

**INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMS  
FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH  
LEARNING DISABILITIES**

Adapted from  
*Review of Residential Programs for  
Young Adults with Learning Disabilities*  
Presented to Riverview School Board of Trustees  
By Dr. Peter S. Capernaros, April 25, 2003

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# CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION .....	2
REPORTS ON INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS	
Anchor To Windward, Inc. ....	3
Berkshire Hills Music Academy .....	5
Casa De Amma .....	7
Center for Adaptive Learning .....	8
Chapel Haven.....	10
College Internship Program - Berkshire Center.....	12
College Living Experience .....	15
Foundation for Independent Living .....	17
HALYARD .....	20
Horizons School.....	22
Independence Center.....	25
JESPY House .....	28
LIFE, Inc. ....	31
Life Development Institute .....	33
Marbridge.....	36
Minnesota Life College.....	38
Moving Forward Towards Independence .....	41
ScenicView .....	43
Specialized Housing, Inc. ....	44
St. Louis Life .....	47
The Threshold Program .....	49
TILL (Toward Independent Living and Learning, Inc.) .....	50
Vista Vocational and Life Skills Center, Inc. ....	53

## INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2003, the Riverview School Board of Trustees asked Trustee Dr. Peter Capernaros to undertake a study in response to the concerns of some Riverview parents about the lack of appropriate or available placements for their sons and daughters after graduation. One of Dr. Capernaros' objectives was to help parents identify appropriate existing placements.

It was Dr. Capernaros's wish that this report continue to be a valuable resource for families, and so Riverview School requested each program to provide an update to their listing. We have indicated the date of that revision under the program title. If a program did not provide us with an update, we noted the work to be the original 2003 submission.

We remain extremely grateful to Dr. Capernaros for his efforts in creating this document and hope that the information herein will be helpful to you as you consider independent living program options.

Jeanne M. Pacheco  
Director of Admission and Placement  
Riverview School, Inc.

**ANCHOR TO WINDWARD, INC.**  
(Revised October 2009)

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Executive Director: Michael P. Harvey

***Providing independent living and social networking services to adults with developmental disabilities including Down Syndrome, Asperger's Syndrome, and other disabilities that stem from early childhood.***

Providing independent living and social networking services to adults with developmental disabilities including Down Syndrome, Asperger's Syndrome, and other disabilities that stem from early childhood.

Anchor to Windward (ATW) is located in Salem, MA on the North Shore, about a half hour's drive from Boston. Salem is an historic city with a diverse population of about 41,000. Salem is one of America's oldest cities and is rich in history from early colonial times and the American Revolution. Salem may be best known for the witchcraft trials of 1692. Salem abounds with historic venues, museums, parks and 18 miles of coastland and sandy beaches. Its main business is tourism.

The offices of ATW are located in the Vinnin Square business/retail district on the Marblehead/Swampscott/Salem line; and on a bus line that connects the cities and towns of Salem, Swampscott, Marblehead, Lynn and Peabody. The ATW facilities include a large function room, two smaller classroom/activity rooms, a game room including ping pong, pool and foosball, a TV lounge and a large reception area and office. The reception area includes an internet connected computer for client use.

ATW now offers many different programs: an Independent Living program for adults who live in their own apartments in Marblehead, South Salem or Swampscott, and Social Networking programs for young adults still living with their families. ATW also has an active Social Club for weekend parties and recreational activities. Fees for all activities, including Independent Living, are affordable and offer as many or as little services as needed. The Social Club is open to all and scholarships are available to those least able to pay the monthly fee.

Anchor to Windward began in 1989, when the parents of a Riverview graduate, long-term residents of Marblehead, sought an appropriate placement for their adult child. They began the independent living program in Marblehead with two residents including a second Riverview graduate. Over the next two or three years the number of clients increased to six, with each client finding – and renting or buying – his or her own apartment or condominium. The Independent Living program has “graduated” clients who now live independently with minimal assistance.

ATW is a small program, but definitely growing and expanding on its original mission. In addition to Independent Living clients, ATW also offers in-home daily living skills for adult children whose parents are trying to transition them to independent living. ATW also has an active men’s group, a social networking group and the ever-popular Social Club which provides a broader opportunity to meet people, make friends and participate more fully in the life of the community. ATW now has about 30 members in all of its programs. Adult clients range in age from a group in their late 20s, a group in their 30s and 40s to a small group in their early 50s.

ATW offers five-day-a-week programming (Tuesday – Saturday). Two evenings a week there are scheduled light suppers at the office complex with discussion groups and other activities. Social and recreational activities are held on Friday nights and Saturday afternoons.

Those interested in the Independent Living program should be aware that all residents are expected to work, or volunteer, at least 20 – 25 hours a week. That is, they should be work-ready on acceptance into the program. Residents work in local supermarkets and a hospital. Jobs in the Boston area also accessible by commuter train from Salem or Swampscott and by bus from Marblehead.

Tuition for the all-inclusive Independent Living program with 24-hour a day emergency service and recreational activities each weekend is \$28,000 per year. This figure does not include basic living costs, such as rent or condo fees, food, incidental expenses and medical care, etc. The rental cost of a good one-bedroom apartment in Salem, Marblehead and Swampscott averages about \$900 a month; the purchase cost of a good condominium could run \$200,000 to \$250,000 or more. The average total annual cost can be estimated at around \$40,000 for Independent Living while other programs for clients still living at home are much less. None of the Independent Living residents receive state assistance and so far all have been privately funded.

## **BERKSHIRE HILLS MUSIC ACADEMY**

*(Added October 2009)*

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*Berkshire Hills Music Academy develops life skills and social skills of young adults with disabilities through a collegiate learning experience enriched with musical arts.*

**Mission** - Our mission is to educate, train and develop the talent of young adults with special learning needs in a community that shares a passion for music so they may achieve personal growth and make a positive contribution to society.

**History** – Berkshire Hills Music Academy was founded in 1999 and the doors opened to its first inaugural class in 2001. The concept of a residential music school for students with disabilities originated at a music camp for individuals with Williams syndrome and with a program at the University of Connecticut called “Music & Minds,” which set out to demonstrate that, for students with a unique passion for music, a talent development approach based on strengths could lead to achievement in academic areas of weakness.

### **Programs –**

#### **Two Year Certificate Program – (ages 18-30)**

Preparing for independence, vocational readiness and personal fulfillment with courses including:

- Consumer math
- Computer skills
- Literacy
- Social skills
- Public speaking
- Adult sexuality
- Healthy living
- Physical fitness
- Life skills (budgeting, money management, hygiene, food preparation and community access)
- Music lessons and ensembles
- Music appreciation
- Vocational training (field work at pre-schools, nursing homes and senior centers)

#### **Music in Careers (MIC) Program**

Qualified BHMA graduates do intensive field work and learn apartment living skills.

### **Extended Learning Community**

MIC graduates live independently with some support services from BHMA.

### **Music Summer Program (ages 16-25)**

Offering musical activities, lessons, performances, skill building, field trips, friendship and fun with experienced staff. One-to-four week program, residential or day, for young people with special needs who love music and want to experience BHMA.

### **Music Therapy Program (ages 7-11)**

Music and movement exploration to develop attention and social skills. Board-certified Music Therapy staff. Individual music evaluation and consultation. Four-day residential program for child with parent/caregiver.

**Our students** – Our students come to Berkshire Hills Music Academy from every region of the country and from abroad. Though most students are residential, day students are enrolled as well.

Since its founding in 2001, BHMA has successfully served young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities linked to various conditions including:

- Autism spectrum disorder
- Asperger’s Syndrome
- PDD-NOS
- Blindness and visual impairments
- Brain injury
- Cerebral palsy
- Down syndrome
- Learning disabilities
- Williams syndrome

Though exhibiting a wide range of ability, our students are seen for their interests-they are singers, songwriters, keyboard players, drummers, guitar and bass players, string, brass, and wind players and dancers. Their motivation through music unlocks their full potential to achieve more.

### **Our College Community –**

BHMA is located in the culturally vibrant and accessible “Five College Area” of scenic western Massachusetts on a 40 acre estate within walking distance to Mount Holyoke College and shops, and on the public bus route.

While living in a well-appointed dormitory on their own campus, our students learn to access the local community safely, to shop, dine, bank, visit events, and attend concerts.

**CASA DE AMMA**  
(Revised December 2009)

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Web Site: [www.casadeamma.org](http://www.casadeamma.org)

Program Director: Aaron Vorell

***A unique apartment community fostering  
growth and independence in adults with special needs***

Casa de Amma is the realization of the dream of Russ and Susie Leatherby, parents of Riverview graduate Douglas Leatherby. The Riverview School provided not only an education but an environment where students matured and friendships flourished. An idea for an innovative, person - centered program was born and Casa de Amma opened in 2004.... a place to live, to learn, to grow, and to create lasting friendships.

Located in beautiful San Juan Capistrano, California, Casa de Amma is a state-of-the-art thirty- two unit complex that is impressive yet feels like home. Residents enjoy their own apartments, but also have many common areas including a lovely dining room, and recreation facilities that include a movie theater, workout room, basketball court, pool and jacuzzi.

Full residential services are complemented by a comprehensive menu of life skills education and support tailored to meet the needs of the individual. These include: Apartment Life; Personal Finance; Healthy Lifestyle; Medical Management; Community Involvement; Grooming and Employment. Work is a central part of Casa de Amma life, and residents may be employed, do volunteer work or pursue further education.

The Casa de Amma Employment Coordinator helps each resident to achieve success. Casa de Amma is a community of friends where families are always welcome: A full schedule of recreational activities allows residents to be as connected or independent as they wish.

The residents of Casa de Amma have complex learning or mild developmental disabilities, are able to function independently but require assistance, structure, and support in their daily living. All have mastered basic self help skills and have social skills sufficient to live in a peer community. Casa de Amma staff are competent professionals dedicated to the health, well-being, and development of each resident.

## CENTER FOR ADAPTIVE LEARNING

*(Revised January 2010)*

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Web Site: [www.centerforadaptivelearning.org](http://www.centerforadaptivelearning.org)

President: Don Bone  
Executive Director: Genevieve A. Stolarz  
Program Director: John Ledahl  
Clinical Director: Nancy Perry, Ph. D.  
Education Director: Jeannine Chang

The Center for Adaptive Learning (CAL) is located near Mt. Diablo State Park in the city of Concord, California; a city of over 120,000 situated about thirty miles east of San Francisco, across the bay. Concord is part of the greater San Francisco metropolitan area, and is linked to the city by major freeways and by BART (the Bay Area Rapid Transit). It is an easy car or BART train ride from San Francisco through the beautiful Oakland/ Berkeley Hills. Concord is primarily a residential community, and boasts a number of parks and open spaces, contrasted with a busy high-rise downtown. It gives the impression of a vibrant and active community, with a variety of local employment opportunities.

CAL is on Clayton Road, a busy main thoroughfare, a two-story building consists of direct-care offices the second floor and additional administrative offices on the first floor. The 6, 100 sq. ft. office building was purchased years ago, with the help of parents. The Center's clients live in adjoining apartment buildings. The apartment buildings are leased by the Center, and then subleased to the program residents, who live two to an apartment (each in his/her own bedroom). Nearby are shopping, religious institutions, a library, community colleges, and a State College and University, as well as a BART station. A bus stop is located just outside the office.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:** The Center celebrated its twentieth anniversary in October 2008. CAL is a comprehensive, residential program serving adults with neurodevelopmental disabilities referred to more recently as autism spectrum disabilities. Participants must be twenty (20) years of age or older to apply. CAL serves about 48 clients, ranging in age from the 20's to the 50's. Although most come from California, there are individuals from all over the country. The clients have diagnoses such as Asperger's Syndrome, High Functioning Autism, Nonverbal Learning Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Pervasive Developmental Disorder-NOS. CAL is a life-span program that provides services in six areas: independent living skills training, individual counseling and educational groups, job development with placement and follow-up support, extensive art therapy and computer training/instruction, as well as a health and fitness program. The program's focus is on supporting and encouraging the adults to develop to their full potential not on fixing their disabilities.

