

Aspires Housing Group of Calgary

Minutes from Meeting of Thursday, December 5th, 2019, 7-9pm

The Ability Hub, Sinneave Family Foundation

Guest Speaker:

Dr. Katelyn Lowe, PhD, R. Psych; Chief Strategy Officer, Sinneave Family Foundation:

When will my adult be ready to move out?

[Link to Video of the Presentation](#)

- When referring to the checklist, parents need to know “You don’t have to check YES to everything on the move out readiness checklist.”
- Not all readiness items hold equal weight. This is for you as a family to assess. Some readiness tasks hold a heavier risk weight than others.
- Ask yourself for instance in the area of transportation can they problem solve if lost or miss a bus?
- Self-advocacy areas, what is there level of self-determination skills
- Does the individual have a plan? Do their parents have a plan?
- What’s in it for them? Consider how engaged they are. Everyone needs to look forward/be excited and engaged towards his or her goals.
- Support opportunities to live more independently before moving out to gradually test level of readiness, build confidence etc. (e.g. staying home on own for a few days, adding other ‘adult’ responsibilities)
- Launch+Skills is a program at the Ability Hub that offers skills coaches who coach individuals towards goals enabling parents to step back.

Business Meeting:

- Request for Additional Agenda Items: no items added
- Review and Approval of Minutes from October 3, 2019. The minutes are posted on the Aspires website. No changes or corrections noted.
- Project Updates and New Developments: John Seigner (Director of Independent Living, Sinneave Family Foundation)
 - **Aspires Connects:** If you are interested in being on a wait list and being contacted if there is a new opportunity that presents itself, ensure you have joined our database Aspires Connects. It helps us to sort/filter individuals for different opportunities. If you are new to Aspires, you will receive a 'Welcome' email with a link to the Connects database. <https://redcap.sinneavefoundation.org/redcap/surveys/?s=YHL4LDRAHX>
 - If you are already an Aspires member, go to the About Page on the website at the bottom and you will see Aspires Connects. To fill in the Connects form you will enter the email you use for Aspires.

- **“Let’s Get Started Guide”:** Are you going to be ready if the right opportunity presents itself? John and Carolyn have been working to develop a comprehensive guide for planning ahead. John and Carolyn or Lorraine can walk you through the process. Get started by emailing the S.I.L. team housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org
- **Horizon View and Being Ready:** We have a waitlist for Horizon View. Last year we had short notice from Horizon Housing on several units that came available. Unfortunately, we were unable to respond quickly enough. To be ready you need to be pre-assessed by Monarch House and ready to sign a lease if you are added to the wait list. If you are interested in Horizon View and would like more information please contact housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org
- **Good News:** Another Aspires member has moved into Norfolk House in Kensington. We now have three Aspires members living in Norfolk Housing, two specifically at Norfolk House, their main building. This individual had been on the waitlist for Norfolk Housing for quite some time. He has been connected with Aspires for several years. This reinforces the need for families and individuals to begin the process of planning ahead.
- **Sisters of Charity Update:** Horizon Housing purchased the building and March of Dimes put in a proposal to provide transitional housing but were not successful. Horizon Housing is going to select another agency. March of Dimes will be looking at other support models in the future that may include PDD contracts. Horizon View also has more inventory coming on-line in 2020. Currently they have several townhomes under construction on the Horizon View site.
- **A new project in Kensington:** Another low-income housing provider is building in the Kensington area. This will be a smaller apartment building built by Homespace designed for medium support individuals. There will be 24/7 supervision in the building. Now is the time to start preparing. John and Carolyn have begun triaging Aspires members who have identified their support needs. Once more details on this opportunity emerge, an email will be sent to all members. We are in discussions with the service provider.
- **Housing Symposium:** The Sinneave Family Foundation in partnership with Autism Alliance is planning a two-day housing symposium to be held in the fall of 2020. We are currently soliciting input to the event. To provide input visit the Sinneave Webpage, [Supportive Independent Living Planning link](#). Please complete this sheet before December 31, 2019.
- **Equity based projects:**
 1. **Attainable Homes:** We would like to support a project for families/individuals who are interested in investing equity. [Attainable Homes](#) is the organization we were looking to work with and we will continue to pursue this idea.
 2. **Life Leases:** another option for families interested in equity ownership.

<https://www.cplea.ca/wp-content/uploads/LifeLeases.pdf>

New Business:

- **Bill Locke, Council for Affordable Housing for Persons with Autism and Disabilities:** The Council brings together stakeholder groups and is connected with many affordable housing providers in Calgary. Homespace is a City of Calgary organization experienced in working with interest groups and agencies to develop and build affordable housing and will be constructing a new project in Kensington. This project also has the potential to be scaled up. The council is also working on other initiatives. <https://www.homespace.org/>
- **Larry Scarbeau, March of Dimes Update:** Announced March of Dimes (M.O.D.) has recently achieved a three-year term for accreditation from PDD Alberta. This means they will become a qualified service provider for PDD and will now be in a position to bid on contracts PDD asks for qualified service providers to bid on.
 - M.O.D. is disappointed the Sisters project did not work out but Larry is confident the “Time is right for families to take the lead.” They are ready to step up to address the need for 24/7 support models by (1) working creatively with families and stakeholders (2) design the supports, (3) show the need for the supports and (4) present a model that works. They are already working with 2 groups in Edmonton and 1 group in Red Deer. In Edmonton, they also currently provide supports for 8 group homes for Nunavut residents which also include clients with ASD.
- MOD would also like to reach out to families interested in setting up a Family Directed Group Home for both PDD funded or non-PDD funded individuals. Enter your information into Aspires Connects Contact the S.I.L. team through the housing email housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org
- **Bill 21, Henson Trust Changes:** The approval of Bill 21 by the Provincial Government will allow changes to be made to the Henson Trust bill by giving the government the authority to move the Henson trust out of Law and into Regulation. Therefore, there would be no requirement to go back to the legislature to make changes to the Henson Trusts, in effect making it easier to modify or even cancel Henson Trusts. This could adversely affect individuals whose families are planning for supports for their individuals. Before Henson Trusts were approved in Alberta last year (and Alberta was the last province in the country to adopt them), an individual could shelter up to \$200,000 in an RDSP, own their own home, own a car, and have up to \$100,000 in savings without affecting their AISH payments. If their savings exceeded \$100,000, their AISH payments would be terminated, even though it is hard to imagine how \$100,000 could support an individual for life. The Henson Trust removed the ceiling on the last item: savings. The Henson Trust funds cannot be given directly to the individual they are in trust for but can be used to purchase supports and goods. In other words, the concern is that if Bill 21 passes with this provision, the government can decide at any time to eliminate Henson Trusts.

Professional contacts for learning more about Henson Trust and RSDP can be found with a google search, several in Calgary are noted below¹:

- Gordon Vanderleek at Vanderleek Law in Calgary
 - RDSP financial advice. Steven Williams
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- Social Update: A very successful potluck was held on November 17th. Thank you to the team of families and individuals who took on organization, set up and cleanup.
 - Family Round Table: Families and individuals in attendance who were new to Aspires introduced themselves and described the housing solution they feel would best fit them.
 - Next Meeting: **Thursday, January 9th, 2020 7-9 p.m.**

¹ SFF nor Aspires endorse specific agencies or professionals.