

Testimony – Program Review and Investigations Committee September 27, 2011

My son, Andrew Puglisi, has been under the care of Oak Hill for the past 25 years. Andy has cerebral palsy, cortical blindness and epilepsy all of which require trained staff to help with his daily living i.e. preparing his meals, giving him his medication, bathing, personal hygiene and keep him safe at home and in the community.

Over the past 25 years Andy has grown in so many ways. He is healthier, has more self confidence, enjoys life more and takes more pride in himself, all because of the excellent care and programs Oak Hill has provided.

Andy also attends an Oak Hill day program in Torrington. The staff in both his home and day program are dedicated individuals trained by Oak Hill to give the highest quality of care and keep me informed if there are any problems.

Over the years, because Andy has seizures and needs help with personal hygiene, Oak Hill has made many changes to help keep Andy safe, here are a few examples:

- Putting his box spring and mattress on the floor so if he should have a seizure he will not hurt himself falling out of bed.
- Padding all the furniture (again so if he were to have a seizure he couldn't get hurt).
- Putting the bedroom door on a double hinge (again if he were to fall against the door the staff could get to him).
- The staffs shaves and showers Andy daily.
- The staff at home and the day program brush his teeth after all meals, which has cut down on dental problems. Andy is always neat and clean which is very important to me.
- He is encouraged to participate in outings in the community, always with a sighted guide.

All parents/guardians are included in quarterly and annual meetings and if the need arise you can request a meeting with staff/management to discuss the issue.

The nursing staff has helped me on numerous occasions with Andy's seizure medications and helped find a new Neurologist who has changed Andy's medication and I am happy to say he has little to no seizures as of this day. This has made Andy's life so much better. Although his seizures are less all precautions are still in place.

At Oak Hill it isn't "one size fits all". Each person has an individualize program and I have seen how these programs help the individuals grow to the best of their abilities.

There are three other young men (two with Prader Willie and one with autism) living in Andy's home and each one is given the opportunity to choose what interest them and each individual is monitored by the staff and nurse and should any problem arise and it is addressed immediately. I am here today to ask you to keep the funds for group homes and day programs in place in order to provide SAFE places to live and work with QUALITY OF CARE by paying competitive wages for CONTINUITY OF STAFF and to set HIGH STANDARDS so that all individual with disabilities have the opportunity to live in a safe caring environment.

Lois M. Nitch 9 Basswood Court Rocky Hill, CT 06067
(860) 257-4334 Email loisnitch@sbcglobal.net

Lois M. Nitch