The program was started in 1988 by a group of parents of young people with learning disabilities. They realized that despite having attended school, their children had not received the training in practical life skills they would need if they were to pursue further formal education or find employment. They started with five residents. There have been two residents who came from Riverview School (one still comes to CAL for periodic services). There are twenty four staff members; at least one staff member is on duty twenty-four hours a day. There is no annual parents' conference. Instead, there is an Annual Award Ceremony, which parents are invited to attend.

The Executive Director, Genevieve Stolarz, has been with CAL for twenty one years. She has a background in nursing and education and has long been an advocate for young disabled people and their parents. The CAL program includes individual counseling (the staff includes a licensed neuropsychologist, Nancy Perry, Ph. D. who has been a Clinical Director at CAL for twelve years.

**THE CORE PROGRAM:** The Center has demonstrated a long term success with its clients by focusing on continuous education related to the four critical, inter-connected elements of life to achieve and sustain self-reliance:

- Health: nutrition, meal planning, grocery shopping, personal hygiene, personal space/home care, exercise, medical advocacy and medication management.
- Emotional: Individual and group counseling, relationship management (peers, employer, significant other and family), supportive management related to mild depression, anxiety and self-esteem development.
- Social-Interaction: Socialization to support employment, peer and family interaction, development of personal interests and managing the social environment.
- Vocational: Skill development, job readiness education, job development, job matching and on the job follow up and support.

All residents are expected to attend a weekly counseling sessions; vocational skills training; job placement and coaching (residents who are employed are required to participate in a weekly workers group meeting to discuss work-related issues). In addition, an individualized annual curriculum (IPP) is designed for each resident. The curriculum focuses on living skills, vocational, educational, and interpersonal skills. One unique feature of the CAL program is its use of Art (drawing, painting, sculpture and computer graphics) as a means of enhancing residents' learning abilities. CAL is committed to creating and maintaining a living and working environment, which promotes dignity and support a sense of community.

Clients who apply to CAL should have the potential for employment. Clients have been placed in a variety of job situations, including drugstores, restaurants, data entry, cashiering, stocking merchandise, janitorial work, and courtesy clerks. Only a few clients work full time (which is not unusual for the programs we visited). In the future, Mrs. Stolarz plans to seek vendor status from the State Department of Rehabilitation so that CAL can develop and operate its own work site. Some of the clients are enrolled in Diablo Valley Community College, and also take courses at the local Adult Education Center.

Looking ahead to the future, and with a particular concern for the health problems which her clients are liable to encounter as they age, CAL has acquired a parcel of land on which will be building an apartment complex for individuals with neuron-developmental disabilities. Construction is anticipated to begin in spring of this year.

CAL is a public, non-profit (501c3), non-sectarian, California corporation; licensed by the State of California: Dept. of Education and Dept. of Social Services; CAL is also a vendor of services for the Regional Centers in California. CAL is essentially a publicly funded program. That is, the vast majority of the residents are funded by the State of California. Originally, all the residents were private pay, but after a while the organizers determined that unless CAL was to remain a small program, they should seek to serve publicly funded clients as well. A small percentage of residents are still privately funded. The others qualify for state funding under California's rather liberal policy of financial support not only for the mentally retarded, but also for those in certain other disability categories. CAL also handles Social Security applications, funding, and related problems for the residents/clients. CAL also makes use of federal housing subsidies. As soon as new residents/clients arrive, they are put on a list for "Section Eight" Housing.

**CHAPEL HAVEN**  
(Revised October 2009)

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President: Betsey J. Parlato  
Vice President, Admissions & Marketing: Judith S. Lefkowitz

Chapel Haven is in the Westville neighborhood of New Haven, Connecticut. Public transportation is handy, and many community resources, job opportunities and conveniences are within walking distance, including shops, restaurants and other small businesses. Chapel Haven has been at this location since 1976, and is a recognized and accepted part of the community.

Chapel Haven was founded in 1972 by two families whose children, graduates of Maplebrook School, lacked the skills to live independently. Concerned about the limited options then available to them, the families decided to create their own program for six young people. The children of the original families now live independently in the area, and are still affiliated with the program, which has grown to serve 200 persons, including many alumni of Riverview School.

The focal point of the Chapel Haven campus is the Bershaw Boswell Community Center, an 11,000 square foot facility with classrooms, including a well-equipped computer room, a media art center, an art and ceramic studio, a fitness center, and on the top floor, a large community room for meetings, parties and recreation and a licensed Café for catering and many other functions.

Chapel Haven has three programs:

- **REACH Residential Education at Chapel Haven**
- **ASAT, a separate Asperger's Syndrome Adult Transition Program**  
Both programs are in New Haven, residentially based, two-year programs that provide a curriculum focusing on Social Communicative Competencies. The programs equip students with a broad repertoire of social competency and adaptive skills across multiple settings with diverse populations while also helping with life skills, college and employment.
- **Chapel Haven West in Tucson, AZ** serves adults with mild developmental disabilities and those on the autism spectrum in the area of life skills, education, employment and recreation programs. It is a few blocks from the University of Arizona – within walking distance – allowing residents to attend classes, have access to University facilities, benefit from their state of the art Disability Resource Center and SALT Center, and pursue employment opportunities. University faculty are part of the program and graduate

interns in the Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences Department assist staff and serve as mentors to our students in a college setting.

Chapel Haven is a state approved school whose objective is to train young persons with learning disabilities to function independently in the larger community. Second, Chapel Haven is a support program for young adults who have completed a course of training (at Chapel Haven or elsewhere), or who otherwise demonstrate readiness for the challenge of independent living.

President, Betsey J. Parlato has served in her present role for ten years and presides over a staff of 120 persons. New staff members go through a formal three-day training period followed by on-the-job training.

The REACH program provides two years (24 continuous months) of on-campus, supervised apartment living for up to 30 students. Students are young adults, ages 18 or older, which come from all over the United States as well as from foreign countries. About one-third is from Connecticut and nearby states. The roster includes numerous graduates of Riverview School.

On campus, the Rossman Residence houses the program's students. The eight apartments come fully furnished with a kitchen, living room, dining area, bedrooms and bath(s). Apartment living provides residents with an opportunity to experience many of the same challenges they will encounter after graduation. Life skills instructors work with students on practical household maintenance skills, shopping, cooking, personal finances, hygiene, interpersonal relations, etc.

In Chapel Haven's state approved education program, students follow a schedule of classes that include both academic courses (Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies) as well as Life Skills, Employment Skills, Wellness and Continuing Education Classes (Painting, Ceramics, Music, Drama, Dance, etc.)

Chapel Haven's Supported Living Program assists about 130 individuals (graduates of Chapel Haven's Residential Life Skills Program and others) who have made the transition to independent living, but who still need some level of support. The program will help the individual to find an apartment or condo, and will match those interested in sharing a residence. A Support Coordinator is assigned to each client as a guide and mentor, assisting with the process of maintaining a home and accessing community services.

There is also a recreation program offering more than 25 choices a month which students and all the members of the Chapel Haven community may participate. Chapel Haven sponsors a number of Special Interest groups and a travel club.

Chapel Haven's Board of Directors is comprised of sixteen persons. Roughly half are family members of clients and the others are experienced professionals drawn from the Greater New Haven community and beyond. The board is actively involved in the program and meets every other month.

Chapel Haven is nationally accredited by CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities), approved by the Connecticut Department of Education and licensed by the Connecticut Department of Education and licensed by the Connecticut Department of Developmental Disabilities.

**COLLEGE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**  
**THE BERKSHIRE CENTER**  
*(Revised October 2009)*

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Executive Director: Heather Greene  
Assistant Executive Director/Director of Admissions: Caroline Wheeler

The Berkshire Center is situated a few minutes off the turnpike (Interstate 90) in the town of Lee (population around 6,000), in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts. The program was founded in 1983 by Dr. Michael McManmon. After working for some time in the field of learning disabilities, Dr. McManmon saw the need for a program to help those young adults who were interested in furthering their formal education or developing work skills, yet still required academic, vocational, and social skill supports. Lee was chosen as the site for the program because of its location and size. Lee is equidistant from Boston and New York City and provides a safe residential environment for the Center's students.

The Berkshire Center makes use of the facilities and offerings of nearby post-secondary schools and businesses to carry out its mission. It supplements these outside assets with the direction, counseling and support it provides its students.

The Center occupies seven buildings, all within walking distance of each other, on or near the town's main streets. The program offices, some classrooms and a computer room are in one building. Tutoring and other staff offices are offered in two additional nearby buildings. Other buildings are living quarters for students. Students reside in apartments containing from one to five bedrooms; each student has his or her own bedroom. The apartments are the site of life skills training by residential staff members, including cleaning, meals, laundry, leisure activities, and the like.

There are about 55 students in the program, about half male, half female. They range in age from 18 to 26. Applicants must be high school graduates, or if not, at least 18 years of age. Students are mostly from the Northeast, especially the New England states and New York, but there are some from other areas of the country. The College Internship Program has three other program sites: in Melbourne, Florida; in Bloomington, Indiana; and in Berkeley, California.

The Center employs nine full-time and twenty-eight part-time staff members, including several clinicians, a number of educators, and a career coordinator.

The average length of stay for Berkshire Center students is two to four years. The expectation is that students will return to their home communities with good independent living skills and well prepared for further education and for employment.

Individual academic and vocational goals for each individual are discussed and determined at the outset. Students are then assigned to one of two programs:

- 1) Academic Track – Students attend Berkshire Community College (BCC) or Mildred Elley Business School. BCC's main campus is in Pittsfield, 20 minutes from Lee. The college offers a variety of courses in business, education, human services, the arts and sciences, as well as many other fields, and awards a certificate or an associates degree. Berkshire Center students are enrolled in the same courses as other students and face the same requirements. They may, however, receive accommodations, through the Student Disabilities Office at the college. Students need not take a full course load, but only as many courses as they can reasonably handle each semester. Credits earned at BCC are accepted at all institutions that are part of the University of Massachusetts system, a plus for students who choose to work toward a bachelor's degree after leaving the Center.

Students may also take courses at the Mildred Elley Business School in Pittsfield. The school offers certification in areas such as information technology, business applications, bookkeeping, travel and tourism, paralegal and medical assistant studies, and massage therapy. Approximately 85% of the Center's students are pursuing an academic track.

- 2) C-STEP (Career Skills Training and Employment Program) – Through the C-STEP program, students receive the support services and skills instruction they need to become self-motivated, self-sufficient young professionals that can forge ahead and succeed in developing a clear career path objective and be successful negotiators in the work world. In-house vocational curriculum provides instruction in self-presentation, communication skills, defining interests, value clarification, skill assessment, and career exploration. Approximately 15% of the Center's students are engaged in C-STEP.

Students involved in either track participate in internships with local businesses. Staff provide guidance and support in matching interests and abilities to an appropriate internship site. For students whose focus is college academics, an internship of a few hours per week can be expected. For those on a vocational track, internships are more intensive, with possible paid positions thereafter.

The Center supplements educational offerings with an array of support services. It provides its own courses in such subjects as reading and writing skills, study skills, math, organizational and time management, social thinking, theory of mind, and hidden curriculum. It also schedules tutoring sessions and mandatory study halls, where staff assistance is available.

Each student is assigned an advisor who acts as a case manager, helping the student set short- and long-term goals, assisting with money management, helping to resolve problems, and communicating regularly with parents.

Each week students are seen individually by clinical staff members. Counseling is intended to be practical and to assist students in dealing with problems related to self concept, social issues and

self advocacy. A Medication Coordinator meets with students weekly to assist students in organizing medications for the week.

Students and staff jointly plan recreational activities. Every weekend 406 activities are scheduled; students are asked to pick two. They may, alternatively, decide how they want to spend their leisure time. The Berkshires have a number of well-recognized cultural institutions and events and offer a broad spectrum of summer and winter outdoor activities. To maintain physical fitness, all students work with the Center's Wellness Coordinator, who assists students in creating balance through nutrition education, exercise, stress-reduction practices, sensory diets, and sleep regimens. Students are also required to perform at least one hour of community service per week.

