Autism Housing Pathways, Inc.
2015 Annual Report

2015 saw Autism Housing Pathways introduce new vehicles to educate families and individuals with disabilities about housing options, increase our impact on training of direct support staff, and carry the conversation about housing models to policy makers across the Commonwealth.

Outreach to families and individuals

AHP launched a new initiative this year: Section 8 sign-up clinics. We had noticed that simply getting through the application process was a major hurdle for families, with the result that many delayed it for years. In our first clinic, we helped 22 individuals and their families through the process of submitting applications to the both the Centralized Waiting List, and a regional non-profit list.

In addition, we continued our work of reaching families through three day-long housing workshops, eight two hour introductory presentations on housing, and individual consultation. Much of the same material that we cover in our two hour presentation was included in a webinar hosted by the Autism Insurance Resource Center at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center.

With funding from the Mass. Developmental Disabilities Council we wrote housing workbooks aimed at individuals with developmental disabilities. The three workbooks cover the same basic concepts, but are written at three different levels: 8th grade reading level, 1st/2nd grade reading level, and picture activity level. The workbooks are available as a free download from the AHP website. They have been used by participants in AHP's Clearing a Path grant (see below), and in a transition classroom in the Andover public schools.

Training of direct support staff

Work on our second training video for direct support staff, "Learning about visual supports", funded by the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism, was completed this year. 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 field tested with both staff already working with individuals with autism and with students in an English as a Second Language program (ESOL) serving those interested in entering human services. Pre- and post-testing with both groups showed skill acquisition. The video has been adopted by a major service provider for use in training its new hires in its autism homes. Both videos are now also part of the curriculum of the ESOL program.

A $2,000 grant from the Winchester Rotary Club enabled us to begin work on a set of basic visual supports for use by direct support staff in working with individuals on activities of daily living.

In addition, AHP has been privileged to provide input to meetings of the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers working group on autism training. We have also

shared information on autism with a service provider planning on expanding its services to those with autism who are newly eligible for services from the Department of Developmental Services.

Clearing a Path

Late last year AHP received a $20,000 grant from the Mass. Developmental Disabilities Council for 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.

AHP took a cohort of 12 individuals and families through a process to enable them to identify housing options suited to their available supports, finances, and interests. Families participated in our day-long housing workshop, and individuals completed 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 then participated in a person-centered planning process, with the goal of developing a housing vision. Two of the participating individuals have found housing, and many of the others have applied for a Section 8 housing voucher and begun to improve daily living skills that will improve their ability to sustain housing. The Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council has renewed the grant for another year; this year AHP will take 18 individuals and their families through the process.

On a macro level, AHP, in collaboration with AFAM and the Arc of Massachusetts, developed a model zoning bylaw, which 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 was developed and presented to the Winchester Planning Board; in the coming year it will be presented to other boards, including the Wellesley Planning Board.

Through the grant AHP was also able to develop a media campaign that reached policy makers, stakeholders, and the general public. A letter to the editor about the need for housing for people with autism was published in the Boston Globe, an article on the disability housing crisis appeared in the Worcester Telegraph, and a series of blog posts reached families. As a result of the article in the Telegraph, AHP was contacted by the Worcester Housing Authority about finding applicants for 300 project-based Section 8 vouchers in Worcester County. AHP was able to connect the Worcester Housing Authority with a number of service providers, some of whom have since been allocated vouchers.

Development of new housing models

AHP worked to raise awareness of a bill filed by Sen. Barbara L’Italien that would allow owner-occupiers of single family properties to borrow funds from the state to partially fund accessory apartments of up to two bedrooms to create housing for the elderly and disabled. Loans would potentially be at 0% and deferrable for as long as property remained occupied by elderly or disabled residents.

Our goals for the coming year include:

- Implement the renewed Clearing a Path grant;
- Launch a new awareness video, “18? Section 8!”, and a companion website, which will explain the importance of applying for Section 8 at age 18, and walk people through the process;
- Complete work on the visuals for activities of daily living for use by direct support staff.
- Continue to work on developing a range of replicable, affordable housing models;
- Conduct 4 day-long housing workshops, and 8-12 introductory presentations.

Financial Report

September 30, 2015

Balance Sheet

Assets

Cash assets

Bank account ……....	47,623.92
PayPal account ……	1,018.39
Accounts receivable…….	4,182.00
Total assets …….	$ 52,824.31

Liabilities

Accounts payable ……...….....	$ 3,277.71
Net Assets ……..….	$ 49,546.60
Total liabilities and net assets ……...……	**$52,824.31**

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

Revenue

Donations and matching gifts…...…….….....	7,354.03
In-kind donations ……	750.00
Grants ……..…	26,182.00
Interest income ……..…	14.66
Membership ……..……...….	3,741.00
Miscellaneous (including adjustments) ……..	240.79
Other fundraising ……...….	17,525.00
Total revenue ……..…	**$55,807.48**

Expenses

Programmatic:	
Advocacy ……..	2,391.40
Family training ……..…..	25,898.45
Direct care professional development ……...	3,506.90
Outreach ……..…..	2,888.60
Research ……..…….	203.49
Fundraising ……..…...….....	2,093.90
Administrative:	
Grant administration ……...…….	1,776.10
Legal ……..…….	18.70
Mailing ……...……	28.27
Supplies and copies …….….	160.07
Training …….	2,147.35
Travel ……..……...	77.48
Lobbying …….……..…	710.05
Miscellaneous (including donations and adjustments) …..	1,231.48
**Total expenses ……..... **	**$43,132.24**

Change in Net Assets

Net Assets as of Oct. 1, 2014 ……	$36,871.36
Revenue less Expenses …….....	$12,675.24
**Ending Net assets ……...….. **	**$49,546.60**

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Autism Housing Pathways … building roads to home