

September 27, 2011

Testimony to the Program Review and Investigation Committee

Good afternoon my name is Pauline Bouffard. I live in Meriden and am a parent of two adults with developmental disabilities. Heather is a happy productive individual. She works at Arc Eatery and is so proud of working and earning money. She lives with a life-long friend and they share a condominium in Meriden. Sean is a very strong willed individual who lives in a group home in Meriden. He is non-verbal, has a seizure disorder, and requires assistance to walk. He and his sister love coming home on the weekend and I am so thankful that I can still do that with them. They love being part of their community, going to church, out to eat, to the movies, visiting friends and relatives.

I understand the importance of the study that the Program Review & Investigation Committee has been worked on, however, I believe that the community setting is the best place for individuals with developmental disabilities. Every day I see individuals who are part of the Arc of Meriden-Wallingford, Inc. who live in the community in group homes, in supported living situations, in community training homes, at home with their parents and they tell me how they much they like being able to go to work to earn money, what they think of their staff, voice their opinion about the services they receive and that they are enjoying their lives. They know that they have a VOICE and are not afraid to use it. If we look back at the beginning of the history of the United States of America and how the constitution was written, the first three words says it all for me "WE THE PEOPLE". I think that means EVERYONE has the right to a life filled with respect, freedom, choice, and responsibility.

As a parent I feel very fortunate to have day and residential services for Heather and Sean. They transitioned well to their new living situations while I am still part of the process. I am grateful to the legislatures for the tasks they always have before them to balance budgets yet still take into account the importance of the quality of life of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Thank you.