The College Internship Program is a for-profit organization. It does not have a board of directors. It does have a National Professional Advisory Board comprised of outstanding professionals in the fields of learning differences and autism spectrum disorders. A weekend parents' conference is scheduled annually.

The Center follows a typical college calendar, from September to May, with Thanksgiving, winter and spring breaks. There is an optional summer program. During the spring break, the Center offers an optional trip to a foreign destination.

The annual tuition cost, depending on the level of support required for the student, ranges from \$38,500 to \$69,500. Room, board, utilities and personal spending at a recommended level of \$250 per month, are at approximately \$1,150 per month (\$13,700 annually).

Most students are on a private pay basis. Some who have not yet reached age 22 receive funding from the Massachusetts Department of Education and their local school systems or from public agencies.

**COLLEGE LIVING EXPERIENCE**  
*(Added November 2009)*

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Website: [www.ExperienceCLE.com](http://www.ExperienceCLE.com)

President: Stephanie Martin

**About College Living Experience**

College Living Experience (CLE) was established in 1989. The program provides intensive assistance with academic, independent living and social skills to students with special needs as they attend community colleges, vocational schools or universities, and transition to independent adulthood. CLE students include young adults with autism spectrum disorders, ADHD, Asperger's syndrome, non-verbal learning disorders and other learning disabilities.

**Approach**

CLE assists students in every step of their post-secondary education, starting with registration. Once enrolled, students live together in apartments near local CLE offices and student centers while taking classes at community colleges, vocational schools or universities. Professional staff members, including a clinical psychologist, work closely with students to provide structured tutoring sessions, independent living skills training and social outings.

**Philosophy**

CLE believes all students can advance academically, socially and behaviorally, given the right instruction in the right environment. CLE helps students with special needs prepare for life as independent adults. With newfound skills and a degree or certificate in hand, our students find meaningful work and relationships as independent adults.

## Programs

CLE provides individualized support in the following areas to complement students' higher education goals.

- ✓ **Academics:** CLE collaborates with certificate programs, two-year colleges and four-year universities to provide a variety of opportunities for students to earn an associate's degree, bachelor's degree or vocational certificate. Students attend sessions with content-specific professional tutors and study hall sessions each week. In addition, weekly course reviews help students keep pace with their peers.
- ✓ **Independent Living:** Students are introduced to the responsibilities of apartment living and receive help establishing and maintaining a bank account, paying bills, shopping, preparing meals, cleaning their apartment and other daily activities. They learn how to create and follow a schedule, use public transportation and interact with roommates and neighbors.
- ✓ **Social Skills:** Students have the opportunity to plan and participate in a variety of activities each week, such as bowling, movies or outings to local events and attractions. Students are paired with a mentor who is a graduate student in psychology or a related field. The mentor facilitates the guided application of the social skills CLE students are learning. Students also participate in group sessions with staff members and fellow students. The ultimate goal in providing social skills training is to help students succeed and become independent in different environments.
- ✓ **Transition Services:** To assist students with job readiness, CLE provides instruction and coaching on essential skills such as searching for jobs, completing applications and seeking out volunteer opportunities. Students learn these valuable skills through experiential education guided by professional instruction.

## Locations

Students travel from all over the country to attend CLE programs in:

- ✓ Austin, Texas;
- ✓ Denver , Colorado
- ✓ Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
- ✓ Monterey, California
- ✓ Washington, D.C.

## **FOUNDATION FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**

*(Revised July 2007)*

1383 Lyons Road  
Coconut Creek, FL 33063-3908  
Tel: 954-968-6472

Web Site: [www.filinc.org](http://www.filinc.org)

Executive Director: Cynthia Sutherland

The Foundation for Independent Living is located in the city of Coconut Creek, Florida. Coconut Creek is a rapidly growing community of over 45,000, about a half hour's drive northwest of Fort Lauderdale. Housing is primarily composed of single family homes, condominiums and townhouses, and the community gives the impression of affording its residents an attractive suburban lifestyle.

The program was started in 1986 by two sets of parents who wanted their learning disabled children to live in South Florida. The Executive Director, Cynthia Sutherland, who grew up in the Coconut Creek area, has been with The Foundation almost since its inception. Prior to that she had a state position in which she worked with developmentally delayed individuals.

There are currently 60 residents in the program, with ages ranging from 18 to 66, although most are in their twenties and thirties. The ratio of men to women is about 50:50. Approximately one-third of the residents are from Florida; the other two-thirds come from all over the U.S.A., and there are several from foreign countries. There are several Riverview alumni among them.

The program employs a staff of 30, split about evenly between full and part-time.

The Foundation's office is in a small mall (close at hand is a much larger mall), and includes a sizeable and attractive space in which residents can meet, relax and enjoy each other's company evenings and on weekends. Adjacent to this space is a computer room (the director prefers that residents use the program's computers rather than have their own computers in their apartments).

The adults served by the program live in an apartment complex which is located about two blocks from the office, within easy walking distance. This is a fairly large complex, and the apartments of the Foundation residents are not contiguous but scattered within the complex. We were assured, however, that Foundation members are readily accessible to each other, and some staff live in the complex. Staff members are frequently in residents' apartments to provide guidance and support (they are not required to be on 24-hour duty, but are available by cell phone when needed outside normal work hours). The apartments are modern and attractive, and each contains a kitchen, living room and dining area. Residents are expected to plan and cook their own meals, with training and assistance as needed, at least in the early stages.

It is interesting to note that when the Foundation began, everyone had a roommate. As time passed, however, it became clear that the majority were not satisfied with this arrangement. Today, all but a few residents live alone. Among the residents are three married couples (one couple has been married for 14 years, another couple for 9 years).

All residents are expected to work, and in fact 82 percent are competitively employed in a variety of work situations, with the Foundation providing job placement services, job coaching, and liaison with employers. There are many employment opportunities available in this still-growing area. For those who are not yet prepared for competitive employment, the Foundation offers its own “work experience” in a small storefront space about a mile from the office. Here, under the supervision of a staff member, residents refurbish TV remote controls or assemble pens, etc., pursuant to job contracts arranged by the program.

Because everyone is busy during the day, individual and group training and activities, other than those that are job-related, take place evenings and on weekends. During weekday evenings the staff provides household and financial skills training one-on-one as well as in groups. Group sessions are offered in such subjects as social skills, arts and crafts, conflict resolution, human sexuality and computer skills. One evening each week there is a “business meeting” at which all residents are expected to be present, and this serves as an occasion for an exchange of information and the airing of concerns and complaints. Group recreational and cultural events are scheduled each weekend. The program operates vans, and together they can accommodate the entire enrollment. (The city operates several bus routes, free of charge within city limits, but they operate only on weekdays.) Several residents take courses at a nearby campus of Broward Community College.

Exercise classes are offered every day, under the supervision of a staff member. The residential apartment complex has an exercise room as well as an outdoor swimming pool. Residents of the Foundation also enjoy a membership at the community gym.

Residents make one major trip, as well as four in-state trips, as a group, each year. In recent years one major trip has been to Alaska, another to the Grand Canyon.

Staff closely monitor the use of medications by residents until it is perceived that they are capable of self-administration, at which point there is some reduction in the degree of supervision.

The two founding fathers of the Foundation continue to serve on the Board of Directors, along with three persons who are family members of residents, and one other individual. The Board meets at least four times a year. Family meetings, including one black tie affair, are scheduled twice a year.

The cost of the program in 2007 is \$2,625 a month, and that includes the rent. (All apartments are rented; none of the residents own their homes.) It does not, however, include other essential costs, such as food, utilities, telephone, cable TV, outings, entertainment, etc., which can run to \$800 a month or more. To these figures may be added the roughly \$300 for each of the four scheduled in-state trips, and \$2,200 to \$2,500 for the annual major trip. So the total annual cost is liable to be in the neighborhood of \$45,000 to \$50,000. One further important note regarding costs: There is a one-time tax deductible "donation" of \$5,000 required when an individual enters the program.

The Foundation does not accept publicly funded applicants, on the grounds that government paperwork and regulations would be restrictive and burdensome. All residents are privately funded.

We were told that there is no ceiling on enrollment, that the Foundation will accept all those whom it is determined are eligible. On the other hand, the director considers a growth rate of not more than six residents a year as appropriate.

The Foundation accepts applicants within a broad range of abilities. Clearly, all prospective applicants must be able to live in their own apartments without 24-hour supervision, and this may be intimidating to some applicants and their parents. But for new arrivals, the expectation is that the staff will provide the assistance needed during the period of transition, and that a failure to adjust will be rare.

The Foundation for Independent Living is intended to be a life-long program for those residents who choose to make it their permanent home.

**HALYARD, LLC**  
(Added September 2007, Revised October 2009)

Hyannis, Massachusetts  
Mail Address: P. O. Box 669  
East Sandwich, MA 02537

Tel: 508-778-0041

E-Mail: [Halyardservices@aol.com](mailto:Halyardservices@aol.com)

Web Site: [www.halyardservices.org](http://www.halyardservices.org)

Contact: Sasha and John McNamara

**Who does HALYARD service?**

HALYARD currently services 26 young learning disabled adults living in Hyannis, Massachusetts.

- Adults over 21 years of age
- Primary diagnosis of learning disabilities
- Self-medicating
- Motivated to gain independence
- Responsible and trustworthy individuals
- Able to communicate needs effectively
- Social compatibility with fellow HALYARD clients
- With approximately 12 hours per week of agent assistance, they are reasonably able to manage:
  - a. Time/schedule
  - b. Money
  - c. Diet
  - d. Health
  - e. Hygiene
  - f. Meal preparation
  - g. Emotions
  - h. Relationships (friends, roommates, family)
  - i. Employment or volunteer position
  - j. Public transportation
  - k. Communication (giving and receiving)

**How does HALYARD work?**

- Families purchase or rent an apartment, condo, or home (we will guide you to the areas that work best). Families supply the housing, HALYARD provides the services.
- All house mates must be HALYARD clients.

- A HALYARD agent is responsible for overseeing and executing all of the supports listed on the service outline to their client group.
- An agent can service 1-6 clients.
- All agents work in collaboration with HALYARD and incorporate HALYARD's philosophy and systems.
- All agents work toward facilitating functional living skills.

### **Why does HALYARD work?**

- The right balance of support and independence.
- Agents are directly accessible 24 hours a day by cell phone (primary agent 5 days per week, and secondary agent 2 days per week).
- Agents are empowered by having ownership of and responsibility for all aspects of their client groups' needs (there are no cracks to fall through).
- Effective ratios (6:1 maximum).
- Strong relationships and communication between agents and clients and agents and families.
- Being located in a familiar and accessible community with employment, transportation and leisure activities readily available.
- Creative, realistic, and individualized systems and structures for all clients.
- Family participation and support.
- All clients having a similar level of functioning allows for all programming to fit appropriately.
  - a. No over-programming leading to dependence.
  - b. No under-programming leading to feelings of failure and frustration.

### **What is the advantage of owning the residence?**

- You can build equity in your own property (rather than paying a program to use their facility).
- You can choose your location and type of residence (as long as it fits a few criteria, numerous locations can work).
- You decide who can and cannot live in the residence with your son/daughter.
- Tax benefits.
- If you ever decide to sell, you can sell it to anyone (rather than being locked into selling only to families within the program).
- Cape Cod property has tremendous resale and equity building potential.

### **What does HALYARD cost?**

- HALYARD offers one-year contracts for \$22,000.
- This fee covers all of the services on our service outline for one year.
- HALYARD also offers consulting to families who may be interested in starting up similar services elsewhere.

## **THE HORIZONS SCHOOL**

*(Revised October 2009)*

2111 University Boulevard  
Birmingham, AL 35233

Tel: 205-322-6606 and 800-822-6242

Fax: 205-322-6605

Web site: [www.horizonsschool.org](http://www.horizonsschool.org)

Director: Dr. Jade K. Carter

The Horizons School aims at serving young adults with learning disabilities, ages 18 to 26, who are already capable of at least a modest degree of independence, and who are motivated towards greater self-determination and self-direction.

