

Getting a Life, Not a Program:  
Developing Housing and Supports for  
People with Disabilities

Derrick Dufresne  
Community Resource Alliance, Inc.  
736 Crabthicket Lane  
St. Louis, MO 63131  
314-821-3316  
cra@aol.com

## ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND OPTIONS

### I. Changing Role of Professionals

Directors

Teachers

Brokers- Consultants -Niche Providers

### II. Conflicting Roles of Professionals

Parent

Friend

Teacher

### III. Emerging Roles of People with Disabilities

Recipient

Client

Customer

#### IV. Issues Causing Dissonance

1. We are asking people what they want when we are used to giving people what we think they need
2. Someone's wants may be expensive, indiscernible, inconsistent, or, in some cases, possibly not in his/her best interest (smoking, obesity, etc.)
3. We are utilizing public money. Our customers do not have the money. We are seeking to transfer control. It will not work without transferring money.
4. We expect seamless change. The history of social movements is choppy, contentious and usually outlives its current advocates.
5. Supported living has often become another program. It is married to Medicaid but wishes it was divorced, but can't afford it financially.

6. We have begun to retrench our choices. It is too expensive for people to live alone, yet we have limited options/ choices of roommates.
7. Choice is not consistent across environments. We have people who are living in apartments still getting on yellow buses and making \$.20 per hour.
8. Many people only making good choices by making many choices, some of which are bad. The system is risk averse which limits choice. (Medicaid=Health and Safety) yet obsession with safety is unhealthy
9. Disability is largely becoming a useless word. Advances in technology, learning and experience challenges this assumption . It may be more about learning styles and opportunity.
10. The system builds artificial relationships. People with disabilities live, play and work together and then we wonder why they are clients not citizens. Staff get people **in** the community yet many people are not **of** it

## IMPORTANT ISSUES IN CHANGE

- Community
  - third place
  - bumping into people
  - work
  - church
  - interests
- “The Money Thing”
  - unlinking Housing & Services
  - Self-Determination (Person- Centered Plans and Individual Budgets)
  - earning power (**Minimum** Wage means **Minimum** wage)
- Expanded Options
  - home ownership
  - relationship building (One Person One Wish)
  - investment pools (non-traditional supports)
  - business opportunities (MicroBoards)
- Changing of the Guard
  - younger parents
  - educated customers
  - first generation parents passing on
  - first generation professionals retiring
  - future staff?

- Implementation Issues

- All means All
- Start one Person at a time
- Avoid “Null Hypothesis” People
- Good to Great-Jim Collins thinking
- Start with the most difficult People to Support
- Start with the Best Staff
- Start with a sense of Urgency
- Complete “CARE” analysis
- Kill Stupid ,neutralize YABBUTS
- DOSEARCH, NOT RESEARCH
- Quality not compliance