



NEWS RELEASE

PROJECT GIVES PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES FREEDOM TO CHOOSE THEIR HOME

Vancouver, January 23, 2007 – Individuals with developmental disabilities are exploring options other than traditional staffed residential resources, thanks to Community Living BC's (CLBC) Residential Options Project. The project, which began this September, has given people across the province the opportunity to identify the residential support that works best for them – rather than placing them in a situation that is not ideal.

Almost 1,500 individuals with developmental disabilities who are living in staffed residential resources (more commonly known as group homes) have been interviewed to find out if they are happy in their current situation, or if they would like the opportunity to look at alternatives. Many of those have chosen to remain in their current home. However, 177 people have expressed an interest in exploring other options and 50 are anticipated to move this year, according to the [Residential Options Project Mid-Point Overview](#).

The project has given many individuals who have expressed an interest in moving to an alternative living situation the opportunity to do so. "Through the process we identified two people who are eager to find another residential option that would better meet their wants and needs," said Bev Edwards, executive director of Milieu Family Services. "They will now have the resources to pursue their goals in a timely manner."

The Residential Options Project gives people with developmental disabilities a chance to make informed decisions about where and with whom they live. It helps people find homes that are best suited to their needs, wants and dreams. The project provides choice for those who have indicated they would like a different home and for those who have never been asked about their preferences. However, if people are happy with their current situation, they will not be asked to move.

Individuals and families have not always had the opportunity to choose their accommodations or design something that would support their unique circumstances. Instead, they were often required to accept that which was available. CLBC is working with families to remove barriers and to create ideal homes with all of the required safeguards.

When individuals choose to explore another option, a thorough planning process is conducted. This process involves the individuals, their families, support networks and service providers. They do not have to commit to any plan until they are comfortable with the new option. Most importantly, when people choose a new living situation, a place in their original home is held for up to four months so they have the option to return.

As people choose more individualized options, this will result in the closure or transformation of many staffed residential resources during the next several years. These closures would be a direct result of individuals with developmental disabilities choosing to move to a home that would better suit their needs, wants and dreams. To support service providers with this change, CLBC has created [Service Provider Transformation Grants](#) that allow

agencies to design and implement new and non-traditional residential services that expand the range of options an individual may explore when choosing a home.

Many individuals and agencies across the province have already developed alternatives to group homes that are both person-centred and cost-effective. In addition to creating more responsive services, this approach has allowed agencies to provide a broader range of supports to more people.

“Our priority, first and foremost, is the people we support,” said Rick Mowles, CEO of Community Living BC. “One of the primary drivers of the community living movement is increased control and choice for people with developmental disabilities. The Residential Options Project allows us to connect with people and ensure they are given options.”

“People choosing an alternative model may result in cost efficiencies, which would therefore allow us to support more individuals. It’s a win-win situation,” he added. “The people we support will be in a home that is best suited to their needs, wants and dreams and more people will be supported in the long run.”

For more information on the Residential Options Project, please visit the Community Living BC website at [www.communitylivingbc.ca/what we do/residential options project](http://www.communitylivingbc.ca/what_we_do/residential_options_project).

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