The school is situated near downtown Birmingham, in a section of the city dominated by the presence of the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), whose buildings occupy many city blocks. Nearby is the Five Points South neighborhood, with its colorful restaurants and shops.

Horizons School developed out of the efforts of local families (one family in particular), which in 1991 contributed a community grant of \$100,000 as seed money to plan and put together a program. The money was administered by the university, which in effect acted as a facilitator and partner. UAB renovated a part of its dormitories to house the program's students and assisted in the recruitment of staff. (From the start, however, UAB did not commit any university funds to Horizons; the school has relied on tuitions to cover its costs.)

The school began operating in 1992, with Dr. Jade Carter as its Director. Dr. Carter has continued to fill the role to the present day. Prior to the start of Horizons she had worked for the university. She received her doctorate in special education, with a focus on learning disabilities from the University of Alabama, in Tuscaloosa. She also began the first classroom for learning disabled adolescents in Jefferson County, AL. So she came to her new role with a great deal of appropriate experience, as well as familiarity with the area and many of the people she would be working and dealing with.

After an eight-year association, UAB administrators and school board members agreed to separate. The Horizons School, Inc. became a private 501(c)3 corporation in 2000. UAB continues to offer Horizons students the use of its health and campus recreation facilities. The school has developed professional relationships with several UAB departments and offers educational experiences for UAB students in the areas of occupational therapy, health education, special education and service learning hours for UAB Honors Program students. Horizons students currently live at University Place Apartments, which they share with many UAB students, and which is located at the southeast edge of the UAB campus. The board is moving toward actualizing strategic plans to establish a school-owned residence, in the Southside area, for its students. Students enjoy a close relationship with the two part-time student resident assistants who live at University Place Apartments with them.

There are 37 students enrolled for the 2009-2010 year. Dr. Carter and the Board of Directors are committed to expanding the program to serve approximately 20-25 students each year (making a total of 40-50 in the Core Curriculum Program and 10-15 in the Community Transition Program/optional third year). To that end, the school has employed a full-time student recruiter. Most of the students come from the southeastern part of the United States. A number of GROW graduates have enrolled over the years and there are typically at least one or two entering the Horizons School each year.

As noted above, the program encompasses two required Core Curriculum years and an optional Community Transition Program year. During the first two years, students live in the University Place apartments and enjoy a structured program of instruction. These two years are devoted to preparing students for independent living; classes are devoted to areas such as social skills, life skills and career preparation and training. During a student's third year, s/he is expected to move away from University Place Apartments and the Resident Assistant support offered there and, if ready, engage in competitive employment opportunities. At the same time, they continue to receive support and instruction, including faculty support in their apartments and at their worksites, classroom support for money management, supper club and business communication as well as continued weekly advising sessions. Students continue to participate with the other members of the school community in social and recreational activities.

With rare exceptions, the expectation is that all new students will complete the two-year core and most will need the third year transition option, even if they have already completed a post high school program such as GROW.

Following graduation (Horizons graduates receive a Certificate of Program Completion), some individuals may choose to maintain their affiliation with the school. In those instances the school will draw up a contract that addresses the specific services and supports needed by the graduate. It should be stressed that Horizons does not offer a life-long relationship. A number of graduates have found the Birmingham area to their liking, and have made their permanent home there. Horizons offers alumni activities to their graduates and invites their alums to participate in school-wide events such as dinner dances, Sunday afternoon kickball, etc.

The Horizons school completed a very successful capital campaign over two years that resulted in a beautiful new facility in the Southside area. The 10,000 square foot building offers classroom space, large group meeting space, wireless computer access and office space for faculty and staff. A new campaign is anticipated for the Horizons Tower residential project.

Horizons classes are held in the classroom facility as well as University Place Apartments and the local community. The program has 16 staff members, 4 part-time and 12 full time, trained in such fields as special education, counseling and rehabilitation.

The students' apartments – which they usually share, two to an apartment – are equipped with kitchens (students will have to prepare many of their own meals). The apartment complex includes a fitness center and a swimming pool. Two members of the Horizons staff reside in the apartment complex providing support and assistance to students as needed. The Horizons School does not have a school nurse and students are expected to be self-medicating.

Horizons School has a fifteen-member Board of Trustees composed of a mix of parents and local businessmen and other professionals. The school holds a parents' weekend in October, including workshops and panel discussions, and parent conferences take place in the spring. A foundation has been established for the purpose of accepting donations to a scholarship fund, and so far over two million dollars has been raised. (Last year \$56,000 in scholarship money was distributed.)

The Horizons School is not a year-round operation. It follows an academic year calendar, which means that there are several breaks during the fall and spring semesters, and then a summer vacation period (although there is a summer program available). Last summer, the school offered a pilot high school program. Plans are being developed to make this a regular event. The school also has plans to establish a GED prep program for second year and Community Transition students and alumni as well as a small number of community-referred students.

<b>Fees for Core Curriculum (Years 1 and 2)</b>	
Academic Fees	\$21,000.00 per year
Living Expenses for Academic Year	\$10,000.00 per year
Living expenses for the academic year include costs for rent, telephone, TV cable, meal tickets, groceries, laundry, public transportation, YMCA fee, personal needs and class materials. The student's family is responsible for hospitalization, health and car-related insurance. The average all-inclusive living expense is \$1,000 per month or \$10,000 per academic year. Apartments are furnished with electricity and water included in the rent. Students pay monthly bills for telephone and cable.	
<b>Registration Fees (subject to change by local vendors)</b>	
Apartment Security Deposit	\$200.00 per room
Apartment Administrative Fee	\$100.00 per room
Apartment Registration fee	\$50.00 per person
Student Accident Insurance	\$52.00 per year
Activities Fee	\$200.00 per year
Books	\$100.00 per year
<b>Fees for Community Transition (Year 3)</b>	
Tuition for Academic Year	\$11,300.00
Living arrangement costs are determined by the student and family	
<b>Optional Programs</b>	
Summer Program	\$3,100.00

The Horizons School is an appropriate setting for rather mature students who are already somewhat capable of independence and who would benefit from the experience of living in an urban and university environment.

**INDEPENDENCE CENTER**  
*(Original 2003 submission)*

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Los Angeles, CA 90034  
Tel: 310-202-7102  
Fax: 310-202-7180

E-Mail: [judym@independencecenter.com](mailto:judym@independencecenter.com)  
Web Site: [www.independencecenter.com](http://www.independencecenter.com)

Executive Director: Judy Maizlish

Judy Maizlish, Executive Director of Independence Center, describes her program as “a mainstreamed transitional residential program for young adults with learning disabilities.” The “mainstreamed” portion of that description refers to the fact that residents are housed in apartments scattered throughout a large (300 units) apartment complex located on a busy main street in a middle class neighborhood of West Los Angeles. The aim is to provide instruction, guidance and assistance to the program’s residents in a realistic living and working environment comparable to what they are likely to encounter on leaving the Center.

The “transitional” portion of the description refers to the expectation that after a certain period of training residents will no longer require the Center’s services and will move on to a life of greater independence. In other words, Independence Center is not intended to be a lifetime program, and in fact the typical length of stay is two years (although one client has been in residence for nine years).

At present, Independence Center enrolls 26 individuals (20 men, 6 women). About two-thirds of the residents are Californians, the other one-third come from all over the country, including some from the East Coast. In the past, several have come from Riverview School, though no one from Riverview is currently enrolled. The residents range in age from 18 to 30 (the average for the group is about 23).

The program originated when a group of parents, organized by Mrs. Sandy Gordon, were unable to find an appropriate post-high school placement for their children with learning disabilities. They created their own program, beginning in 1985 with a group home. Subsequently, they bought a small apartment complex. After a time, however, they concluded that even that arrangement was too isolating and restrictive, so about 10 or 12 years ago they moved the program to its present location.

Judy Maizlish has been with the program for nine years. She is a former public school educator, having retired from the Los Angeles Schools. She served as a kindergarten teacher in regular education, then moved into special education, and spent 15 years administering a school for students with learning disabilities.

The Center's clients live two to an apartment, and they do their own housekeeping, cleaning, preparing meals, etc. The director and her staff are in an office suite in the complex, and the office is manned from 8:00am until 10:00pm daily. (Residents are expected to be in their apartments by 10:00pm, at least on weekday nights, and apartment checks are scheduled each evening.) One "house parent" lives in the complex, so that there is always someone available in the event of an emergency. (On the other hand, the program is not designed to accommodate those who require twenty-four hours a day supervision.)

All the apartments used by the program are leased by the Center, rather than by the individual residents. In that way, the Center is in a better position to monitor apartment conditions and to represent the residents when dealing with the landlord. Mrs. Maizlish described the area in which the Center is located as a safe neighborhood. In any case, the apartment complex is gated and cannot be entered without an access card. The Center's clients, like all the residents of the complex, are entitled to use the outdoor heated swimming pool, tennis courts, and the exercise equipment in the fitness room.

The Center has thirteen employees, four of whom are full time. All are college graduates, including three with doctorates (one of the latter is a vocational specialist). The Center also has an advisory board consisting of specialists in a variety of fields, including psychiatry, psychology, speech therapy, counseling, etc.

Instruction and counseling concentrate on the development of the practical skills and attitudes which will enable the individual to find and hold employment, to manage personal finance, to maintain social relationships, prepare nutritious meals, etc. Much of the instruction takes place in the resident's apartment. The small size of the program facilitates on the part of the staff a closer understanding of the needs and progress of each individual.

On weekday evenings there are scheduled group events for instructional purposes as well as for socialization, physical fitness or recreation. On weekends there are scheduled group activities during which residents can enjoy the many recreational attractions of the Los Angeles area. Once a month there is a general meeting (including a pot luck dinner) of all residents at which matters of mutual concern or interest to staff and residents are discussed. This get-together takes place in the apartment of one of the residents, since the program does not have a meeting space of its own.

According to the director, most of the residents are not prepared for work when they arrive. The Center makes it a top priority to develop appropriate work skills, and to that end the vocational specialist works with the California Department of Rehabilitation and enrolls residents in job preparation programs available at the local community college. Once an individual is ready, the Center's vocational staff will assist in finding a job and will monitor job performance, offer on the job guidance to the worker, and will maintain a good working relationship with the employer. Residents work in a variety of job locations (no two work at the same place): retail stores, delicatessen, homeless center, pre-school (as a teacher's aide), etc. (One serves drinks in a Beverly Hills hotel.) Some are full time students. Only one resident works full time. The Center has a rule that residents who are not employed at least twenty hours a week must participate in the "Job Club" which the vocational director runs on weekday mornings. (Most do not work twenty hours a week.) The Job Club focuses on the residents'

vocational interests and abilities and works to improve their job-finding and job application skills, etc.

Although in general public transportation in Los Angeles is poor, it happens that Independence Center has access to three major bus lines within a block's distance. As a result, program participants have convenient transportation to UCLA and to area community colleges and vocational/technical programs.

The Center has a ten-person Board of Directors, with a mixture of parents and professional people (including the director of the special education program at Santa Monica Community College). The board meets twice a year, discusses the director's report on the status of the program, and approves the budget. According to Mrs. Maizlish, she is given a great deal of discretion by the Board to operate the program between board meetings.

In the past, it was the practice to hold an annual families conference. That practice has now been discontinued. Informal conferencing with individual families continues, however.

The cost of the Independence Center program is \$2,300 a month, or \$27,600 a year. That is an all-inclusive figure, covering everything (program and living costs) except telephone, Cable TV, computers, and other such appurtenances. But keep in mind that once a resident is at the point where he or she is almost ready for independent living, an arrangement can be made with the Center to reduce the degree of involvement, with a corresponding reduction in cost. At yet a further, even more independent stage, one has the option of leaving the apartment complex, yet still retaining a connection with the Center, with a negotiated reduction in cost. (In addition to the 26 persons now residing at the apartment complex, the Center is serving two others in its "outreach" program.)

