

February 12, 2021

Hello

I am writing this letter to give our family's personal experience with Self Directions, from our point of view, and the upcoming Self-Direction Act HB#318/SB#0441. We have a 30-year-old non-verbal, autistic, insulin dependent, diabetic son.

Prior to graduation, I (John's mother) went to many day programs to figure out what would be best for John. IF John were to attend a "day program", a Medical Day Program would be the only option due to John's medical condition and the medication needed. John went into New Directions – which has now been renamed and is currently referred to as Self Directions. In New Directions/Self Directions, John started his own errand business called John the Go2Guy. It is John's goal to be productive out in his authentic community helping others.

By John being in Self Directions, he is able to do things he enjoys. He is happy and productive. Prior to COVID-19, John was in his authentic community every day. Currently he enjoys doing therapeutic horseback riding twice a week, walking at various parks in our area, swimming most days of the week, listening to music, reading books and playing games. He has exceptional staff working with him who have been with him for years.

Self Directions allows John to "live the good life" ~ disabilities or not. He is able to customize his needed supports which meet his unique needs and goals. As I stated previously, without Self Directions John would be "sentenced" to his days spent in a day program due to his intense medical needs. These day programs are quite expensive for the state to have individuals attend, while for some individual's day programs may be their best option. It would not be the best option for John. John enjoys being out and productive in his authentic community. He is a real, productive member of his community. He spends his days happy, productive, safe and all of this at a savings to what Maryland State could be paying for he attending a day program.

John is able to make choices and decisions about how he spends his day, what work he will do and who he will hire to assist him in being productive. This does not come easily but with his incredibly dedicated staff and family (John's team), we manage~always with John's best interest in mind.

Self Directions allows all the individuals in Self Direction to customize their life, receive the supports they need, live their dreams and "live the good life". That is the goal, and it is achieved by many individuals in Self Directions.

Sincerely,

Carol Kuchar

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