who do receive residential funding from DDS
- Means those with funding and those who are self-funding can share housing, helping to make housing more affordable for all



# Where do I start? With freedom comes responsibility

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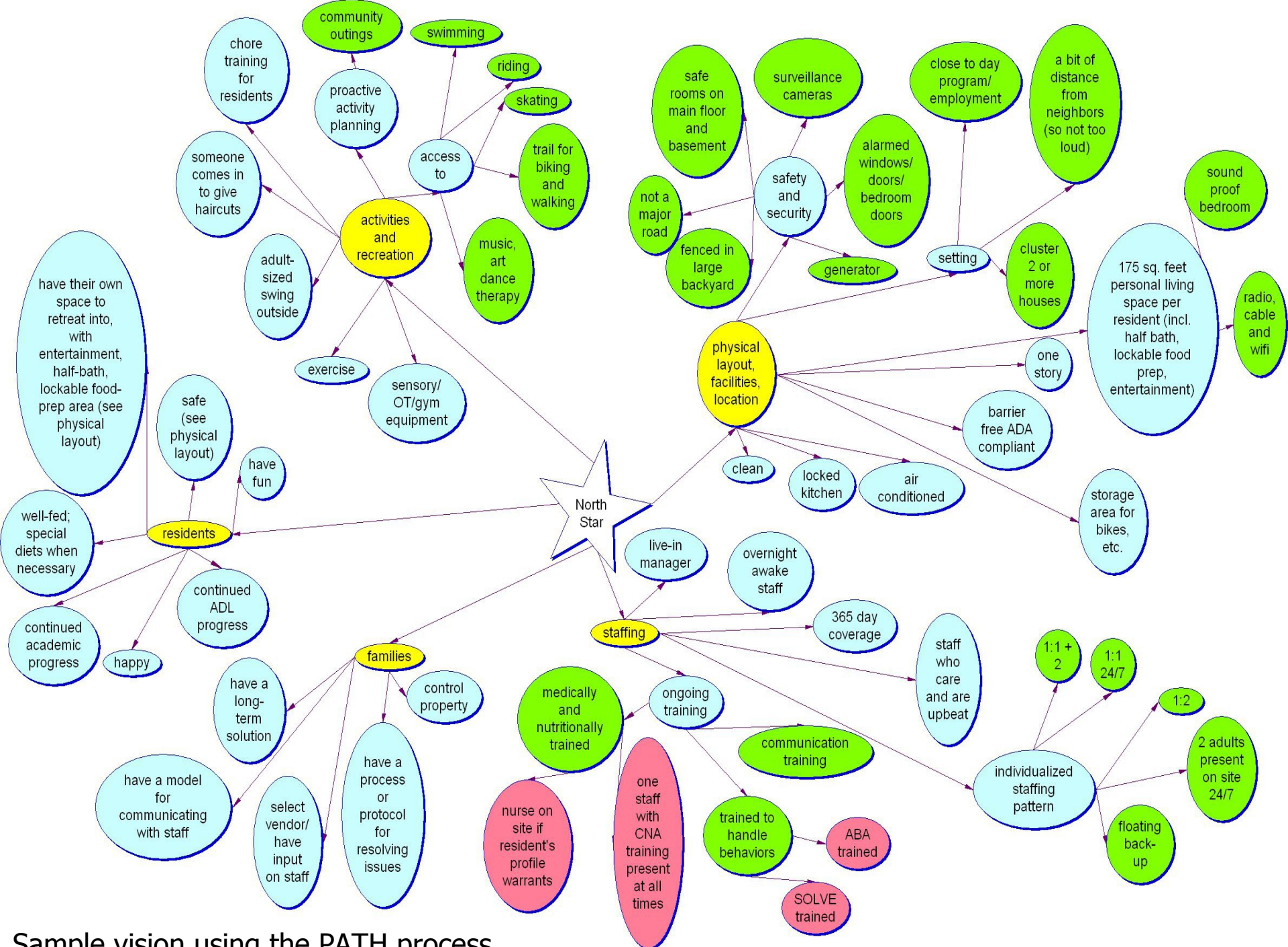
- What sources of funding are available?
- What can I afford?
- What form of ownership best meets my needs?
- What is a real estate trust?
- How do I meet other families with similar needs and visions?



# Autism Housing Pathways

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- Began as a group of parents interested in creating self-directed housing for our children with autism
  - Began meeting in June 2009
  - Explored what other groups have done
  - Researched funding sources
  - Engaged in a visioning process



Sample vision using the PATH process



# Autism Housing Pathways, con't.

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- But:
  - While many in the group share a vision, there is a range of support needs, price points, and geographic locations
- ⇒ Need for an umbrella group to
  - ⇒ do research
  - ⇒ create different models
  - ⇒ incubate and support housing groups





# AHP's mission

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- Create a menu of options for different price points and support needs
- Provide a road map for families to follow
- Provide a venue for families to find one another
- Eventually function as a Mutual Housing Association that may offer access to discounted accounting, legal, administrative and training services to member housing corporations



# AHP's structure

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- Membership-driven organization
  - Committees work to assemble both general and detailed information
  - Members gain access to detailed information, such as boilerplate language for real estate trusts, or lists of builders who have constructed housing that meets DDS design specifications



# Take-home lessons

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- Do not assume all your child's adult residential needs will be met by the government
- DDS appears to be more open to innovative public/private hybrid models than in the past
- Save for housing like you would save for college
  - Assume you will need \$45,000 up front
    - If you put aside \$200 per month at 3% interest, it will take 15 years

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