Most of the residents are privately funded. A number, however, as individuals, receive some funding from the state. The director is wary of the entanglements that could come with state funds, and therefore does not seek any for the program. For those who would have difficulty paying the program cost, Independence Center does have some financial aid available.

The director believes that in order to maintain the quality of her program, she can enroll no more than 30 persons at any one time.

**JESPY HOUSE**  
*(Original 2003 submission)*

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South Orange, NJ 07079  
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Fax: 973-762-5610

E-Mail: [lkucher@jespy.org](mailto:lkucher@jespy.org)

Executive Director: Lynn Kucher

JESPY House is situated in a residential neighborhood a short distance from the center of South Orange, New Jersey. This is a large program, serving over 150 adults with learning disabilities, most of them living pretty much on their own in apartments and condos within walking distance of the program offices and recreation center.

The program began in 1978 with a group of parents who felt their children, just finishing high school, could live in the community if they had some help with the adjustment. With the support of a local synagogue, the program opened with four residents.

The Executive Director, Lynn Kucher, has twenty-four years with JESPY House. She joined the program shortly after its beginning, and became executive director in 1985. She has a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling, and prior to joining JESPY had worked in the public schools.

The typical progression at JESPY begins with a residence of two or more years (as long as is necessary) with shared apartment living in a supervised setting. Once the individual demonstrates the ability to function without full supervision, he or she then rents an apartment (or purchases a condo) in the neighborhood, continuing to receive whatever services may still be needed, at a reduced cost, depending on the specific services required. Under these circumstances, the individual still remains a member of the JESPY community and participates in its social and recreational activities.

The building housing the initial two-year (or more) period of supervised residential living has a capacity of eighteen persons (there are six apartments of varying size, accommodating from one to five individuals), a factor limiting the number of applicants that JESPY can accept who lack prior independent living experience. However, applicants who do have that experience and have shown some success in living without close supervision can be accepted, as long as an apartment or condo can be found.

Near the program offices, which are located in a former home, are three other houses owned or operated by JESPY. These houses contain apartments for program clients and provide overnight supervision. Then there are about 100 clients who live within walking distance, in leased apartments or in their own condos. Rents in the community are on the high side, due

largely to the fact that South Orange is linked by rail to New York City. (The railroad station is a short distance from JESPY offices.)

Down the street from the program offices is JESPY's community meeting place and social center, also in a former residence.

JESPY residents come from all over the country, although the majority are from the Tri-State area (New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania). Most residents are young adults, but because the program is now over twenty years old, there are 30 to 40 who are over forty years old. There are seven married couples in the program. Mrs. Kucher estimated that there are thirty or more former Riverview students at JESPY, and indicated that they are doing very well. About 80 percent of the program clients are Jewish. Judaic principles are maintained by the program, and JESPY benefits from the support it receives from Jewish foundations and organizations. However, I need to stress that the program is open to persons of all denominations, and that the maintenance of Judaic principles should present no inconvenience to non-Jews.

It was reported that under normal circumstances, employment prospects in the area are very good, and that typically over 90 percent of JESPY clients are employed. However, given prevailing economic conditions, finding jobs for clients has become much more difficult. Even so, Mrs. Kucher reports that most clients work a full 35 or 40-hour work week, with benefits.

A number of residents take courses at local community colleges. Thirteen residents have graduated from college; one has a master's degree. (One resident is a senior at nearby Seton Hall University.)

There are activities each night at the program social center, for anyone who wants to come, and a variety of activities are available on weekends, including athletics. (The program sponsors several athletic teams and cheerleaders.) Staff members are available at the social center each evening until 9:00pm.

The program operates its own business, with clients employed cleaning group homes in the area. This work fills a void for those who have been unable to find a job in competitive employment. It is a component of a day program begun several years ago, which also includes art therapy and music groups. The latter were instituted in order to provide older or ill residents with interesting and supportive activities during the day.

Clinical staff members are available at the program offices: they include two part-time nurses as well as a psychologist.

I should stress that JESPY is not a school, that there is no programmed schedule of instruction for new arrivals. The idea is that new residents are placed in employment and enter into the community as soon as possible. This reflects the program philosophy that there is no substitute for the actual challenges of independent living. Of course, each client has a case manager who serves as a mentor and facilitator, and residents receive on-site training in independent living skills. Newcomers are given vocational tests and otherwise assisted in the process of selecting a vocation and finding a job, with follow-up job coaching. Although there is some supervision, all clients in the program have to be able to live in their own apartments without twenty-four hour oversight.

The Board of Trustees consists of 32 members. Six are family members, the others members of local communities. Their ranks include doctors, lawyers, educators and business executives.

JESPY does not hold an annual families conference. However, there is a dinner dance on Super Bowl Sunday to which parents are invited, and there is a family picnic in the fall. In addition, a major fund-raising event is held each year. (The program distributes about \$60,000 in scholarships each year.)

The tuition for residents receiving the full range of services (this would include at least the first years of residence for newcomers to the experience of living independently) would be \$28,000 a year. This would include all program and residential costs in a supervised living situation except for incidental spending money and purely personal expenses. The tuition for “outclients”(i.e., those not in a supervised living situation, but requiring some supportive services) would run between about \$400 and \$900 a month, depending on the extent of their services. There is a one-time entrance fee of \$2,000.

JESPY House is licensed by the State of New Jersey as a provider of services to the developmentally disabled (a substantial minority of JESPY clients are eligible for state services). As a consequence, it receives a direct grant of \$500,000 a year from the state. It also receives \$30,000 a year from a local Jewish foundation, as well as other foundation grants.

The program will provide assistance to clients in dealing with social security or state benefits and entitlements.

JESPY accepts persons between the ages of 18 and 45 who are diagnosed with learning disabilities, neurological and/or perceptual impairments. They should be individuals who have a potential for competitive employment and independent living, and who can turn that potential into reality after two to four years in the program.

**LIVING INDEPENDENTLY FOREVER, INC. (“LIFE”)**  
(Revised January 2010)

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&  
175 Great Neck Road South; Mashpee, MA 02649

Tel: (508) 790-3600  
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Web Site: [www.lifecapecod.org](http://www.lifecapecod.org)

Executive Director: Matt Cronin

E-Mail: [matt@lifecapecod.org](mailto:matt@lifecapecod.org) / [admissions@lifecapecod.org](mailto:admissions@lifecapecod.org)

LIFE’s Mission: To assist adults with disabilities to function as independently as possible and to provide supports to assist them in attaining their maximum level of *independence, self-fulfillment* and *happiness*.

LIFE was established in 1993 through a collaborative effort of Riverview parents and Riverview management. As of today, we have built two beautiful Cape Cod campuses on twelve acres of land and continue to provide both residential and support services for adults with disabilities on and around those campuses. In total, our campuses house approximately 45 condominiums. Both of our campuses are within walking distance of the largest shopping and business centers on Cape Cod.

When a resident first comes to LIFE, they enter in to “The LIFE Introductory Program.” This program is aimed to provide a caring, supported environment while simultaneously assisting residents in developing independent living skills that will allow them to ultimately become part of LIFE’s Supported Independent Living Program. The LIFE Introductory Program provides more significant staffing, oversight and support for both residents and their family members. LIFE has developed this program as a bridge to ease the transition from a post-secondary program like GROW to an Independent Living Program.

Overall, LIFE’s Program includes the following features:

- Full access to all LIFE facilities, including:
  - State of the art Fitness Centers at both the LIFE at Mashpee and LIFE at Hyannis campuses. These include flat screen televisions, Wii systems and high quality commercial fitness equipment.
  - Outdoor tennis court, basketball court and volleyball court at the LIFE at Hyannis campus
  - Recreational halls (including pool tables, televisions and common areas) at both the LIFE at Mashpee and LIFE at Hyannis campuses.
- Goal setting and monitoring.
- Regularly scheduled work with LIFE’s Employment Team. The goal of the team is to work with the resident to develop the skills to build and maintain meaningful paid and/or unpaid employment opportunities, adding purpose to one’s day. LIFE’s

- Employment Team takes a holistic approach to build up the resident's confidence so that they can become depended upon as a valued member of a business or group.
- Regularly scheduled one-on-one work with a Case Manager. The Case Manager assists the resident in developing and practicing skills such as:
    - Meal planning, shopping and cooking
    - Coordination of medical, dental and other appointments
    - Time management
    - House cleaning and basic home maintenance
    - Transportation
  - Regularly scheduled one-on-one work with a Money Manager. This includes working to develop a budgeting process, paying bills and balancing a checkbook.
  - A plethora of social and recreational services. Calendars are posted on our website under a password protected section of the website that show the activities offered on an ongoing basis for residents. Social and recreational activities include:
    - Walks, hikes and outings to local beaches
    - Concerts/Fairs
    - LIFE sponsored dances
    - Cape Cod Baseball League games
    - Movies
    - Personal shopping at various locations
    - Halloween Extravaganza
    - Holiday parties
    - Partnerships with local art and theatre organizations such as the Cape Cod Symphony, Harwich Junior Theatre and Cotuit Center for the Arts.
    - Volunteer outings (walks, runs, biking, etc.)
    - Clubs (book clubs, biking clubs, dining clubs, musical band, Mens Group, Womens Group, etc.)
  - Group and individual fitness support. LIFE employs a full-time Certified Personal Trainer that assists each resident to set a fitness plan and work towards those goals. LIFE aims to make fitness a social endeavor, with group work out sessions, walks, renting gym space in the community, sponsoring Special Olympics teams, and maintaining Cape Cod YMCA memberships.
  - Group learning. While a significant portion of our work with a resident is one-on-one, we also utilize group sessions where deemed appropriate.
  - Group meal. Most weeks, LIFE hosts a "Road to Better Health" meal where residents come together and (with the assistance of a professional staff member) buy, prepare, cook and eat a group meal at a LIFE Rec Hall.
  - Staff availability and assistance, including a 24/7 Emergency On-Call System
  - A buddy for the resident. Each new resident is paired with a "veteran" LIFE resident who will support their transition, ensure inclusion in activities and be supportive.
  - Ongoing communication between staff and family, including weekly correspondence from the staff in the preferred manner of the family (phone call or e-mail).
  - Weekend staffing. This includes regularly scheduled group and fitness activities on both Saturday and Sunday. Some residents will also have meetings with case and money managers on either Saturday or Sunday.

**LIFE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE**  
(Original 2003 submission)

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Glendale, AZ 85308  
Tel: 623-773-2774  
Fax: 623-773-2788

E-Mail: [LDIinARIZ@aol.com](mailto:LDIinARIZ@aol.com)  
Web Site: [www.life-development-inst.org](http://www.life-development-inst.org)

President: Robert Crawford

Two years ago Life Development Institute moved to its new home in a pleasant, modern section of the city of Glendale, a western suburb of Phoenix, Arizona. LDI maintains a 7,000 sq. ft. suite of offices and classrooms in an office complex situated several blocks away from the residential component of the program. Students are housed in an attractive, 400-apartment, gated complex complete with swimming pool, spa and exercise area. Next door is a large shopping mall, the Arrowhead Towne Center. One or two well-appointed bedroom apartments are available (most residents live two to an apartment, each with a separate bathroom). The apartments include a kitchen and dining area (residents prepare all their own meals, after a period of cooking instruction) and a balcony or patio. LDI maintains one apartment in the complex as a meeting/on-site office. A staff member is on duty at this locale until 10 p.m.

LDI was founded about twenty years ago by Robert Crawford and his mother. One factor that distinguishes this program from the others we have seen is that Robert Crawford is himself a person with learning disabilities, as is his wife, Veronica, who has written a book about her experiences. (She is the Human Relations Coordinator for LDI.)

