

# Culture and Disability

*“It’s not the difference between people that’s the difficulty.  
It’s the indifference.” Anonymous*



March 2015

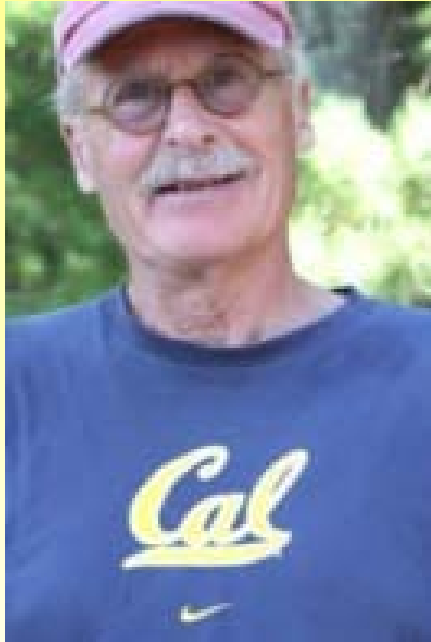
Karen Toto LMFT  
Executive Director

# Background

- Who are we and why are we here?



# The Schreiber Center



# Common Myths

- People with developmental disabilities do not have mental illnesses severe enough to need therapy.
- People with a developmental disability cannot participate in or benefit from psychotherapy.
- People with developmental disabilities already live in a therapeutic environment and do not need mental health services.

*-Carroll Jackson, LISW-S 2010*



# Ben

25 year old with Down Syndrome, engaged in his community, involved in city politics as an advocate.



# Reality

- 1/3 of individuals with a developmental disability have a mental illness of some type.
- In Developmental Centers the number can be as high as 7 out of 10.

*-National Core Indicators, 2010*



# People's First Language

**People-first language** is a type of linguistic prescription in English, aiming to avoid perceived and subconscious dehumanization when discussing people with disabilities, as such forming an aspect of disability etiquette.

The basic idea is to impose a sentence structure that names the person first and the condition second, for example "people with disabilities" rather than "disabled people" or "disabled", in order to emphasize that "they are people first"..

The speaker is thus expected to internalize the idea of a disability as a secondary attribute, not a characteristic of a person's identity.

# Vision

- People with developmental disabilities living in supportive communities with a sense of belonging, beauty and joy in their own homes.





# Mission

Create and sustain high quality services that are stable, secure, lasting and committed to serving the unique and changing needs of each individual.

