



Maggie's Home – A Cooperative Approach

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My Home, My Community

Panel 5: Lessons Learned Family Panel

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Why Did We Do This?

- Testing the future – could her supports move with her?
- We were getting older, but not in crisis
- Group homes not an option – the “system” moving too slow with different priorities
- Worked with another individual with similar needs: intellectual disability and deaf so we could focus on similar supports
- Siblings moving away - desire for independence
- We had the financial resources and were willing to take a risk

Maggie's Home

- Purchased by her parents in 2011
- Our dream: 4 bedroom home with space for 3 women needing support plus live-in caregiver with sign – shared costs
- Housing costs (rent and food) managed separately from shared care costs
- Currently: Maggie + 2 room-mates – looking for live-in caregiver
- – LHIN supports for Maggie's health care needs



What Did We Have to Decide on Before We Purchased?

- Rent or buy
- Collaborative or individual purchase
- Location, amenities, transportation, closeness to family, etc
- Number of participants and level of care we could accommodate
- Governance and decision-making
- Kind of legal structure – for house & care
- Budgeting structure

4 Years Later 2016

- Only for a 3 month period did we have more than two women living there
- We still heavily subsidized cost of ownership and operation of the house
- Failed to negotiate recognition or extra funding from MCSS for this venture
- Original room mate had to move out in December 2015– costs too high to sustain



Revising Our Vision – The Darkest Hour

- Maggie shared her home with university students for a year – Reverse Integration
- Maggie missed room-mate - isolated
- Care costs totally managed by one family
- Explored other arrangements – selling and renting, short-term respite, agency affiliation
- Explored purchasing condo at reduced rate

Now . . .

- Via family support and independent facilitation networks we have 2 new room-mates
- Maggie views this as her home – “Good Bye Mom”
- She “owns” many home management skills and initiates these independently support all the time she is there
- If I die tomorrow, her safety net is secure, diverse and knowledgeable – all documentation shared by Circle
- We have some leverage to explore other options



Next Steps

- Confirm support commitments from MCSS and MHLTC – work toward individualized funding
- Consult with lawyer, financial planner, tax consultant to review contracts, financial and legal instruments
- Confirm rules of cooperative living with 2 new roommates
- Look for another live-in caregiver who understands the model (based on a L'Arche-style value system)
- To support siblings and their obligations, establish Microboard (Aroha)



Recommendations on System Level Changes

- MCSS & MHLTC need to open up individualized funding or alternative funding for non-agency housing initiatives (we are getting there)
- Risk and risk mitigation models need to change with access to a regional broker system
- Legislation/regulations in place for residential funding – assessment system needs to incorporate these options.