LDI is primarily a school and secondly a provider of services to long-term, including lifetime, residents with learning disabilities. Not all of its enrollees are residents. It also serves a number of day students who live in the area. It offers a variety of programs, one secondary (for ages 16-21) and four post-secondary (for ages 16-30), as follows:

1. A two-year high school program, the Academy of Lifelong Learning. Its curriculum focuses on literacy, independent living skills, and career development, and is intended to prepare students for post-secondary placement. (In 1992 LDI was a recipient of President and Mrs. Bush's Points of Light Award for its exemplary literacy program for those with learning disabilities.)
2. Sonoran Desert College is a two-year collaborative program with area colleges and universities and includes course work on both the LDI campus and community campuses. LDI provides mentoring and assistance both on campus and at local colleges.

3. The Career College Program's method is similar to that of Sonoran Desert College. The difference is that the Career College Program links students with technical and vocational schools. Its thrust is vocational rather than academic, leading to an industrial certification or to a diploma in a special vocation. It is designed as a program lasting for two or more years.
4. The two-year Competitive Employment Program aims to match students with jobs, based on their skills, abilities and other factors. Job preparation, placement and monitoring are an essential part of the program.
5. LDI's Independent Living and Program Extension Services pick up where the above post-secondary programs leave off, providing continuing assistance to those who need it, both in relation to their academic or vocational careers and to their developing life skills and capacity for independent living. It also accepts qualified newcomers who enroll specifically for the purpose of long-term or lifetime living in the area, making use of LDI's supportive living services, and participating as members of the LDI community. Mr. Crawford indicated, however, that he might prescribe a period of orientation and training for newcomers, depending on the status of the applicant. Currently the age range of those in this particular LDI program is 18 to 44, and program participants come not only from the local area, but from all over the United States and from foreign countries. One Riverview graduate is now enrolled.

Altogether, there are approximately 54 persons enrolled in LDI's various programs, with a male to female ratio of 60-40. Mr. Crawford felt that his programs could not accommodate more than about 70 persons total, given present staffing and residential space. He and his board are now engaged in thinking about how an expansion of LDI could be implemented.

Thirty-eight persons reside in the program's apartments. All, including the high school students, are in a supported living situation, rather than a supervised one. In other words, they are treated much like any adult, except that they have access to assistance, to the degree that they need it, in the activities of daily living. A number of extracurricular activities are offered on weekday evenings and on weekends, and all program members are welcome to participate. There is also an annual 5-7 day out of town field trip, which is optional.

Unless fully engaged in college work, all post-secondary members are expected to be employed, at least part-time. Employment opportunities in the Glendale area are reported to be good. (Some individuals, to begin with, are assigned to volunteer work.) There are a number of colleges and universities in the areas, including Glendale Community College, which is 15 minutes away, where residents not formally enrolled in an LDI college program can further their educations.

Some transportation is provided by the program, but otherwise is left up to the individual. Public transportation is available, and many of the residents drive their own cars.

There are currently eight persons on the Board of Directors, about half from the business community and half from LDI families. One board member is a psychiatrist. LDI does not schedule an annual meeting of families.

LDI employs thirteen full time staff members.

Tuitions for post-secondary programs (excluding the Extended Services Program) range from \$25,500 in the first year to \$22,700 in the second year, to \$16,000 in the third year. Residential living expenses must be added to these figures. They range from \$15,390 to \$18,250, and include everything except phone, TV or stereo, computer, and similar personal items. Altogether, costs would range from about \$41,000 to \$44,000 in the first year, \$38,000 to \$41,000 in the second year, and \$31,400 to \$34,000 in the third year. To these figures should be added a factor for pocket money (perhaps \$40 a week), telephone, TV cable, computer, medications/medical, etc.

The post-secondary programs, like the high school program, follow the school year calendar, but residents lease their apartments for the entire twelve-month year. The above figures, therefore, cover the entire year.

The Extended Services Program, which is a year-round, long term or lifelong program, offers two levels of services. One carries a tuition rate of \$10,500 a year, the other a tuition rate of \$8,000 a year. To these figures must be added the residential living costs, so that the total for level one is about \$26,000 to \$29,000, while the total for level two is about \$24,000 to \$27,000. (Plus the additional, non-program living costs noted in the preceding paragraph).

Life Development Institute is appropriate for young adults who are capable of employment, who can cope with an unsupervised (though supportive), independent living situation, and who want to live in the Phoenix area.

## **MARBRIDGE**

*(Added July 2007, Revised October 2009)*

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Fax: (512) 381-2493

Web site: [www.marbridge.org](http://www.marbridge.org)

Director of Admissions: Will C. Hoermann  
Email: [wchoermann@marbridge.org](mailto:wchoermann@marbridge.org)

### Program:

Started by Ed and Marge Bridges in 1953, Marbridge is a post-secondary residential program that provides individualized training and education to young adults and adults with cognitive challenges or developmental delays. Our residents continue learning through our Abilities Centered Training curriculum and are encouraged to grow, prosper, and reach their maximum potentials. While some families view our services as a short term, college-like experience, others come to us in search of a safe and supportive community where their loved ones will have the opportunity for a lifetime of care.

### Population:

Residents of Marbridge will be men and women who are at least 18 years of age and have a primary diagnosis of a cognitive challenge including but not limited to Autism Spectrum Disorders (including Asperger Syndrome), Williams Syndrome, Down Syndrome, Seizure Disorders, and Mild-Moderate Developmental Delay.

### Cost:

Marbridge offers two assisted living communities: The Ranch, a dormitory setting, and The Village, a cottage setting. The monthly tuition for The Ranch is \$2700.00, and the monthly tuition for The Village is \$2730.00. Tuition covers costs associated with room & board, individual training & education, 24-hour awake staff support, one-on-one or group counseling, and basic nursing supervision. Residents' personal spending for shopping, activities, outings, etc. and any medical expenses not covered by an insurance carrier are not included and will be an additional cost to the family.

### Size and Location:

Marbridge has the ability to serve 170 residents in our assisted living communities. Our 210 acre campus is located 15 minutes southwest of downtown Austin, Texas.

### Communities:

The Ranch consists of two residential dormitories, and the Village consists of 14 residential cottages. Our campus has a swimming pool, a softball field, a gymnasium, stables for equestrian, a non-denominational chapel, dining halls, recreation rooms, and various other training buildings to support our residents and their goals.

Skills Taught:

Abilities Centered Training focuses on four key areas of functional academics: independent living skills, social skills, job skills, and leisure and recreational skills. Within these areas, residents can receive individualized training in money management, personal hygiene and grooming, art, music/choir, drama, equine/riding, horticulture, cardio/fitness, history, on-campus job skills, off-campus job skills, nutrition, cooking/food prep, shopping/budgeting, and many other meaningful topics to keep them active and engaged. We also have an athletic program and compete in regional and state competitions for swimming, bowling, bocce, softball, track & field, equestrian, basketball, power lifting, and golf.

**MINNESOTA LIFE COLLEGE**  
(Added September 2007, Revised October 2009)

7501 Logan Avenue South, Suite 2A  
Richfield, MN 55423

Tel: 612-869-4008, x16  
Fax: 612-869-0443

Contact: Amy Steele, Director of Admissions/Marketing  
E-Mail: [asteele@minnesotalifecollege.com](mailto:asteele@minnesotalifecollege.com)  
Web: [www.MinnesotaLifeCollege.org](http://www.MinnesotaLifeCollege.org)

**Program Description:**

Minnesota Life College (MLC), located in Richfield, Minnesota, is a not-for-profit, vocational and life skills training program for young adults with learning disabilities. Since 1996, MLC has been dedicated to helping our students make a successful transition to independent living and financial self-sufficiency. Our students are involved in a challenging vocational curriculum with an emphasis on “*Real Skills for Real Life.*” Students have the opportunity to learn beyond the classroom in places such as the grocery store, in the workplace, at restaurants, on public transportation and in their own apartments. We give students the opportunity to learn the skills they need to know in the real world.

As a post-secondary option, MLC attracts a student body from all across the United States. After completing the 3-year undergraduate program many graduates will continue to live and work in the Twin Cities independently as members of the life long Graduate Living Community (GLC).

At MLC, we believe that everyone has the potential to be a contributing member of society. Life is a learning process and people think and learn differently. We help individuals with learning differences reach their potential with support and guidance; we take great pride and responsibility in connecting our students with a community of opportunities. The families we serve are proud of the personal integrity and leadership qualities our graduates embody.

**Population Served:**

**Undergraduate Program** – male & female, between the ages of 18-26 years old with a primary disability being a learning disability, ADD/ADHD, Aspergers and/or other neurological disorders.

**Graduate Living Community** – male & female, graduates of Minnesota Life College’s undergraduate program, this is a life long program.

**Summer High School Program** - male & female, between the ages of 15-18 years old with a primary disability being a learning disability, ADD/ADHD, Aspergers and/or other neurological disorders.

**Cost:**

All-inclusive tuition for 2008-2009 is \$42,000 (tuition is adjusted annually)

**Size:**

Undergraduate program is working towards a capacity of 36 students total. GLC does not have a capacity. Summer High School program was a capacity of 15 students per session (currently 2 sessions offered)

**Description of Community:**

Minneapolis/St. Paul

Although our campus is located in a quiet residential area, we are only minutes away from everything a big city has to offer. The Twin Cities is home to four major league sports teams, has some of the best museums and is one of the most active theater and fine arts communities in the nation. The changing seasons provide a number of choices in outdoor, professional entertainment and cultural activities in and around the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. Opportunities on campus and surrounding areas abound, making this a great place to live.

**Campus:**

The Colony Apartments have been the home to Minnesota Life College since the program was founded in 1996. The MLC Campus is conveniently located in the safe neighborhood of Richfield, Minnesota, a first ring suburb of Minneapolis. Nearby shopping areas, parks, recreation facilities, public library, entertainment venues, places of worship and Minneapolis/St. Paul International airport (MSP) are all easily accessible.

The student apartments, complete with patios and up-to-date appliances, are furnished with living room, dining room and bedroom furniture and all the necessary cleaning, cooking and housekeeping equipment. There is also a Student Center, Computer Lab and on-site classrooms.

**Areas of Focus:**

**Vocational Readiness:** Being able to get and keep a job that will allow our students to live independently is the heart of our program. We do this by providing students with the skills necessary to complete the job search process (obtaining employment) and an understanding of and ability to demonstrate job keeping skills and behaviors (maintaining employment). Primary topics addressed under this component: Job Research, Work Behaviors, Resumes, Developing Professional References, Cover Letters, Applications, Interviewing, Disability & the Workplace (ADA), Work Skills/Abilities & Interests, Job Search Process, Employment Paperwork, Worksite Safety.

Our vocational team conducts assessments which include: IDEAS Interest Inventory, Reading & Math Index 12 and Career Ability Placement Survey (CAPS). Results are combined with job exploration activities completed by students, as well as used during the job goal development and planning process for establishing positive and appropriate job goals.

**Independent Living:** Classroom and apartment living instruction focusing on independent living skills is a part of everyday life at MLC. Some courses include grocery shopping, meal planning and preparation, personal grooming, public transportation usage and personal finances.

**Social Skill Development and Wellness:** Connecting our students and graduates to the greater community is what drives MLC partnerships in the Twin Cities. It is important to us that our students not only understand how to access community resources, but also know how to succeed socially in the changing world. Extensive classroom instructions address community participation, fitness and wellness, in addition to social interactions, relationships, behaviors and society's unwritten rules, which are then able to be applied in the community itself in required social activities.

Throughout the undergraduate program, Advisors work intensively with students and their families, giving them support and encouragement as they learn to make healthy decisions.

**Graduate Living Community:**

The Graduate Living Community (GLC), established in 2004, is offered to MLC graduates who reside in the Twin Cities and who want to continue to receive career development services and participate in social activities among peers in a safe setting. While our graduates are successful and active in their independent lives, GLC is able to offer them an accepting environment where they can develop and maintain friendships, travel and continue to grow in self-awareness, confidence and community involvement. Our program believes that we never stop our work toward our lifetime goals of maintaining independence. By having GLC, our graduates will continue to learn new ways to accommodate for their learning disabilities, allowing them to lead fulfilling lives and be successful in the ever changing world.

