



Lifelong Advocates for Marylanders with Developmental Disabilities ®

ADVOCACY EXAMPLES

Advocacy: to support; to promote the needs and interests of others.

By Their Side provides advocacy for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the form of assessment visits, monitoring, support in planning meetings, work to resolve identified concerns, and update reports to families. The wishes of each individual and family guides their By Their Side Advocate, as well as a strong person-centered philosophy and understanding of the service delivery system and community resources.

Advocates help people pursue their interests.

David loves art, so together with his Trustee, his Advocate arranged weekly sessions with a mentoring artist. As David's talent grew, his Advocate located an Art Studio offering staff support where he now works on art several days a week, participates in exhibits throughout Baltimore, and is helped to market his artwork.

Advocates carry forward information that parents knew would be important.

John can only express pain through his behavior. Thanks to the intake documents completed with John's parents decades earlier, his Advocate was aware that John had hip replacement surgery that might one day need revision. Decades later, this information expedited John's diagnosis and treatment. With further hip surgery, John was living comfortably once again.

Advocates respond when someone's needs change.

When Chuck was admitted into the ICU, his Advocate visited and found him intubated, alone, and anxious. Medical Assistance will not pay for a hospital and residential staff at the same time. She told the nurse his nickname, TV preferences and communication style, and posted a note for all shifts. She called Chuck's brother about a companion, and he flew in the next morning.

As Ann aged, she developed irregular sleep patterns and Alzheimer's. She participated very little in her day program, so her Advocate suggested retirement. State funds were transferred to provide support at home. Ann can now sleep late and enjoys short outings to remain active.

Advocates involve specialists when needed.

Ben has an anoxic brain injury. When By Their Side became involved, his Advocate requested a neuro-psychological evaluation be completed to clarify his disability. This evaluation identified Ben's short term memory impairment for the first time. It answered a lot of questions, and his team was better able to plan support and safeguards.

Advocates address health and safety needs.

Tom is proud of his job gathering shopping carts from the parking lot. His Advocate stops by to make sure he is wearing his neon safety vest and is dressed for the weather, and updates his concerned sister, who lives out of state.

Mark has complex healthcare needs, so his Advocate regularly reviews his medical file. Because services were frequently overdue, his guardian decided to look for a new agency. As requested, Mark's Advocate helped them interview new agencies and later, staff. Mark still lives in his Trust owned home, and his new agency has a good monitoring system.

Advocates support individual rights.

John's Advocate appealed his Managed Care Organization's decision to deny funding of the \$5000 speech device recommended by his speech therapist. DHMH reversed the decision because John's speech disability existed since childhood.

Susan's financial account was depleted. Her Advocate learned Susan had been charged by her agency for a nurse visit following each of her recent hospitalizations. Regulations require a delegating nurse direct staff to implement physician orders. Her Advocate arranged a refund, as the expense was funded by Susan's DDA budget.

Advocates work closely with siblings, near and far. They serve as local eyes and ears, sounding boards, and partners in advocacy.

Jack does not communicate verbally, but his sister Jean understands him. She sees Jack weekly, and when her work takes her out of the country, Jean arranges for their By Their Side Advocate to visit in her place. Jack likes his advocate so the visits help him cope with Jean's absence, and the advocate's emailed update reports help Jean stay involved.

Advocates help facilitate use of Trust funds, for individuals who have them.

Mary had difficulty opening the drawers of her old dresser and her bed was in bad shape. With the help of her Advocate, residential agency, and Trustee, Mary received a "bedroom make over" with new furniture, curtains, bed linens, and fresh paint--all selected by Mary.

Mark's Advocate makes quarterly visits to monitor his needs and any needed repairs to his Trust-owned home. She updates his Trustee and arranges services such as an occupational therapy evaluation to identify sensory activities that engage Mark and reduce self-injurious behavior.

Advocates help families address a short term need.

Jane's elderly mother knew Jane would need full residential services but the State didn't understand, so she involved By Their Side. Their Advocate provided a report to the State detailing Jane's support needs and safety risks, with examples, and accompanied the family to meet with a State representative. Jane's full residential services began the same year.

And By Their Side helps parents plan for the future.

Whether calling for resources or attending an educational presentation at By Their Side's Annual Luncheon, parents and siblings are always welcome—even those who are not members. To view our new future planning guide and other resources, visit <http://www.bytheirside.org/resources-educational.html>.

For additional information, please contact
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