



The Community Living Paper

Promoting Life In Community For Ohio's Citizens

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Prepared For The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Planning Council by Ohio Safeguards

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A Glimpse Back At Early Efforts To Include People With Disabilities In Community Life

•When parents of sons or daughters with mental retardation decided, in the 1950's and early 1960's, that there had to be something better for their children, that decision included a determination that they would invent supports and services if those did not exist.

•The early efforts to get things organized for children and

adults with severe disabilities were constantly threatened by

"Our community has always done what we wanted. We asked, first for schools, and they gave us schools. Then, we asked for money; we got money. We wanted work for people to do in a workshop, and we got work. Then, we got more money. Lately, we've been asking for jobs that people can hold and that will pay more reasonable wages. Our town's businesses have supplied those jobs. The lesson is that we have to be very thoughtful about what we ask for, because the community is likely to give it to us."

the still-prevalent professional (and popular) idea that someone else "far away" would better be able to meet the needs of these people.

•Service organizations have grown so large and complex, control over them and even effective voice about them disappeared from families' experience some time ago.

Images Of Community Life Today & In The Future

When life has changed in desirable ways for people with disabilities and their allies, strategies of cooperation most often prevail. People invest in knowing one another well--in knowing the stories of others and in sharing their own.

...being three-and-a-half and having your pre-school teacher think that you are absolutely irreplaceable; and being the one child in the class who has a severe disability



...listening to a friend tell her favorite story over and over again, and hearing something each time; knowing that for her to risk asking you to listen again is a sign of her capacity to trust you



...getting to hold and rock to sleep your neighbor's grandchildren when they come to visit, even though some people still treat you as a dangerous person.

...being patiently tutored in gardening by your 76 year old neighbor, hoping that the lessons will continue for years because some things, happily, take a long time to learn.

...having your neighbor stop over because he missed seeing you out this morning.



...having your friends from the church and your family organize a schedule so that you can recover from surgery at home, not in the nursing home

...getting a job for someone who has been waiting for a chance to have full-time work.

... always having the coffee pot on because people stop often to visit!

...having your co-workers throw a surprise birthday party for you after you all "clock out" for the night.

...starting a fix-it repair service with your uncle, who you didn't meet until you came home from the institution after 25 years.

Many Of The Answers Lie Outside The Context of Typical Human Services, Within Our Families & Communities

The Way Things Stand Now



Most people with developmental disabilities in Ohio still experience lives that are separated from the general population by the services they rely upon, including schools, sheltered workshops, residential services and others.



People with developmental disabilities placed in facilities are still living with groups of unrelated adults who were collected by the organization that has the legal claim on the facility.



There are growing number of "non-building" service options becoming available in Ohio communities, but these represent a small fraction of the output of taxpayers dollars to support people with disabilities.



Only a few Ohio citizens are enjoying individual relationships of mutual support with people labeled as developmentally disabled.



Unless something changes the likely future is that most people with disabilities will continue to grow up as strangers to their neighbors, peers, and fellow community members.

Most people count on their connections to other people as the significant source of stability, security, and richness in their lives.

Implications For Organizations And Communities



Finding ways to shift increasing shares of resources, which are intended to help people with developmental disabilities, from the control of service agencies to control by people with disabilities themselves and their allies will be a necessity. This will require both the development of the necessary fiscal

means and the removal of many barriers that now stand in the way.

Unless an organization decides to be guided by the situations of individual people who need assistance, and works hard to live out that decision, the distractions of managing an agency in a political context will usually prevail.

Informed choice is usually based on experience; people trying things out ought to be expected; helping

organizations will be required to build flexibility into their structures.

Citizenship carries with it a different status than does clienthood, and that status needs to be confirmed through the ways that people are portrayed.

Assuming more active personal and collective responsibility as trustees or stewards of our own future implies a more public life for many people.

Yes, I Would Like To Order A Copy of The Community Living Paper!

If the ideas on this poster (yes, please feel free to hang this on your wall) interest you, you may wish to read a more detailed description of the vision of changing communities in Ohio where people with developmental disabilities are included as fellow learners, neighbors, co-workers & citizens. Please fill out this form and return it along with a check or money order to cover postage to OHIO SAFEGUARDS; P. O. BOX 1943; CHILLICOTHE, OHIO 45601 to receive a copy of the 40-page book entitled *The Community Living Paper*.

Name: _____

Address: _____ County: _____

Phone: _____

Please send additional copies of *The Community Living Paper*. _____ copies @ \$3.00/copy = _____

Please send copies of this one page summary poster of *The Community Living Paper*. _____ copies @ \$.75/copy = _____

Yes, I Would Like To Host A Conversation In My Community Regarding The Community Living Paper & Efforts To Include Ohioans with Disabilities In The Life Of Our Community. Please Contact Me.

Yes, I Would Like To Attend A Conversation In Or Near My Community Regarding The Community Living Paper. Please notify me of such events.