Graduate Living Community offers:

- Vocational Support and Career Enhancement
- Health, Leisure and Social Activities
- Safety and Communication
- Advising and Guidance Support

## **MOVING FORWARD TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE**

*(Revised October 2009)*

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Napa, CA 94559  
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Fax: 707-259-1557

E-Mail: [donnaf@moving-forward.org](mailto:donnaf@moving-forward.org)  
Web site: [www.moving-forward.org](http://www.moving-forward.org)

Executive Director: Donna Feingold

Moving Forward Towards Independence began in 1998 with six residents. In the eleven years since its start, however, it has grown steadily, and currently enrolls 30 young people, ages 18-37 (most are in their twenties), divided almost equally between men and women. Most residents come from the western US with the majority from California. Four of the residents are Riverview School graduates.

The program was founded by two sets of Riverview parents, both California residents. They selected Napa as the site for Moving Forward because of the natural beauty of the area, its livability, employment opportunities and appeal to visitors. With a population of approximately 75,000, Napa is large enough to offer many of the amenities of an urban lifestyle, but small enough to be manageable. About an hour's drive (depending on traffic conditions) are the resources and attractions of the San Francisco Bay area.

Moving Forward's Executive Director, Donna Feingold, has been with the program for nearly 6 years. Prior to that, she was the Executive Director of an agency in San Francisco that provided job training, employment and supported living services to adults with disabilities. Donna has over 30 years experience working with individuals with disabilities. Among its other employees, the program includes a director of case management, director of residential services, recreation coordinator, case managers and support staff.

To help get Moving Forward started, one of the founding families bought two adjacent houses in a quiet residential section of the city. These now house a small staff office, meeting center ("rec" room) as well as the "transitional" component of the program. The administrative office is located downtown.

The Transitional Program is the first phase of the program. Those entering the program will spend time in a more closely supervised (staffed 24/7) situation where residents learn independent living skills. After certain skills are mastered, residents can then move to an adjacent apartment building that offers slightly more independence while maintaining 24/7 supervision. The second phase is Community Living where residents who have demonstrated substantial capability for independence move into their own apartment or homes offsite. At that point, the resident requires fewer services and less supervision from Moving Forward. Keep in mind, however, that the Community Living program is intended to be a permanent, lifetime

program, so that residents have the opportunity to remain a part of the Moving Forward family indefinitely.

All the residents live in the same neighborhood, in close proximity to each other and to the program center. While most of the residents in the community live in apartments that they rent, there are some residents who live in homes or duplexes that their families have purchased in the neighborhood.

There is much emphasis on employment in the program as working creates higher self-esteem and productivity. The program assists residents in finding jobs and works very closely with other employment agencies in town. Job placement and job coaching services are provided by the California State Department of Rehabilitation. The vast majority of residents do work ranging from 20-40 hours per week. For those residents who wish to continue their education, Napa College (which is the local community college) is only three miles away.

Moving Forward offers three terms of in-house classes each year which are taught by outside consultants and Moving Forward staff members. The classes, held mainly in the afternoon and evening, focus on life skills such as personal hygiene, money management, job club and community access. Recreation, wellness, music and art classes are also offered each term. Many residents belong to the local gym and go on their own or with staff, and Moving Forward has also developed its own small in-house gym.

The Board of Directors of Moving Forward is composed of parents and members of the Napa community. There is also a Parents Association whose president sits as a nonvoting member of the Board. Parents meet in Napa three times per year. Twice a year this meeting is a potluck luncheon followed by parent meetings, and one gathering is for the annual Moving Forward picnic. Parents are also invited to attend annual conferences for their children where goals are set for the next year.

With respect to costs, residents in the Transitional Program pay an all-inclusive fee of \$3,450 per month or \$41,400 per year (Moving Forward is a 12 month, 365-day program). This figure covers housing, food, utilities, and all program services. It does not, however, cover medication or other medical related matters, nor does it provide for incidental pocket money (about \$40 a week is recommended for that purpose).

The residents in Community Living pay a flat fee of \$1,250 per month for all group activities, classes and access to 24-hour on-call staff for emergencies. Additional costs include individualized case management services (to help with cooking, apartment cleaning, paying bills, arranging medical appointments, etc). The number of hours each resident uses varies based on their needs. However, Moving Forward is vendorized by the North Bay Regional Center, and for those residents who are eligible, these fees are paid for by the Regional Center. Residents in Community Living also pay for their own rent and food. Typical apartment rent ranges from about \$800 per month for a one bedroom apartment to about \$1,200 per month for a two bedroom apartment. It is estimated that it will take a minimum of one year to three years for an individual to make the transition to Community Living.

**SCENICVIEW ACADEMY**  
*(Added 2007, Revised October 2009)*

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Web site: [www.svacademy.org](http://www.svacademy.org)

Executive Director: Douglas A. Gale

ScenicView Academy is a not-for-profit post-secondary educational facility for adults ages 21 and older with learning disabilities. The facility and programs are state-of-the-art, designed to provide adults with learning disabilities the opportunity to work toward their individual lifetime goals. ScenicView Academy offers year-round 24-hour structure built around a “Balance of Life” program. This enables students to plan goals in eight areas of life: Creative, Educational, Vocational, Independent Living, Social, Emotional, Physical and Spiritual. Emphasis is placed upon continuing progression and positive involvement. As students reach their goals, they can set new ones and move on to greater accomplishments.

Annual cost: \$36,000 – based on family circumstances

Size: 46 residential spots and 18 day student spots

**SPECIALIZED HOUSING, Inc.**  
(Revised November 2009)

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Brookline, MA 02446-2220  
Tel: 617-277-1805  
Fax: 617-277-0106

E-Mail: [margot.wiz@verizon.net](mailto:margot.wiz@verizon.net)  
Web site: [www.specializedhousing.org](http://www.specializedhousing.org)

Directors: Margot and David Wizansky

Specialized Housing is unique among the organizations we visited. It is a business devoted primarily to the creation of residential units for persons with a range of neurological disabilities. Its founders and directors, the husband and wife team of Margot and David Wizansky, (both have advanced degrees as social workers) believe strongly that disabled persons (or their families, or a trust) should share in the ownership of their home. In this way they can be assured of a large measure of security and dignity. Specialized Housing will undertake to initiate and carry out the entire process associated with creating a group residence: finding a suitable building or site, obtaining the necessary permits, supervising the design, renovation or construction, identifying a compatible set of residents, hiring staff, and providing needed services to the residents once their new home is up and running. The organization's commitment to its clients is long-term, and is intended to be lifelong for those who wish it.

The organization began its work in 1983. Today it serves more than 85 clients in 10 residences in Brookline, Arlington, and Cambridge, MA; and is developing houses in South Portland, ME and Boston, MA. (In one case, the same 12 persons shared the same large home for over 26 years.) The age of residents runs from 17 to 69 (most are in their 20's and 30's). Most are from Massachusetts, but a few are from other states (including California, New York, Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maryland and Delaware). Overall, the ratio of men to women is reported to be about 50:50. The Wizanskys estimate that there are about six Riverview School graduates among their clients and more in the planning process.

Bringing together a group of clients who will be compatible housemates is a critical element in the planning done by the Wizanskys, particularly because the arrangement will be long-term. Subsequently, should a vacancy occur, the families and residents have to agree on the replacement, who will be a new addition to their household. (Should a resident decide to leave, his or her piece of ownership can be sold, the only restriction being that the buyer must be a disabled person, and must be accepted by the remaining residents.)

The areas in which Specialized Housing operates are urban and suburban, Brookline, Cambridge and Arlington are all close-in Boston suburbs with rather dense housing and good public transportation, making travel to work, shops or recreational sites convenient.

On-site residential staff members provide continual, informal training in home management and maintenance, grocery shopping, food preparation, etc. They also assist residents in finding jobs, establish relationships with job providers, and monitor clients' employment experience. In addition, Specialized Housing will connect clients with private and government human services organizations that can provide vocational, social and recreational opportunities. There are a number of such organizations in the Boston area.

Residents are encouraged to be as independent as possible, taking on as much of the management of their home as they can handle. A house manager is assigned to each property to supervise, assist with daily maintenance, help with personal finances, and offer problem-solving advice. In almost all cases, there are staff members who live in their own apartments in the residences, along with the clients, so that someone is always available to deal with any emergencies that may arise.

The organization employs ten to twelve full-time, and about forty part-time, staff members.

Clients are expected to be busy during the day. Specialized Housing anticipates that applicants will have the potential for employment, and most of the current clients are in fact working in competitive employment. Job opportunities are good in the vibrant communities in which residences are located. Clients work in a variety of occupations in offices, supermarkets, retail stores, restaurant kitchens, laundries, etc. Some are continuing their educations.

Specialized Housing has worked through another agency to set up a recreation club in whose activities all their clients may participate, if they choose to do so. But it is at the level of the individual residences that most social and recreational activities take place, with the residents planning their own evening and weekend outings and diversions. The organization helps by making sure residents become familiar with activities in which they might be interested that take place in their own communities.

There is a condominium association at each home, and the residents meet periodically to discuss and decide upon matters that affect them as condo owners. Each year Specialized Housing schedules a meeting at each residence for the purpose of presenting to the residents a proposed annual budget.

Some of the older clients have reached an age where medical problems are becoming an important concern. In order to deal with the issue, Specialized Housing has 2 nurse consultants.

The cost of a condominium share depends on the individual residence and the particular space or spaces occupied by the client. In a desirable community like Brookline, which has a diverse population, a lively street life and many amenities, the cost of a share is likely to be in the neighborhood of \$100,000 to \$175,000 depending on whether the unit is in a new household or is a resale. Aside from the expense of the initial purchase, the average annual cost to the individual is about \$18,000 to \$24,000 a year. (A residence with fewer members will have a higher per person expense.) That amount includes not only a condo maintenance fee, but also food, the staffing of the residence, utilities and other essentials.

Specialized Housing is a for-profit entity. It does not have a board of directors. But it does have an advisory board composed of condominium association representatives (family members) and some local individuals. The advisory board meets about four times a year.

In addition to their work in the Boston area, the Wizanskys have provided consulting services in other parts of the country and even overseas. They are willing to consult with out-of-town as well as local families who might be interested in the creation of a group residence.

One more note: Specialized Housing will also provide support services to individuals living in rental apartments, with the cost dependent on the services needed.

## **ST. LOUIS LIFE**

*(Added September 2007, Revised October 2009)*

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Web Site: [www.stlouislife.org](http://www.stlouislife.org)

Executive Director: Andy Conover, [aconover@stlouislife.org](mailto:aconover@stlouislife.org)

### **Introduction**

Established in 2004, St. Louis Life is a nonprofit organization with a mission to enable individuals with developmental disabilities to achieve the highest level of independent living and live a full and enriched life. St. Louis Life strives to fulfill its mission by operating a residential facility and program in St. Louis (opened July 2007) for young adults with developmental disabilities.

### **Program Description**

St. Louis Life offers a full continuum of services that include supported employment, continuing education classes and clubs focused on life-skills, structured social opportunities, and recreational activities. Residents will be working and living in the community and allowed to make decisions that affect all aspects of their lives. St. Louis Life is a life-long, residential program. Residents can participate in the program for as long as they are happy and the program is meeting their needs.

St. Louis Life's approach to effectively serving young adults with developmental disabilities is based on and guided by the following concepts and values:

- Independence with support;
- Structure with resident choices;
- Opportunities to work, recreate, and socialize;
- Family involvement;
- Parent leadership; and
- Community integration.

Key overall program features include:

- Right balance of support and independence.
- Staff available on-site 24/7.
- Effective staff/client ratios.
- Staff works with all areas of residents' lives.
- Strong relationships and communications between staff and residents.
- Creative, realistic and individualized services and structures for all residents.
- Opportunities for family participation and support.
- A focus on independent living within a structured program.

- Initially, residents will be of similar age, approximately equal number of males and females, and have a similar level of functioning which allows for programming to fit appropriately.

St. Louis Life's goal is to create a safe, campus-like atmosphere that regularly interfaces with the surrounding community while providing residents the opportunity to live independently in the context of individualized supports and structure.

