Autism Housing Pathways, Inc.
2014 Annual Report

Autism Housing Pathways matured as an organization in 2014, as a number of our projects came to fruition. This has enabled us to serve families in a more systematic fashion, creating a path for them to follow as they seek to find or create housing.

Family Training

The long-awaited overhaul of our website was completed, including work to make the site ADA-compliant. With completion of the website, families are now able to access "My Benefits Generator" (MBG). MBG is an interactive web tool that allows families to determine the MassHealth disability benefits for which their family member should apply. We are grateful to the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center for their on-going assistance in the development and hosting of MBG.

In December, we launched our program of day-long housing workshops. This intensive program takes families through the process of understanding available government funding streams; what supports their family member needs and is likely to qualify for; how to apply for supports; how much house they can afford; what housing models exist and their associated costs; ownership models; financing; location and design considerations; working with service providers; and creating a vision. As of the end of the fiscal year, we have held three workshops, in greater Boston, central Massachusetts, and on the North Shore, training over 30 participants.

AHP now has a cohort of trained volunteers able to give its introductory presentation on housing, "Thinking about housing", to parent groups around the state. This has enabled our president to spend more of her time on the day-long workshops and other projects.

Staff Training

One of those projects is our second training video for direct support staff. "Learning about visual supports" is funded by a $10,000 grant from the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism. Like our earlier video, on reinforcement, this video is aimed at staff who may not speak English as a first language, and who work with adults with autism on activities of daily living. Consultation was provided by Technology for Autism Now, as well as by a teacher of English Language Learners. The video was in editing at the end of the fiscal year. Our goal for the coming year is to have it adopted for use in training by a number of service providers. In the long-term we will develop two other videos, one on sensory regulation and the other on the characteristics of autism.

Another project that came to fruition this year was development of a hierarchy of off-the-shelf, free or inexpensive staff trainings. These trainings are appropriate for different levels of employees, from new hires to house managers. Staff who have received these trainings, and are working under a clinician who is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, would be well-qualified to implement positive behavioral supports, and have a basic understanding of sensory regulation and the use of visual supports. We are entering into discussions with service providers to ask them to consider use of these trainings.

Clearing a Path

In September we were pleased to be awarded a $20,000 grant by the Mass. Developmental Disabilities Council. The grant will fund a project called “Clearing a Path to Innovative Housing”. The purpose of the project is to educate families, other stakeholders, and the general public about the necessity and practicalities of creating alternative housing, and the elements necessary to facilitate such creation.

On a micro level, Autism Housing Pathways will take a cohort of 12 individuals and families through a process that will enable them to identify housing options suited to their available supports, finances, and interests. Families will participate in our day-long housing workshop, and individuals will complete a workbook (either independently or with assistance from a trusted individual) touching on preferred activities, lifestyle and location, and being a good neighbor. Individuals and their families will then participate in a person-centered planning process, with the goal of developing a housing vision.

On a macro level, AHP, in collaboration with other housing and disability organizations and advocates, plans to develop a model zoning bylaw, that would make a two-bedroom accessory apartment for people with disabilities a by-right use in municipalities where it is adopted. A presentation about the bylaw will be developed and presented to multiple policy making bodies. In addition, AHP will, via traditional and social media, circulate articles and letters about the need for alternative housing options, and the importance of asset development, access to financing, and supportive zoning. The target audience for these will include individuals and families, stakeholders and the general public.

Development of new housing models

Catherine Boyle, AHP’s president, spent considerable time this year in discussions with state officials, service providers, lenders, and housing developers. The goal is to create new housing models that are affordable to a broad segment of families, and that combine funding streams in new ways. Two major steps toward that goal were achieved. First, the passage of the Autism Omnibus bill, Chapter 226 of 2014, means families should be able to open tax-advantaged savings accounts for disability-related expenses, including housing. Housing-related savings accounts were originally included in a housing bill, H. 3364, that Catherine Boyle drafted with Rep. Jason Lewis. A second step was identification of a lender willing to work with families to access Fannie Mae HomeChoice loans. These loans allow families to act as non-occupying co-borrowers when a family member with a disability buys a home. Until now, HomeChoice has not been available in Mass. for over 5 years. AHP worked with that same lender to identify a little-known provision in the Fannie Mae regulations that allows families buying a home for an adult child with a disability to be treated as owner-occupiers, allowing a down payment of as little as 5%.

Our goals for the coming year include:

- Implementing Clearing a Path to Innovative Housing;
- Working with service providers to adopt the completed staff training videos, and other elements of our recommended list of staff trainings;

- Continuing to work on developing a range of replicable, affordable housing models;
- Conducting 3-5 day-long housing workshops, and 8-12 introductory presentations; and
- Developing visuals for activities of daily living for use by direct support staff.

Financial Report

September 30, 2014

Balance Sheet

Assets

Cash assets

Bank account ……....	44,837.18
PayPal account ……	299.70
Total assets …….	$ 45,136.88

Liabilities

Accounts payable ……..….....	$ 8,265.52
Net Assets ……..….	$ 36,871.36
Total liabilities and net assets ……...……	**$45,136.88**

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

Revenue

Donations and matching gifts…...…….….....	4,979.49
Other fundraising ……..….	11,424.00
Membership and joining fees ……..….	1,515.00
Grants ……..…	10,000.00
Interest income ……..…	12.31
Adjustments ……..……..	104.00
Total revenue ……	$28,034.80

Expenses

Programmatic:	
Family training ……..	6,202.86
Direct care professional development ……...	1,027.68
Outreach ……..…..	2,512.52
Fundraising ……...…...…..	2,920.25
Administrative:	
Bank fees ……..…….....	10.00
Legal ……..…....	138.27
Mailing ……...……	15.24
Supplies and copies ……..….	111.52
Training ……	217.31
Travel ……..……...	42.23
Lobbying ……..……..…	277.90
Adjustments …….....	1.28
**Total expenses ……..... **	**$13,477.06**

Change in Net Assets

Net Assets as of Oct. 1, 2013 ……	$30,579.14
Revenue less Expenses …….....	$14,557.74
**Ending Net assets ……..…... **	**$45,136.88**

Board of Directors

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Cheryl Chan	Auburn
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Autism Housing Pathways … building roads to home