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Sharing a Home, Sharing a Life

May 7, 2015
DoubleTree Suites by Hilton, Mt. Laurel

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OCL's Move to Life Sharing

- Mission
  - ...to live full lives as integral and respected members of the community
  - ...to have meaningful relationships with others

Traditional Programs versus Normal Homes and Lives

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History of Sue

- Many years institutionalized
- Moved to a group home
- Years of competing for attention
- Years of being seen as a behavior problem
- Years of being completely misunderstood
- Clientized, marginalized, trapped in a cycle of negativism

Cycle of Negativism or Positivism

- Maybe she does not like living with the group?
- Mom could see no other option
- Many naysayers in her life
- Learning from history and moving on
- Mom finally letting go and believing something different could work if all believed.

A Champion Emerged
TRYING, LEARNING AND TRYING AGAIN

- Early attempts
- Learning from mistakes
- Refocus – Sue versus agency versus system

A NEW CHAMPION EMERGES

A MATCH IS MADE

- Like personalities
- Love for life and beauty
- Putting a thought in a mind... Have you ever thought about sharing a home and life with Sue?

STRUGGLES IN LIFE AND COMMITMENT TO ONE ANOTHER

- Two floor house
- Housemate changes in partners
- Housemate getting married
- Housemate moving to new home
- Sue’s mother dying, sisters wishes
- Sue becoming less and less stable
- Sue brain surgery and recuperation
- Increased support needs

OCTOBER 1, 2000 TO PRESENT

- A Deeply Committed Relationship is Established, Nurtured and Grows through Happiness, Pain, Sharing and Togetherness.

LIVING TOGETHER AND SHARING LIVES

- It is what each of our lives is all about
- We learn from and take care of one another
- We go together through triumphs and struggles
- We grow in relationship with one another
- We share lives as friends, partners and in other significant ways
- We freely pick, or decide who to stand with, those we share our lives with
WHEN LIVING WITH A DISABILITY

- Sharing life is misunderstood
- There are prescribed supports
- Protections by paid supports
- There are prescribed people to live with
- Typically you are surrounded by those of a similar diagnosis
- Your life becomes clientized
- Freely chosen people are typically not an option

IMPORTANT TENANTS TO UNDERSTAND AND BELIEVE IN

- Every person has an inner spirit as their core where the beauty of the person resides
- Once recognized it can be nourished and will begin to flourish
- Working to bring out the true magnificence that each person has to share

DEEPENING RELATIONSHIPS

- The service system must allow all people to enter into meaningful relationship with others- not everyone is a volunteer
- The people of the community need to be welcomed
- Relationships must be built on choice, value, honesty and ordinariness that is personally rewarding
- Relationships must be built on commonality, not different-ness
- It is all about belief, values and mindset

SHARING HOME AND SHARING LIFE

WHERE CAN PEOPLE BE FOUND?

- From sharing common interests
- From those who are your champions
- From current relationships and support circles
- From family, friends
- From paid staff who you have known
- From churches and community groups
- From advertising for common interests
- From community newspapers, on line groups and flyers
- By asking
**HOUSEMATE AD**

- I am a woman with a disability living in my own home in a nice neighborhood in the north side of Syracuse with my pet cat. I work out of the home weekdays and also have a nice social life and family. I have staff that come into my home to assist me several hours each day. I like taking walks, going to festivals and being part of my local church. I am looking for someone who can share my lifestyle and my home being there for companionship, friendship and safety. In return for this I can give you free rent. Please call 555-5555 x 555.

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**ROLES CHANGE AS RELATIONSHIPS DEEPEN**

- Start as protector or teacher
- Move to a learner, about yourself and the person life is shared with
- Shared heart aches and triumphs meld people together
- Partnerships, friendships, comradely
- Ordinariness becomes the ordinary

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** ORDINARY PEOPLE ORDINARY LIFE**

- Ordinary people known and living as citizens not clients
- Ordinary homes not agency sites or programs
- Ordinary relationships as friends and companions
- Ordinary neighborhoods where the person is well connected
- Ordinary personal lives based on interests and neighborhood connections
- Common citizens not volunteers
- Matching of relationships based on interests, age or other factors
- Nurturing and stepping back to allow time to grow
- Respect of the two people, their home, their relationship, their privacy and their life
- Valuing the relationship and all that it can bring

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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Book: One Person At a Time
Onondaga Community Living  
Housemate Agreement

_________ is involved in a life sharing situation with housemates and scheduled staff support (including back-up support when necessary) through Onondaga Community Living. These pieces, combined with the vocational support and family will work together to provide proper support to __________ on a 24-hour basis, and will back-up each other as needed. The Coordinator will work with ________ and the OCL business office to pay the established rent and utilities. You will live there without paying for rent or utilities in return for the companionship, friendship and safety that you will model and supply.

