



**The Arc-Dane County
Statement for Public Hearing- September 12, 2002**

County Executive Kathleen Falk, Human Services Director Susan Crowley, Chairs, Judy Wilcox, Kathleen Nichols, Sue Plasterer and Members of the Health and Human Needs Committee, Long Term Care Committee, and the Human Services Board.

Although some would not understand my opening statement, a lot of you would! When I refer to sounding like a broken record, some would not know that I am talking about a 45-rpm or a 33 1/3 or even a 78! But what we are bringing to your attention tonight is probably not anything new (like a CD or tape) and probably does sound like a broken record.

The Arc- Dane County now has a fifty-two year history of advocacy for children and adults with developmental disabilities. We are proud of the work that we have accomplished to help establish community services. We are also grateful for the service system that exists in Dane County. But we have a way to go!

A very serious situation exists in our county caused by continued and chronic under-funding of agencies and people on Self-Directed Services (SDS) contracts, as well as outrageous increases in insurance costs. Past records indicate that Dane County has only given an increase in contracts serving people with disabilities that equaled inflation once in the past 11 years. We have heard that the figure could amount to a 50% increase in three years. **Let us work together on resolving these high and outrageous costs that are limiting the capacity to provide quality services.**

And another year in the Yochum family finds our daughter Sara, still unemployed. As I mentioned last year, funding levels have not been sufficient for some supported employment providers to hire/retain job developers. So Sara continues to receive personal care worker services from her parents, Marcia and I. And Sara is fortunate to have a capable Support Broker who is helping Sara to direct services. But where will you find the funds devoted to provide job development and job placement services. We believe that all individuals should have the opportunity to work at a job within their capacity and to live where they choose within their means. Your decisions will help individuals with disabilities reach these goals.

To that end, The Arc-Dane County requests a 3% increase in contracts serving people with disabilities in Dane County to allow near continuation of services. We urge the Dane County Executive and the Board to make these adjustments for the 2003 budget year. Without your action, we are concerned that services may be lost in 2003 and beyond

We do have a couple of questions for you to consider as you make your decision:

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First, how are agencies expected to maintain quality services, including enough food, when inflation is essentially cutting the amount of money that is available to provide services? Anything less than the annual inflation rate is a cut in real dollars. We have had 11 consecutive years of cuts! How are agencies supposed to survive year after year of these cuts?

Second, how does Dane County justify giving county workers a 3% raise plus maintaining their health insurance coverage, when the Consumer Price Index was 1.67%?

In summary, we continue to believe that solving the problems related to the work force must take priority in restoring and/or continuing quality services. We will also welcome the opportunity to work with you on resolving these issues.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you for listening!

Paul Yochum, President
The Arc-Dane County

Lorie Betz, Chair
Advocacy Committee
The Arc-Dane County