



May 13, 2009
Number 14

The Stakeholders say ...

a newsletter to help with strategic planning

SUMMARY OF CONVERSATION WITH FAMILY MEMBERS WHO ATTENDED THE "TRANSITION SERIES," MAY 6

Families said that they worry about what happens to their children when school is over: what will she DO all day? How will he live successfully? Families face the possibility of lots of empty time in their children's lives (includes the summer, especially), and they see the continuing need for someone to guide them through the maze of requirements and information toward better life-circumstances for their children. A big problem that families identified is that there's NO TRANSPORTATION available in flexible ways to take advantage of various opportunities the community offers.

In the future, families see their daughters and sons going to work in community jobs, full-time if possible. They envision their children as parts of active social networks and moving forward toward living in their own places. Families are committed to seeing their children's lives filled with purpose and meaning. Participation in active social networks will require (among other things) more flexibility in the ways that "leisure" supports are used and lots more opportunities for people with disabilities (especially children of older primary and middle school age) to practice social-learning.

Each family in the conversation named "one thing" that they'd hope for over the next several years. Among those hopes were:

- That the DD Program would keep on getting better at family networking and information-sharing;
- That the professionals and other support workers who support their children in the future would be well-screened, well-trained, and well-compensated;
- That their children would live in mixed, integrated communities where they could live safely and enjoyably with people they care about and where they could have access to places and resources they want to use;
- That local citizens demonstrate more awareness and understanding of people with disabilities and their life-situations;
- That those close to their children would help each individual understand her/his own capacity and encourage reaching for his/her greatest possible success.

HEARING FROM FAMILIES!

MEMBERS OF THE ARC OF BUTLER COUNTY BOARD OF DIRECTORS TALK ABOUT THE FUTURE

The Arc's Board of Directors spent part of its May 7 meeting in conversation about what's needed and what's important for people with developmental disabilities (and families) over the next several years. Major points mentioned were:

- We have to find new ways to fund/support transportation that's flexible and responsive;
- Early Intervention services have to continue to be supported;
- Employment opportunities are of top priority—we must find ways to work more closely with businesses in the area to promote jobs for people;
- Transition projects (Project Search, Project Life) have been helpful, but more is needed because families still flounder when school is over. Systems have to be easier to navigate.
- Promote "futures planning" for students—their IEP's should include "what I'm going to do when school is over."
- Safe housing is important.
- Is more thought about the use of funds called for? For example, maybe working with other counties would help with certain efficiencies in some areas. Does everyone working for the Board have a unique and necessary job or is there duplication, such that staff positions could be stretched in order to put good people to use in better ways? That would be better than getting rid of services if money gets tighter.
- We like the leisure activities that are available and would like more, especially in the community.

UPCOMING EVENTS

*Strategic Planning Search Conference, May 18-19, 2009

Wilks Conference Ctr. Hamilton

Please contact Sharon Sheets, 867-5924, ext. 27, if you haven't yet responded to your invitation to take part in the Search Conference.