

**Human Services Committee**  
**March 13, 2007**  
**RE: Private Provider Funding**

The Arc of Meriden-Wallingford, Inc. provides services for individuals who have developmental disabilities in day service options, group supported employment, supportive independent employment, and residential. We also provide individualized services for people who do not wish to attend day programs, respite for parents, transportation, recreational activities, dances, and self-advocacy meetings. We meet with families and teams to provide choices, opportunities, and support.

The backbone of the Arc of Meriden-Wallingford, Inc. is the direct support staff. They are there everyday to provide the individuals served with the support they need to have the best possible day at their day program, at work, participating in a recreational activity, when experiencing time away from their family, and in a residential setting. It is very difficult to tell those staff that all that hard work will go unrewarded for the next two years and expect them to accept that and stay with an agency. The lack of an increase in the COLA and rising cost of living leaves our direct support staff with even less in their paycheck.

In our agency many of our staff is single parents struggling from week to week to meet their own family's needs. Many of our staff works a second job just to provide some quality of life for their own family. They are good, hard-working people who want to be in the Human Service Field. I see the smiles on the faces of the individuals served when staff members walk into a room or their home. The level of comfort individuals feel with people who they know and have began to build relationships with is gone when a staff leaves. It takes months for someone new to build that level of trust.

The Arc of Meriden-Wallingford, Inc. takes pride in the level of care that is provided for individuals served and will continue to do what is right. The services we provide are at the request of the state. It is important for the system to be adequately funded. We ask for your help us to keep our direct support staff motivated by funding the budget increases in each of the next two years of 7% and 5% and a long term solution to private provider funding issues.

The State of Connecticut faces many demands and I am very proud of all that has been accomplished over the years for individuals with developmental disabilities in this State; please assist agencies with the continuation of important programs and services for our most vulnerable citizens.

Pauline Bouffard  
Director of Employment Services  
Arc of Meriden-Wallingford, Inc.