A Bit About Who You Will Live With
Personal Paragraph - for any particular needs. Put in what the person needs support or guidance with and any particular interest they may want to share. (IE) This is only an example. As has already been discussed, there will be no smoking allow in the home, while in the car with _____ or in the garage. This includes your personal living space. It is also important for _____’s health that you model and support healthy eating and lifestyle. It will be the combined role of you and the staff to ensure that _____ eats properly, gets some moderate exercise and works to loose some extra weight to enable her to get into the best shape that is possible. The person loves listening to bands and dancing so any opportunities to share in this will be welcomed.

Your Responsibilities
Each of you will live together and cooperatively support one another in times of triumph, need or trouble. You will be a part of a team of staff, friends and family. In the safe hands of this team, you will all work together whose focus is to enable __________ to have an enjoyable, well connected and pleasant life. Should problems or concerns occur and greater assistance be required, the Individualized Coordinator is to be contacted. Team member numbers along with other emergency numbers will be available to you at the household. It will be up to you to keep them readily available. As you contact people, needs will be assessed and proper support will be secured. Everyone agrees to work together and keep in close contact, so we may support one another in the best way. We all need to work to anticipate areas of concern, so that we can collectively support these before frustrations or problems begin to mount. The Individualized Coordinator will be the center point for all communication and is responsible for working with each person on the team to ensure open and honest communication. It is every one’s responsibility to keep the lines of communication open. You are an incredibly important part in your role.

This address will be your home. You will be equally responsible for the care and upkeep of the home both inside and out unless it is otherwise specified in the
lease that the landlord has responsibility. This may include lawn work, shoveling, and household upkeep as it would in any rental situation.

This will also be both of your neighborhoods and you will be encouraged to have neighborly relationships with others who live and work on the street. You must keep in mind that this is the long term residence to the person who you are living with even if you choose to move on at some point. It is critically important that positive relationships are developed with others in the neighborhood so that the person you live with is accepted and welcomed.

It will be the joint responsibility of you and the staff to assist _____ with the upkeep of the residence and with the personal connections and relationships. You are part of a team to meet this end.

**Financial**

As a housemate, there will be fixed expenses that you will be responsible for paying: a housemate (pet) deposit, your fair share of food and household expenses, your correct percentage of the cable based upon the number of people who reside in the house, and your own long distance charges with related taxes and surcharges. You will be sent a bill from our business office of any incurred expenses. Payment must be received in the business office within 15 days of the billing date. Late fees will be added for any late payment to the agency and show up on billing forms.

You are to establish your own bills and accounts for your own personal phone line, internet connection, personal cable connection, and renters insurance, or other needs, if you choose to have any of these.

Onondaga Community Living will assist __________ with all household bills. The Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating __________’s share of monthly expenses.

Prior to moving in, each housemate is expected to give **$200.00 deposit** for OCL to hold until you move out to ensure that all bills are paid to date when you leave and that there is no damage and that the home is left in good condition. If proper notice is given, everything is paid, and no damage or disarray is found, the entire amount will be reimbursed at the end of a thirty day billing cycle.

All pets must be approved before they move in by the landlord, person you live with and the Individualized Coordinator. You are also required to pay a **$300 pet deposit to OCL** prior to the pet moving in. If you have more than one pet there will be an additional $75/approved pet held by OCL. The landlord may ask for additional pet deposit. That will be between you and the landlord. You may also be held responsible for additional charges, should there be pet damage, if it exceeds the deposit held. Any unpaid damage, cleaning, outstanding bills or
other costs related to the household that you resided in will be deducted from the deposits.

As a housemate you will live at this location without any financial reimbursement (other than free rent and utilities).

You are not considered in a staff or volunteer role. You are entering into this situation freely as a private citizen, companion and friend.