### **Population Served**

St. Louis Life serves individuals who:

- Are 21 - 35 years old
- Have a diagnosed developmental disability
- Are able to communicate needs effectively
- Are socially compatible with others
- Are willing and able to live and work within a structured program and living environment that provides choices
- Can make decisions with support
- Are self-medicating
- Can manage their time, schedule, budget appropriately with assistance if necessary
- Are motivated to work or volunteer a minimum of 20 hours per week
- Will be responsible for participating in planned social activities and daily tasks such as food preparation and light housekeeping
- Are able to and motivated to live independently
- Are developmentally ready to make a commitment to a comprehensive residential and community-based program

St. Louis Life is not appropriate for individuals who have a psychiatric and/or serious emotional disturbance that impacts behavior, have serious medical conditions that require daily or weekly monitoring or intervention, and/or require 24-hour supervision.

### **Cost**

\$40,000 annually that includes an apartment, 14 meals a week, and 24/7 staff support.

### **Size**

St. Louis Life currently has 16 single-occupancy apartments. Once capacity is reached on the current 16, phase two will include the construction of 16 additional apartments for a total of 32.

### **Description of Community**

St. Louis Life is located in Winghaven®, a 1,200-acre, planned community in O'Fallon, MO, just west of St. Louis. O'Fallon is the fastest growing city in Missouri and has received recent national recognition as one of the "best places to live in the US." The community is uniquely designed to balance the essentials of life--living, learning, working, playing and praying. Neighborhoods are intertwined with 500 acres of green space and laced with numerous playgrounds for children. A town center called Boardwalk Market Place binds the community with its pedestrian-oriented assembly of shops reminiscent of small town America. A variety of homes with beckoning streetscapes encourage residents to interact. Recreational connections abound with more than six miles of walking and biking trails.

**THE THRESHOLD PROGRAM  
AT LESLEY UNIVERSITY**  
(Revised October 2009)

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Director: James Wilbur  
Director of Admissions: Helen G. McDonald, M.Ed.

*The Threshold Program* is a comprehensive, non-degree, campus-based program at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts for highly motivated young adults with diverse learning challenges and other special needs. All are clearly interested in careers in one of our vocational fields of study - Business and Support Services or Early Childhood Studies, and all have a strong desire to become independent adults. Threshold students are high school graduates who typically have received extensive special services in either private or public schools, yet each would likely have considerable difficulty succeeding in a traditional college degree program.

Threshold's *Two-Year Program* accommodates about fifty students each year. Most participants generally attain scores below the average range on specific standardized tests of intellectual ability. Reading and writing skills typically range from the fourth to seventh grade level; often math skills tend to be at somewhat lower levels.

Two successful years on campus culminate in graduation, where students receive a certificate of completion and six college credits from Lesley University. Most students then participate in one of Threshold's two post-graduate programs: *Transition Year* provides continuing support as students enter the work world and live in apartments; *Bridge* offers another year of skill building on campus. Both are certificate programs and an additional three college credits are awarded for successful completion of Transition Year.

For more information, please visit us at: [www.lesley.edu/threshold/threshold\\_home.htm](http://www.lesley.edu/threshold/threshold_home.htm)

**TOWARD INDEPENDENT LIVING AND LEARNING (TILL), INC.**  
*(Added September 2007, Revised January 2009)*

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Director of Residential Alternatives: Alan White

Toward Independent Living and Learning (TILL), Inc., is a private, not-for-profit human service agency, established in 1980, which provides a comprehensive range of services throughout Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Our innovative services meet the needs of individuals of all ages with learning disabilities, mental retardation, physical handicaps, autism spectrum disorders, Asperger's Syndrome, emotional problems, brain injury, behavioral health and other developmental disabilities. Funding comes through state agencies or through private pay arrangements with individuals or families.

Our guiding principle is that community-based working and living arrangements offer the optimal environment for an individual's self-worth, social acceptance, and growth. We design unique residential, day, and support services to help individuals develop their potential to its fullest and to become active participants in their community. Our programs emphasize abilities, not disabilities.

We are constantly developing **residential options** to meet the dynamic needs of individuals as they change. Our forty-eight residential homes take many forms at TILL. Each one is a unique arrangement which provides the staffing and support appropriate for the individuals living in the home.

All residences are personalized homes or condominiums located in attractive, residential neighborhoods. In many instances they are located near public transportation to allow for easy access for daily needs such as shopping and recreation. Most have cars or vans available for daily transportation. Homes are well maintained by a professional crew of Property Managers.

**Creative Living Options (CLOs)** are residential arrangements for individuals with special needs and requirements. Each CLO is created for the unique needs and interests of each and every individual. There are no set staffing patterns and every housing arrangement is different.

Each CLO:

- supports the individual in becoming an active and participating member of his/her home and community.
- promotes independence.
- is founded on the principle of self-determination.
- respects the role of family members and the individual in planning for the future.
- assists the individual in obtaining or developing the tools necessary for self advocacy and empowerment.
- promotes cooperative relationships between the provider, family and referral source in meeting the individual's changing needs, preferences and interests.
- encourages relationships, social activities and an active, full quality of life.
- is supported by staff with extensive experience in the field of disabilities. A professional staff including psychiatrists, psychologists, registered nurses and consulting occupational, physical and communication therapists are part of TILL's team and are available to the person and staff.

TILL provides a wide range of **day supports**. Some situations lead to competitive employment whereas others may involve skill training leading to supported work or more independence in daily functioning. All day support services start with the individual. An evaluation of needs will be completed with input from the individual, the family, referral sources with whom he/she is working, and others who could provide useful information. A work history, day services history, and interest and ability inventories will be done, depending on the situation.

We work closely with Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission offices in designing employment situations. Depending upon the referral, an assessment may be done followed by a work plan design, which could include:

**Vocational Assessments** - occur at a work training site and include comprehensive skill testing for job specific potential.

- **Job Development** - assistance with locating a job, writing a resume, training on prerequisite work skills and work tolerance, and interviewing skills. Our employment staff are imaginative and assertive in making connections with a wide variety of employers.
- **Job Coaching** - assistance with necessary job skills, as determined for each person. This occurs at the job site with the goal of reducing the support and transferring it to the natural supports in the work environment.
- **Ongoing Support** - assistance of a Job Coach to determine the extent and duration of contact with the individual and the employer. In some cases, long range but minimal support is warranted to ensure long-term success. Employers receive support and information about tax credits as well as ways of working with other employees to successfully integrate the person with disabilities.

TILL's **Springboard** is a member organization which provides social, recreational, cultural, and educational activities for adults and adolescents with learning disabilities. Springboard is the only group of its kind in the area which focuses specifically on the social needs of people with learning disabilities. Participation in Springboard has resulted in lasting relationships and cultural learning experiences, allowing people to go on to greater areas of independent socializing, living and working.

**Goals of Springboard**

- To provide members with new, enriching, social and recreational opportunities
- To improve independent living skills
- To introduce people to new friends with similar interests
- To enhance social skills
- To enable members to function as independent contributing members in the community

## VISTA VOCATIONAL & LIFE SKILLS CENTER

*(Revised October 2009)*

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Web site: [www.vistavocational.org](http://www.vistavocational.org)

Executive Director: Helen K. Bosch  
Director of Admissions & External Relations: Bobbi Guercia

Vista was founded in 1989 by the family of a young woman with learning disabilities, who owned a building on the site of what is now the program's headquarters in Westbrook, Connecticut. Since then, Vista has grown to about 165 students and members, from the age of 18 to over 50. Although most come from the Northeast, Vista draws from all over the country. Approximately ten percent or more of Vista's students are former Riverview School students.

Helen Bosch, Executive Director, has been with Vista almost since its inception. Prior to joining Vista, she worked with the State of Connecticut, consulting with organizations to create programs for persons with disabilities. At Vista she supervises a staff of about 110 full-time and part-time employees. Bobbi Guercia, Director of Admissions and External Relations, has been at Vista since its founding, working in various positions, including Director of Student Services.

Vista is located midway between New York City and Boston, along the south central Connecticut shoreline in the five towns of Guilford, Madison, Clinton, Westbrook, and Old Saybrook. This is where Vista maintains offices, a work center, recreational facilities, a condominium complex, and where Outreach Program members continue to live and work after graduation from Vista's residential Entrance Program. This is Vista's "virtual" campus, along the Route 1 and I-95 corridor. This corridor provides easy access to full service public bus transportation, and students are taught to use this public system. In addition, Vista provides its own supplemental transportation service to local destinations not served by public routes or schedules. Vista provides rides to work, appointments, and recreational and social activities.

Vista accepts applicants age 18 and older. New arrivals typically begin with the Entrance Program, which spans up to three years, and is intended to provide students with the basic skills necessary to live as independently and successfully as possible. About a dozen students are accepted each year into the program in a rolling admissions process. If an applicant has completed a post-secondary program elsewhere and can demonstrate a potential for independent living and competitive employment, it may be possible to customize the Entrance Program into fewer than three years.

During their first two years, students live in The Residence, a dormitory-like setting on the Westbrook campus. The Residence provides common areas for dining and socializing, and overnight staff is on the premises. Students are responsible for cleaning their rooms and taking turns helping to prepare meals. In their third year, students move to the Transition Apartments in nearby Guilford. Here they learn the skills of managing their own apartments, similar to those

they may be occupying in the community after graduating from the Entrance Program. Students live two or three to an apartment, and they prepare their own meals. These first three years at Vista are not a formal, classroom-type school experience. Vista provides a hands-on model of instruction, whereby students learn by doing, and often learning takes place in the community.

Each student is assigned a program counselor to coordinate services and to provide guidance and monitor progress. The counseling model at Vista is the foundation of teaching cognitive and social skills program-wide. Counseling has a teaching, modeling and supporting focus. Emphasis is placed on the skills of adult living and thinking: decision-making, problem solving, self-advocacy, relationship building, and accepting responsibility for one's actions. Students receive individual and group counseling and training in life skills, hygiene and self-care, wellness, management of time, money, medications, food planning and preparation, household management, use of public transportation, etc. Learning to navigate in the community and access resources is also an important program component.

Vocational skills training progressing to employment is a core component of the program, and new arrivals begin the process of developing work readiness skills. As soon as they are ready, students are assisted in finding an internship or part-time position, either paid or non-paid. The objective is to progress to paid employment. About 90% of Vista members who are ready for paid employment are employed. Employment opportunities range beyond the shoreline within a 30-mile radius of Westbrook, from New Haven to New London and north to Middletown. More than 140 firms employ Vista students and members.

After graduation, students may choose to stay in the area, to become members of Vista's Outreach Program. Many have made this choice. There are now 125 individuals in the Outreach Program. Outreach membership can be a long-term connection with the Vista community, as long as members continue to meet the admissions criteria. Members live in apartments throughout the shoreline region. They can choose to continue to have the services of a program counselor, life skills instructors and vocational staff. Outreach is a fee-for-service program: the member works with his or her program counselor and others to determine what services are needed and for what periods of time. Outreach members are eligible to participate in Vista's social and recreational activities, in addition to the Outreach Clubhouse.

Those individuals who are capable of a high level of independent living, and who require only minimal assistance, may enter the Community Support Program. The members of this program do not have a program counselor, but can contract with Vista for needed services. Community Support members remain part of the Vista community for social and recreational purposes.

Vista's Board of Directors numbers about 15 persons, divided in roughly equal parts among parents, community members and professionals. The Board is very active in the affairs of the program and meets every other month.

The annual (12 months) cost of the Entrance Program is \$61,800, a figure that includes tuition and room and board, as well as transportation within the Vista service areas. It does not include medical services or some recreational activities for which an extra fee may be charged. The annual cost of the Outreach Program will depend on the services provided, and could run anywhere from \$5,000 with few services, to \$40,000 for the full range of services. For an annual fee of \$2,615 per year, Vista provides a Benefits Counseling service that will review students' eligibility for state or federal benefits and monitor or coordinate them for the individual.