

## Norton, Heather (DBHDS)

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**From:** Jack Bruggeman [jackbruggeman@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 11, 2014 11:01 AM  
**To:** SB627  
**Cc:** Eileen Filler-Corn  
**Subject:** SB 627 Work Group Letter

September 11, 2014

To the members of SB 627 Work Group:

I am co-guardian (with my brother Mike) of our sister Cathy who has been a 31 year resident of NVTC in Fairfax. In October Cathy will be moving to a new community home in Burke operated by Community Residences, Inc. and funded through Medicaid ICF funding. For the past 15 years I have served in volunteer and board positions with organizations that serve to meet Cathy's needs. I currently serve on the Board of Directors of ServiceSource which operates her day habilitation program and for the past five years on the board of directors of the Parents and Associates of NVTC.

When the original closure date for NVTC was set my brother and I decided to pursue community options in Fairfax County for Cathy. Throughout our exploration of community options my fellow NVTC board members have been uniformly supportive. Like my brother and me, they support the right of all individuals with ID/DD to live in the setting that best meets their needs. With our choice to move Cathy to a community home my fellow board members encouraged me to remain on the NVTC Parent & Associates board.

Our journey in exploring community options for Cathy over the past 1½ years has been illuminating and instructive. In our first effort to place Cathy we discovered the inadequacy of the Medicaid Waiver in Northern Virginia. We withdrew from the process and rethought our strategy. Our feeling was that Cathy, despite her profound disabilities, could do well in a community placement provided certain criteria were met. First, because of her age, her disabilities, and her previous bout with cancer, we decided that the ICF funding that has served her so well in her time at NVTC should be continued. Second, we required that Cathy remain in her Fairfax County community. Both my brother and I reside in Fairfax County as does our and Cathy's mother who currently suffers from dementia and resides in a continuing care community that provides an Alzheimer's Care facility. Third, we wanted to be sure that Cathy could continue to attend her long-time day habilitation program operated by ServiceSource. This program is a key component of Cathy's life and essential to her happiness and well-being. With ICF funding we would know that access to her day habilitation program would be maintained.

Fortunately, for our family, we found such a placement for Cathy. We were able to meet these requirements with Cathy's selection by Community Residences to reside in their new Burke, Virginia ICF home. We are very lucky for many NVTC families wanted a placement in this new home.

Upon learning of Cathy's selection by Community Residences I asked my NVTC colleagues if I could remain on the Parents & Associates Board. In my years on this board I have made many friendships and

have developed a deep admiration for my fellow board members' commitment to the rights of all Virginia citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I was delighted with their encouragement to remain on the board to help advise them on the community placement process. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to make sure that all residents of NVTC receive the care that is most appropriate to their needs.

Through my years of board and volunteer service on behalf of our citizens with disabilities one frustration has been the difficulty in conveying to all, both fellow citizens and elected officials, the degree of disability that current training center residents have. They represent a small percentage of our citizens with ID/DD but require intensive care. Fortunately, most of Virginia's citizens with ID/DD are able to live successfully in the community. That is exactly as it should be. But one size does not fit all. Just as my mother is now unable to live independently and requires a high (and very expensive) level of daily care so it is the case with many of the individuals who reside in Virginia's training centers and also require a similar high level of care.

My heart sinks when I hear our state officials say Virginia cannot afford a two-tier system of care for its disabled citizens. Of course we can. Virginia ranks eighth nationally in per capita income but 47<sup>th</sup> in funds spent per capita on citizens with ID/DD. Shame on us. We can, and should, do much better for every one of our citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Sincerely,

Jack Bruggeman

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