**Time Away/Moving**

As a housemate you agree not to be away in regards to vacations, holidays or overnights without first contacting the person you reside with and OCL. You need to talk with the person’s circle of support to ensure that _____ always has the proper support.

As a housemate, you agree to give ample notice of your intention to move. As a friend, your support is welcomed in a search for an alternate housemate to replace yourself. A three to four month notice of your intention to move on is expected to ensure a good transition, which will give us time to ensure a smooth transition. Housemates agree to not move out of the house until a new situation has been secured. Lack of proper notice may result in the loss of your deposit.

If any problems arise that cannot be worked out with the help of everyone involved, the housemate may be asked to move out, the housemate deposits may also be forfeited by your leaving without proper notice or if you are asked to leave due to the safety or well being of the person you are living with.

All deposits held by OCL will be held for an additional 30 days to ensure that all bills are paid timely and that there is no damage or disarray to the household. If all bills are paid timely and you leave the home in good shape, your deposit will then be returned.

This has been reviewed with me by __________________________ on ___________________. My signature indicates my understanding of my life-sharing role.

My move in date is _________________________________.

_____________________________________
Name printed
Housemate Signature _____________________ Date ____________

Signature of Person Housemate Resides With _____________________ Date ____________

OCL Staff member _____________________ Date ____________

To be completed at move out:

Move out date: ________________________________________

Forwarding address: ____________________________________
                                                                                   ____________________________________
                                                                                   ____________________________________

Future phone ________________________________________

CC: Residential file
Business Manager
Service Coordinator
Residential Director
Executive Director
A Champion

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As I continue to learn more about persons with a differing abilities, I have come to learn that listening and creativity are really the cornerstones to the work they we are a part of. When I think about some of those whom we support, they have provided many gifts in the lessons on the art of listening, staying flexible, being creative and working towards what one believes in.

Often time's families, self-advocates and service providers don't think about normal lives when we are talking about developing services for those with complicated needs. Typical homes with people who are loved and cherished are often not the first options discussed when you are perceived to have a disabling condition. It is because the service system and professionals have developed a different way of supporting and maintaining those who do not fit the typical mold. Traditionally, people who are perceived as unlike the typical populations are pulled from the roots of family, neighbors and friends and are served in a system of supports that is very foreign to them. Strong parents and advocates, who are not afraid to fight, have worked long and hard to break out of the traditional mold that meets few people's true needs.

The individuals that I speak about were challenging to most, difficult to many and were extremely misunderstood. They were institutionalized, incarcerated, managed, medicated, controlled, clientized and victimized. Yet each of these people later became champions due to the hard fight that each of them had against a system and service that did not meet their needs.

In a society, if a normal life is a 'right' for you, and then it should not be something that someone else has to fight for. Those that have needed to fight long and hard for what they need are indeed champions. They have given those of us that took the time to listen 'with different ears', the gift of understanding that there is a separately unique way of providing supports and services.

A normal life, along with the attributes that each person brings, should be paramount in all decisions that are made. But unfortunately normal lifestyles and personal gifts are often clouded or unrecognized because they are disguised by a perceived disability and a model of support. A normal life is seen to be farfetched, or even unobtainable, by those who see the disability. The person is then not recognized for the gift of who they are, but instead they are seen as the perceived difficulty that they bring, as discussed in the brief story of Susan.
Susan was institutionalized for most of her life. In her mid-twenties, she was finally accepted into a group home. At this residence, she became highly agitated every time someone left the house without her. She repeatedly damaged property and injured others. Susan was purposely communicating what she needed, but not in a way that was easily understood by most. Susan knew what she wanted but staff did not understand her. Susan was a champion and never let her needs be unknown to the dismay of many around her. It was finally recognized that Susan just wanted to be on the go and did not want to compete with others from the group home.

After much planning, Susan then moved to her own home with the support of typical community people. She did not have to live with or compete with others with disabilities. She now had the personal attention that she worked so hard to get. Susan now lives peacefully with Ingrid, a person who loves and respects her. She no longer damages property or injures others. Her voice was finally heard. She had finally taught those around her how to listen differently to perceived problems, how to be creative and flexible, and how to work towards her own personal dreams.

