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Welcome Home: Exploring Housing Options for Adults with Developmental Disabilities in Maine

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Welcome Home: Exploring Housing Options for Adults with Developmental Disabilities in Maine



Wooster Hill Home, Rome



Specialized Housing, Inc. South Portland



Parish House in Bar Harbor
CHOM/ Community Housing of Maine

Housing Options with Levels of Support

Minimally supported:

- Independent apartment, home/condo ownership
- Minimally supported congregate living
- Other community based alternatives, co-ops, co-housing

Moderately supported:

- Parents' home
- Shared living occupancy
- Other community based alternatives, co-ops, co-housing

Most supportive:

- Shared living with increased level of support
- Group home
- Intermediate care facility
- Other community based alternatives, co-ops, co-housing



A House for ME, Kittery

Maine Coalition for Housing and Quality Services

Began as a parent-driven, quality oriented advocacy group in 2006 through a meeting with Community Housing of Maine and the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies.

- As of 2019, it is over 4,000 members strong and continues to work with all interested others to improve policies and make quality housing and supports a reality for individuals with developmental disabilities in Maine.
- This is an action focused person and family-centered coalition, with choice and dignity at the forefront of efforts.

Purpose of Leadership Project

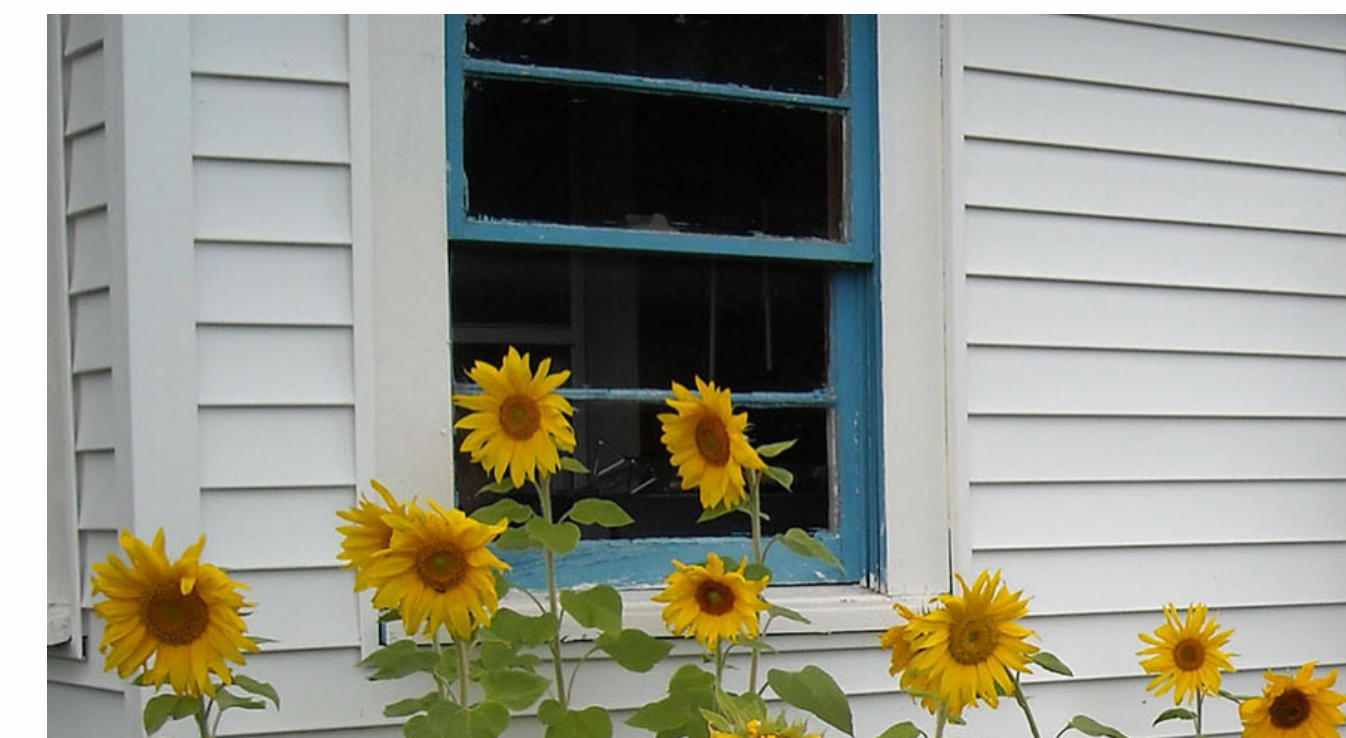
To update the Coalition's presentation on housing and to thoroughly outline various housing options in a user-friendly manner.