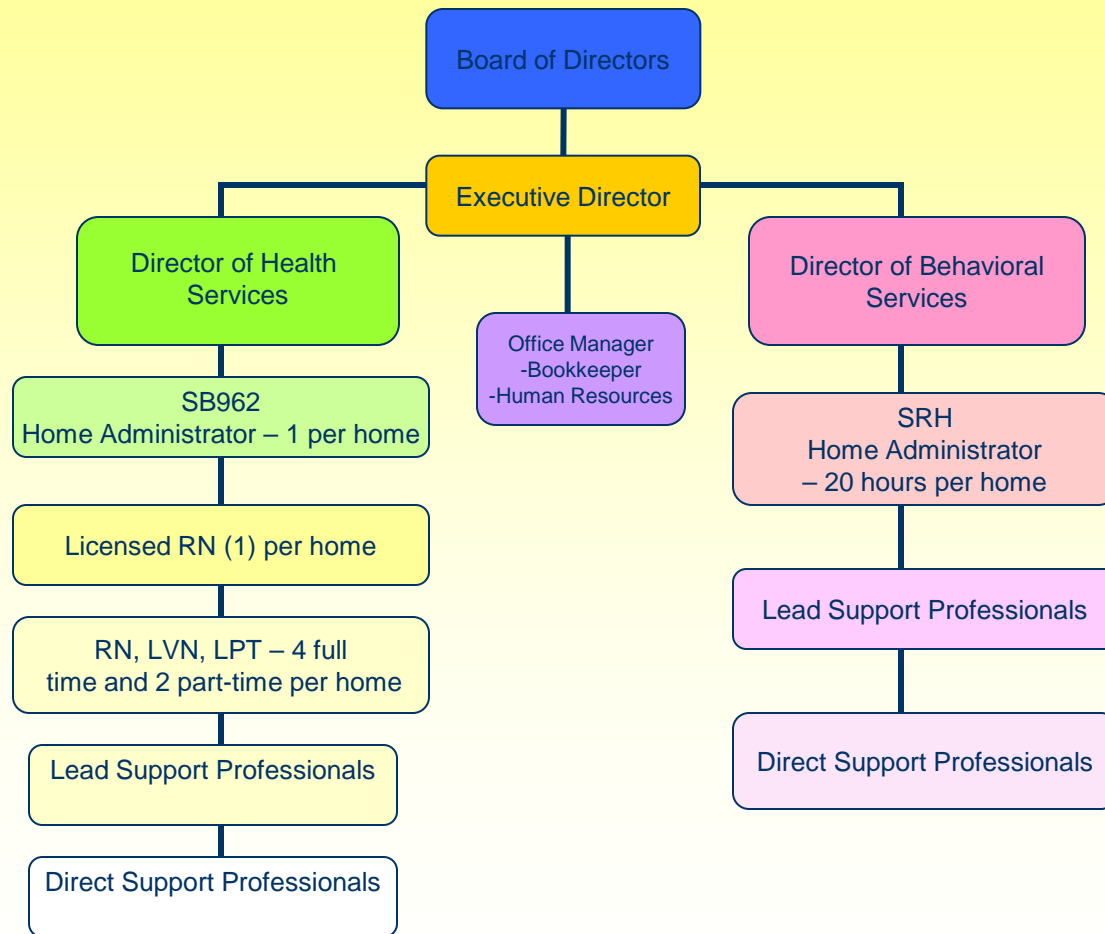


# Current Projects

- 7 Special Residential Homes
- 2 SB962 Homes for individuals who are medically fragile

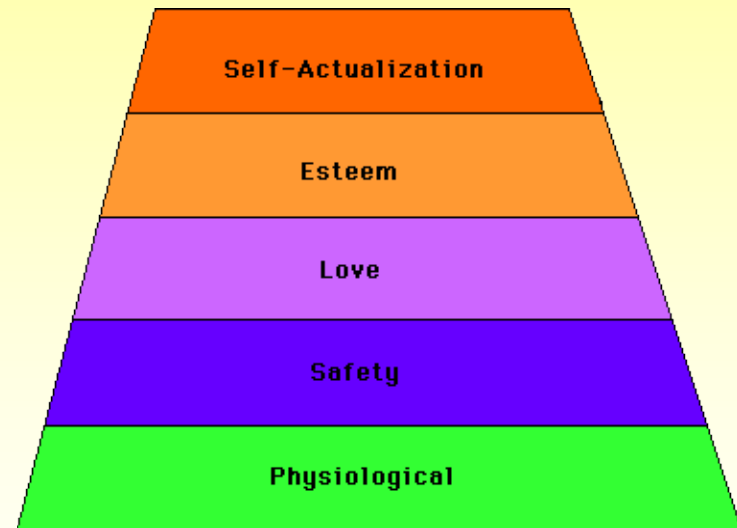


# Organizational Chart Alegria Community Living



# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities

- Going above and beyond meeting the basic needs of the individual
- Emotional, psychological, spiritual needs
- A truly therapeutic environment



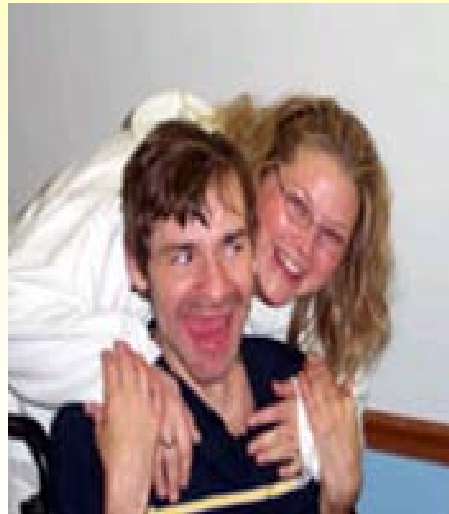
# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities

- Therapeutic Environment
  - Health Consultants (Nurse, Dental Hygienist, Psychiatric, OT/PT, Speech, Respiratory Therapist) – 3 hours per month per client
  - Behavioral Consultant – 5 hours per month per client



# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities

- Therapeutic Environment
  - Alternative Consultants (Art Therapy, Music Therapy, Massage Therapy, Pet Therapy, Sand tray, Individual/Family Counseling) – 2 hours per month per individual



# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities



- Multi-Sensory Equipment (Snoezelin)

# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities

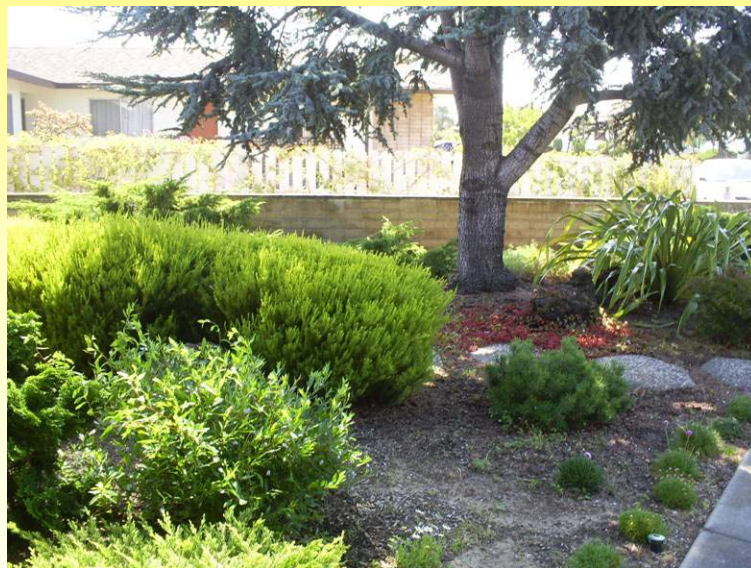
- High Staff Ratio
  - at least 2-3 staff on at all times (overnight, too)
- Director of Behavioral Services - MA
- Home Administrators – BA
- Lead Staff & Direct Care Staff
- BA or equivalent experience





# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities

- CHOICE
  - Furniture, decorations
  - Beautiful backyard
- Bringing the outdoors into the home
- Non-ambulatory – but not a medical facility



# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities

- Being part of a “community”



# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities

- Family involvement
  - Feedback
  - Dinners and other events
  - Counseling



# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities

- Building a Team
  - Respectful
  - Priority is to serve
  - Choice
  - TEAMWORK
  - Compensated and valued
  - Training



# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities

- Oversight
  - QMS Project
  - Internal QA
  - Regional Center
  - Community Care Licensing



# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities

- Shady Springs



# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities

- Shady Springs

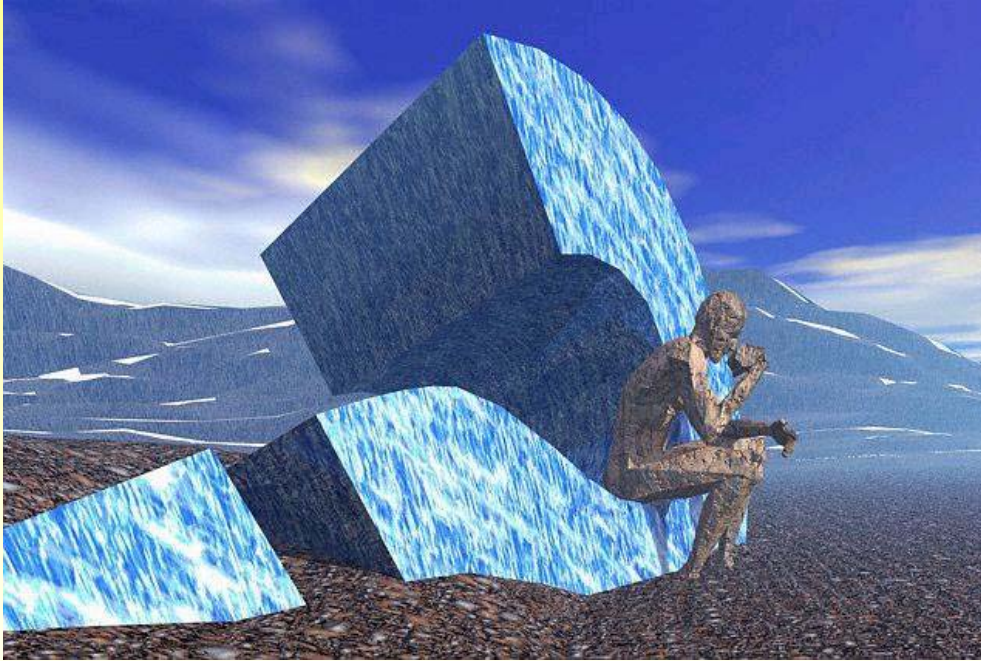


# Creating Environments of Beauty and Wellness for People with Developmental Disabilities





# THE END



QUESTIONS?