Susan's had the desire and special ability to never stop trying to tell us what her needs were. No matter how much she was controlled, punished, or medicated, she kept trying to communicate to the staff what she felt and needed. How frustrating it must have been to her to be communicating to a crowd that did not understand what she was trying to tell them, but that never seem to discouraged her from letting staff know what she wanted.

Susan has many gifts, one of which is the gift of personal determination that went both misunderstood and unrecognized for years. Because of her own determination Susan now lives a more peaceful life. She lives with someone whom she deeply cares for, without the competition of others around her. She lives in a beautiful home with stylish furnishings and a person who enjoys her company. She has deeper relationships and more involvement with her family than she has ever had before. These relationships were paramount to her but highly disregarded in the past.

Realizing that Susan was trying to tell us something was the first step in changing her life. Susan did not change, it was the staff that learned to change their ways because they finally began to understand what Susan was trying to tell them all along.

Developing a more realistic and normal life based upon the attributes that Susan has was no longer farfetched when one let go of the perceived disability and saw the strengths and gifts that Susan brought to her own life and the life of others. Susan gave to us the gift of deepening our ability to listen. She helped us to be both creative and thoughtful as we thought about what services she really needed. She helped us to think about the safeguards that were really necessary in her life. All of this was because we learned to listen and believe in what Susan was telling us. As she continued to fight for what she wanted, she helped us to realize what a champion she really is.
“All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. What ever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.”

Martin Luther King

Living and sharing life together is part of what makes each of us whole. Learning from, and taking care of another person through the triumphs and struggles of life is part of what helps to bind us together as we grow in relationships with one another. Life sharing is a term that is arising in our field and it is time to now begin to realize what this can mean for a person with a disability. People with disabilities have typically not had the opportunity to choose their home or lifestyle and often times have been placed into a living arrangement with other people who they do not know, nor do they care to live with. The system has traditionally offered only what was available, with little or no opportunity for another type of arrangement that is out of the norm.

As we begin to listen differently to what people actually want, we find that often times those coming for services do not want what has been normally offered. People are beginning to ask more and more for ordinary and regular lives in partnership with other community members. It is not that the person miraculously needs less support and that human service system is not necessary, the support just needs to be delivered in a very different manner, more creatively with community citizens in partnership in integral roles with those you are paid to support. It is this combination of supports and services that will enable the person to live more effectively and contently in the long haul.

Several years ago I was planning for a man who was not happy with his current life. He was living with a group of people that he called “sick” and he was supported by 24 hour staffing that he did not like.
As we began to plan with him more deeply, we knew that what we were currently providing for him was not working. We needed to find another way. What we learned from him is that he did much better when he was with typical community people and that he had no desire to live with any person who he deemed to be “sick”. Because he was so distraught living within the group setting, staff often times needed to intervene, setting him up to be at odds with staff. As we began to walk further down this path of understanding, it was clear that he would need a lot of support but that it needed to be delivered in an entirely different manner. He wanted a more normal and ordinary life. He wanted to share his home and his life with people that he valued and who would value him in return. He wanted to be seen as a regular guy, to live with a regular guy and to do the things that regular guys do. He wanted what each of us wants. He deserved to live a gratifying life co-connected with others who he could share in mutual enjoyment with. We needed to open our minds and our hearts to another way of providing support to him. This led us down a different path as we began to recognize community people that he valued as regular guys who could enter into honest and valued relationships with this man.

What this man was teaching us was that there are many unique ways of providing services. He was pushing us towards a new path for how services could be delivered, helping us to realize our weakness; the facilitation of connections of the people we serve with typical community members in honest and productive relationships based upon each of their personal interests and aspirations. We were also caught up in delivering only what we had available and not necessarily what someone needed. He was helping us to fully realize the deep fundamental needs that were being neglected in the service delivery of the past, the profound importance of honest and fulfilling relationships between people. Our new focus was how to support a person to join in partnership with members from his or her community in honest and valuing ways.

The first of the essential tenants that we all must believe in, is that every person we support has an inner spirit core, although it may have never been recognized previously, it lies within. It is the task of each of us to discover what that inner core is all about and where that contribution may lie, even if it is not readily apparent. If we are
successful with this then we will see the beauty of each person, allowing us to assist them in finding others who can enjoy that exquisiteness while working to nurture and enhance the magnificence that the person shares.