Project Activities

I collaborated and met with the Maine Coalition for Housing and Quality Services to revise and update their Housing Options presentation. I attended the Maine Coalition's monthly meetings via remote site, and asked the coalition's participants for input. I spoke with key stakeholders in Maine, Intake at the Office of Aging and Disability, as well as meeting with Resource Management. I spoke with out of state waiver managers and their designees in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. I researched options in 3 additional states, reviewed the Coalition's previous presentation, and did research on their extensive website. I reviewed position statements on housing locally through the MDDC, and the Autism Society of Maine, and the Autism Society's national position statement on community living and housing. I had frequent contact with my leadership mentor, as I interviewed key stakeholders and providers to understand the constellation of housing options and supports. I formulated questions to elicit their responses regarding the future of supportive housing in Maine.



Parish House



KFI, Penobscot, Cumberland and York counties

Research on this project has illustrated that:

- Quality, safe, and affordable housing with individual choice and consistent supports grows stability and a place of belonging.
- All aspects of health and opportunity depend on this.

Dirigo; "I lead"

In speaking with providers in various Maine locations, I was consistently inspired by their commitment and enthusiasm. Gail Fanjoy of KFI encouraged thinking in "The art of the possible", when devising a personal plan which includes housing. "We start with a blank piece of paper and nothing exists until it is created for the person." Roberta Raymond of Local Solutions directed me to "Visions for the Parish House". In which visions for the residents, the staff, the community and the Board of Directors have been created. The Heron Model of Care for the Parish House emphasized health and wellness and community engagement. Dennis Dean of A house for ME spoke of "Circles of Support" rising from a supportive community, in which volunteerism and connectedness abound. Mary Chris Semrow of Specialized Housing shared information on out of state innovations and a family perspective

Voices From Away

Information on expanding housing options for people with DD was gathered from other states and included in the revised presentation. This included the following:

- Massachusetts has three waiver programs and boasts a large number of advocacy groups; such as the Autism Housing Pathways/AHP. This group recently organized a think tank to address housing needs with assistance from their DD Council, the Arc of Massachusetts, and others; with findings released to the state legislature. AHP offers workshops, seminars, how-to clinics related to housing and YouTube videos. The "Community Rule" is cited as guiding efforts in providing supports "In which the individual and their family is always central."
- The New Hampshire Bureau of Developmental Services/BDS contracts with ten local agencies to provide support services to adults with developmental disabilities and their families. Currently, they are supporting approximately 1,900 "enhanced family care homes". This is similar to Maine's "shared living" model. These homes accommodate between one and three adults.
- Parents across the country are starting their own initiatives by unifying, collaborating with developers, the local community and seeking innovative ways to finance, design, and involve all levels of decision makers, including their adult children, in this process. Some of these efforts have resulted in apartment complexes to include adults with disabilities as part of an inclusive community. Wisconsin, Maryland, and Connecticut are breaking ground, literally and figuratively with these new efforts. Community enrichment and inclusion of all segments of the population are emerging as central themes, as well as innovations in design to meet this population's needs, enhance quality of life, and create opportunities for permanence.

Visions for the Future

"In twenty years, I envision the state of Maine as....."
"This is best accomplished by....."
Answers are included in the revised Housing Options Presentation.