

PARTNERS IN HUMAN GROWTH



Grafton State School



**1st DHI Group Home
Dyke Ave**



**Newest Group Home
5509 Cottonwood**

Hear Our Story; Share Our Story!

This place is so much different than what I'm used to. I'm walking up to a big building that I've never seen before. Someone greets me and calls me by my name and then takes me to a room. I'm scared! I don't know anyone or what's going on! I look around and notice all the people around me. They are all talking. I can't understand any of it, it just sounds like garbled noise. So many people here that I just want to hide and get away from all this noise.

I get to a huge room full of beds. I'm told which one is mine and run to it. All I want to do is lay down. The bed squeaks under me. Every time I move my bed "squeaks, it gets louder every time I move, so loud that it becomes difficult to concentrate on anything else.

I try to curl up under my sheets but the sheets are so itchy. They are white with stains. When I realize that I am not going to be able to hide, I jump up to my feet and I notice how cold the floor is. With all of the noise, people everywhere, the cold under my feet, I just want to close my eyes and pretend to be somewhere else!"

The story above is not about one specific person, but multiple. A lot of the people DHI has supported throughout the years have experienced this as they entered the state school. Although it may seem like ancient history, it really wasn't that long ago that organizations like DHI didn't exist for our societies most vulnerable. Institutions were the only option for many looking to find services for their loved ones. We are grateful to be able to provide community living options that enable people to have quality lives!

An Amazing Journey to Freedom

As I near retirement very soon, it is a time of reflection on a career that has spanned over 43 years dedicated to serving marginalized and vulnerable people in our society. The changes that have occurred during this time have been astounding, and give me great hope for the future. Please take a quick journey with me over this time. I will never forget touring the Grafton State School, as it was called then, in the mid-1970's. This was before the Arc class-action lawsuit against the state of ND that was filed in 1980. It left an indelible sadness in my heart; seeing people in crowded, understaffed, unsanitary conditions, treated with virtually no dignity and respect. It was common then for children to be admitted as a young children and to live their entire lives there with no hope and no dreams. People were stripped of privacy, often chemically and physically restrained, even shackled, sometimes abused and often neglected. And for many, there was no way out.



My entry into the world of deinstitutionalization came a couple years later, as I had the opportunity to oversee a residential program in Grand Forks that operated 2 group homes for women who had grown up in the institution. We helped them get good jobs and apartments and to make choices about their lives and relationships. It was exciting to be part of a nascent revolution in how we treated and valued people in our society who had been hidden away and often forgotten!

Fast forward to the mid-80's and throughout the state, community provider agencies like Development Homes embraced building group homes and transitioning people out into our communities by the hundreds. In a matter of a decade, ND went from having more people institutionalized per capita than any state in the country, and spending the least on them, to an exemplary service system that shone as the leader amongst states.

*“.....ND had more people institutionalized per capita
than any other state in the country...”*

Our Mission:

Development Homes, Inc. is committed to the provision of quality community based support services to persons with disabilities which will enable them to maximize their individual potential and fulfill their personal dreams.



Development Homes had operated a children's group home on a shoestring prior to the lawsuit, and expanded services by leaps and bounds when given the opportunity. And we have never shirked from the commitment to helping people have normal, quality lives in regular neighborhoods with the support they need to succeed. For many years, we have continued to focus on supporting people to move from larger settings into less restrictive environments, and to not only live in community, but to become a valued part of the social fabric of Grand Forks.

With the opening of our 8th group home last month, we are able to give four young men the

chance to move from the Life Skills and Transition Center in Grafton back into an integrated community life. The Center is a whole new place, where people are treated with dignity and respect as individuals, and it now serves as a "safety net" for youth and adults who may live there temporarily while re-adjusting and re-setting.

During my career I have been so very fortunate to have gotten to know so many wonderful people; the individuals we have served and the staff and community partners we have worked with. I have been able to have a key role in leading the way through the requirements of the Arc suit through full implementation and eventual release from the courts of any ongoing or permanent injunction. As then Director of the Developmental Disabilities Division for the state, I will always feel proud of what we accomplished during those 15 years of litigation, and its final outcome.

Again, fast forward to the current day. In 2006, I came full circle back to DHI, an agency I had served on the board for decades earlier. This last part of my journey has been immensely satisfying and rewarding. While we will continue to grow and serve more people in need, we have come a long way as a company, as a state. I leave this work having been witness to an incredible and amazing change in people's place in our society – as full participants in every way. Thank you, as our community partners, for being there with us then, and now into the future!

“To become a valued part of the social fabric of Grand Forks.”



Continue the DHI Difference



It is important to remember our past and keep it at the forefront of our minds. If we forget the past we are bound to repeat it. We **MUST** remember that each person is an invaluable member of society, no matter of their abilities! Take a look again at the front cover. We have come so far in the quality of care and the homes we provide that care in. Will you continue to be a Partner in Human Growth and help us support and share the stories of our communities most vulnerable?

Our Vision

We envision a community built on mutual reciprocity for everyone, driven by progressive leadership, an inspired workforce, strong community connections, and wise use of technology.

Yes! I want to make a difference in the lives of persons with disabilities.

I believe that inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of everyday life, enriches our quality of life, our community and our humanity. Therefore, I will:

_____ Arrange a time for the members of the Speakers' Bureau to speak at my club/church.

_____ Volunteer and participate in one of DHI's social capital events (Art , Speakers' Bureau, Aktion Club)

_____ Participate in an advisory group to help connect persons with disabilities to our community.

_____ I cannot volunteer right now, but please accept my donation.

If you would like to receive our e-newsletter please signup at:

<http://www.developmenthomes.org/get-involved/enewsletter.html>

Please email aindvik@developmenthomes.org; or call 701-335-4028 or mail/stop by 3880 Columbia Rd. S.



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