

**The Arc-Dane County  
Statement for Public Hearing- September 5, 2001**

County Executive Kathleen Falk, 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.

The Arc- Dane County has a fifty-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.

We know that Dane County has had to use local tax dollars to provide increases over the past several years because of the state's neglect of human services. Especially the current state biennial budget just signed by the Governor! Our members have also advocated at the state level for adequate state support. This advocacy was successful in the 1970's and early 1980's but history that is more recent has not been encouraging.

We believe that the quality of services in Dane County is in danger because the annual cost of living adjustments in funding has not met the rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In fact, in many years, the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) has been less than one-half of the CPI. Health insurance costs have risen even more drastically. The Purchase of Service (POS) Agencies are struggling to provide quality services with inadequate resources.

We know that the quality of services has suffered. There is often not staff time available to develop new job sites when consumers lose their employment. Often, the individuals are expected to stay at home when unemployed, putting pressure on families and the residential providers. Both of these scenarios have happened in the Yochum family.

Not only has our daughter Sara been out of work since last October 2000, the only day service activity she has received comes from Mobility Training & Independent Living once a week. Her current supported employment provider has been providing all that they can do within their available knowledge about job development and within their current capacity. And while past efforts by the provider agency are appreciated by Sara and her advocates, especially her mom and dad, the fact remains that Sara is not receiving job development/job placement services tied to those supported employment dollars. How is it that Dane County can afford to pay for services for Sara Yochum (or for anyone else) that she doesn't receive?

We are now in the process of trying to resolve this in a joint effort by Sara's case worker (soon-to-be broker), supported employment agency, and Sara's advocates and family.

**The Arc-Dane County**  
**Statement for Public Hearing- September 5, 2001**  
**Page 2**

But in order for Sara to sign up for Self-Directed Services, we have been told that there is a paperwork delay of 90 days. Once Sara is signed on to SDS, she can then re-direct her funding to whatever job related agency who can satisfy her services needed. But why does Sara have to Wait! Shouldn't Sara have the same options that you or I would have when it comes to choices (without the 90-day waiting period, etc.)? I know that Sara's family thinks she should!

We are also concerned that we hear of incidents and practices in the residences that are of questionable safety. These practices are not made by choice, but rather by the necessity of inadequate funding, high staff turnover and subsequent staff vacancies.

Therefore, the Arc Board of Directors has voted to support a 3% increase in the COLA for the agencies providing services in Dane County. We believe that solving the problems related to the work force must take priority in restoring quality services.

We will also welcome the opportunity to participate in the strategic planning process that was recommended by the Human Services Task Force. Any reorganization of services to cope with the funding crisis must be done carefully. Early intervention strategies such as Birth to Three, Family Support, life span respite care and vocational/day services for high school graduates offer long term savings possibilities to help address our waiting lists.

However, the most urgent issue at present is the need to increase the COLA by 3%.

Thank you for listening!

Paul Yochum, President  
The Arc-Dane County