As we continued down the path of learning more about this man, we found many interests that he had while growing up, that were now lost with his life within the system. We also realized more and more the importance of many of these experiences for this man. He truly valued working men and saw himself as a working man, not a client of the system. Although people say he cannot read, he could identify all construction trucks by company names. We knew he would not succeed in another traditionally staffed arrangement, so we looked to the community to find a man out there who could share this man’s love of work and construction. Our goal was to look for a man who could enter into a potential life sharing role, sharing this man’s dreams, his home and his life in a meaningful way. Such a man was found and they have been sharing their lives together now for over 12 years.

As I look back on the many people who have entered into the life sharing role with a person with a disability, I have found that they originally saw themselves as a teacher. Various people have entered into this role believing that they could give something to a person. They could teach, they could support, and they could model. But as they take on the role of a true life sharing companion, living life day to day along side of someone (who was at first seen to be the person in need) they begin to realize that as a life sharing companion they are also being taught. They are being taught about their own humanity and their own humility; their personal failings and inhibitions, their capacities and weaknesses. As people grow in this role as a sharer of life and all that comes with it, they begin to realize the depth of the experience that they entered into. This necessity of becoming a learner as well as a teacher has enabled the life sharing partners to grow together. I have spoken with many of the community people, who have entered into life sharing roles with someone with a disability, and it seems when they meet with this awareness then life becomes more settled. The inner development of both people is now the work, as together they continue to share their lives with one another. No one is the burden to the other. I have seen this deep
personal attachment; mutual growth and awareness go on between people for years upon years as they surmount the triumphs and struggles that each new day gives to them.

"The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community finds its reflection and when in the community the strength of each one is living."

- Rudolf Steiner

A critical tenant to enable those with and without disabilities to share life and enter into honest and caring relationships with one another is that the service system must allow the creation of conditions that permit such meaningful and important relationships to unfold. The more we see those with disabilities as dissimilar from those in society, the farther away their service and lifestyle will be from that of the general population. It is when we begin to understand fundamentally the needs of all people to be in valued, honest and ordinary relationships with others that the possibility of community members sharing life in straightforward and personally rewarding ways will occur. We must give up the mindset of the service system being all knowledgeable and the inimitable protector over people who are deemed to be different. We need to listen more carefully to those who come to us for support and we need to support them in becoming involved in valued and honored roles with others. We need to support the development of ordinary relationships between those with and without disabilities. We need to recognize the growing relationships for what they are, friends and companions and not lump them into a human service category. If we can begin to do this, we will begin to experience the wonder and excitement of people who are choosing to share their lives with one another in some very honest and real ways.

I was talking with a woman who is the non disabled housemate to someone that we support. She lives there freely as a companion and friend and is not in any paid or volunteer role. These two women have lived together over the last few years. Her housemate had been institutionalized and always supported through the system in very traditional services. Although her housemate is classified as severely intellectually disabled, this woman has become to know her as a very
intelligent peer. They have a wonderful home and work together to share the responsibilities of not only their home but also their interdependent lives. As I was on the phone with her the other day, I realized that her role from teacher to learner had occurred. She tells me of the times they share in the gardening that they do and how much they both enjoy it. She also shared with me the times that they have had in growing together through times of struggle. She realizes now that her perceived role as this woman’s protector and teacher has changed, as she learns more and more each day with the person she thought could not teach her in return. As she has gotten to know her life sharing partner more fully she has learned much about her own self along the way. She remarked that she felt she was a part of such a wonderful arrangement, that her housemate was such a lovely person and that she felt so fortunate to have been brought together.

Stories like these should not be the exception. We had a state official come to visit us recently and she met these two particular women. When this state official came back to talk with me she said, “She is a very lucky woman.” Sharing a life with someone you value and respect should not be by chance or luck, it should be the norm. Just because you have a disability does not mean that you do not aspire to all the ordinary lifestyles and experiences that each of us take for granted. How did we get so far from normal and ordinary lives and relationships for people with disabilities?

We need to look at the changing the role of the human service system as we begin to facilitate and support more honest and valued roles between the people we are paid to support and common community citizens. It is all very possible, we just need to change our mindsets and our hearts, and find the inner core of each person that we support.

