

Dear Legislators,

As you prepare the FY25 Budget, I ask that you SUPPORT \$10.82 million for the implementation of the housing pilots for adults with developmental disabilities begun with planning grants from Act 186.

Please also support funding the annual development of stable, service-supported housing for adults with developmental disabilities. Those Act 187 pilot projects are just a first learning step towards creating a network of community-based, collective housing opportunities with support staff for developmentally disabled adults who require substantial care. Estimates suggest that over 600 placements are needed statewide right now.

My former colleague and dear friend Cecilia has a daughter Sarah who will turn 21 soon. I have known Sarah since she was born. Cecilia has worked tirelessly--and exhaustively--to, essentially, raise her daughter on her own while continuing to work--which she must do. Cecilia is struggling to figure out what will happen to Sarah after she can no longer attend public school as a special ed. student. Sarah has Down Syndrome and several serious medical conditions and language challenges that together require 24-7 care. Sarah is a very social girl and would love to make friends and be active and creative. She needs an engaging community of other people like herself while depending full-time on excellent caregivers. Right now, there is nowhere for her to live in Vermont when her mother and her school are unable, or no longer able, to fill those needs. Please think of Sarah and other such vulnerable adults as you consider expansion of low cost housing options in Vermont.

Thank you for your support of Sarah and others with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Elizabeth Wright

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