Published in the TASH Newsletter, Volume 32, Issue 9/10, September/October 2006, pages 7-8

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A Parent’s Story

In the mid eighties I was asked to speak at a workshop of our school district’s conference day. Typically, students with disabilities like Deb’s were sent to segregated schools outside of the district but Deb was in her own district. As I spoke about our family and what we wanted for our children I was asked where I thought Deb would be living 20 or so years from then when she was no longer at home with us. After some thought I responded probably in a group home somewhere. The teacher reacted quickly with “you want you daughter to live in a group home?” My reply was of course that was not what I wanted but what other choice did I have. I probably owe that teacher a debt of gratitude as she started me thinking even way back then about the future. I was advocating for Deb to live as normal a life as possible, to attend class’s right alongside her typical peers. It would be something I would do for the duration of her school education. But why should I continue to fight for this when she would leave the school setting to go to a segregated setting who knows where. We wanted Deb to always be a part of her community where people would know her.

Fortunately, when it came time to start planning for her transition from high school, our family was already involved with an agency that shared our philosophy. Onondaga Community Living has a history of providing individualized supports to people with disabilities in their own community. Knowing it was a long process, we began talking about Deb’s eventual move from our home when she was about 16 years old. People at OCL would talk with us about what was important to Deb and us and what we wanted for her. We knew we did not want her to live in a group home. She had spent some respite time in various ones and although they were very nice places she did not like them and did not do well there. Our dream was for her to live in her own home in her community with all the supports that she would need but we didn’t know how to make that happen. OCL put us in touch with Covenant Housing Corp. who develops housing. We began meeting and talking about how we would go about getting a house for Deb. They presented several options for homeownership and told what would be available to Deb in the way of grants. We explored the various options of Deb owning the home, her parents owning the home or putting it into a trust. This was a long process and along the way we consulted with an attorney who specialized in Medicaid, an accountant familiar with our financial situation and people from OMRDD. Eventually it was decided the best route for us was to put the house into a trust and we had that set up. Covenant Housing took charge of the purchase of the house as well as making the necessary renovations to make it wheelchair accessible. They secured the grants and assisted in obtaining financing. When it was complete and Deb moved in the house was sold to the trust.

At the same time we were meeting regularly with folks from OCL to decide what kind of supports would be provided for Deb. Because Deb requires a great deal of assistance in all areas of daily living we all agreed that her day would be divided between a Day Hab program and staffing. In addition Deb was currently receiving some Nursing services in the morning and evening. We also decided Deb would share her home with two unpaid community housemates would could provide safety and companionship when staff was
not available. They would live with her rent-free. OCL took charge of submitting the necessary budgets for staffing and household expenses. All along the way everyone involved in this was kept informed of what was happening in the other’s area. Although we were certain this was what was best for Deb as her parents we were worried and scared. We kept thinking about all the things that could go wrong or fall apart. I began making lists. I had a list of questions about who would be responsible for one thing or another. Then I had a list of my “what If’s”. Each month when we met we would discuss my concerns or fears. If my question couldn’t be answered someone would offer to find out. My fears would be talked about and those discussions helped shaped how Deb’s services would look. We would identify the risk and build in the safeguard.

There were many people involved in this process. Everyone had an area of expertise they were concentrating on and would keep the others informed of their process. We were all working together toward the same goal of Deb living in her own home. There were monthly meetings in our home and everyone was really getting to know Deb and her needs. Staff were identified and were already spending time with Deb. This made a tremendous difference in her transition. Along the way there were many obstacles and at each one everyone would work together to overcome them. It took almost a year to identify the right house and another six months for it to be ready to move in. There were times when I wasn’t sure it would really happen but when it did my husband and I were surprised at how well Deb adjusted. We visited her every day at first and saw for ourselves how very happy she was in her new home. She was full of smiles and laughter. When she came home to visit us she was in great spirits but was just as happy to go back to her own home. Although Deb does not speak she has communicated clearly that all the work everyone had done to make this happen was the right thing to do. We were thrilled and seeing her so happy made a very difficult time for us so very much easier.

Although we had been talking about it for much longer, the more intense planning took over three years before Deb finally moved. But, it was worth all the time and effort. I firmly believe that Deb’s transition went so smoothly because so many people worked together to make it happen. People really knew and understood Deb and what she needed and wanted. It was a real team effort.

Cheryl Kantak, parent