BEYOND COMMUNITY SERVICES

John L. McKnight
Director of Community Studies,
Center for Urban Affairs & Policy Research and
Professor, Communication Studies & Urban Affairs
Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois

It was in a small New England town that I first understood the limits of community services. The town was located in a state with one of the most humane and progressive systems for serving people who are labelled developmentally disabled. Very few people were in large institutions, small group homes had proliferated, sheltered workshops were being dismantled and a serious effort was underway in the schools to bring labelled children into the regular classrooms. In this town I was taken to a group home for people labelled developmentally disabled. The home was physically indistinguishable from the other houses on the street. Living in the house were five middle-aged men, most of whom had lived in this residence for nearly ten years.

It was with considerable pride that an agency director and public official took me to visit these men. They wanted me to see how their clients were "a part of the community" and the beneficiaries of an effective program of community services. When the opportunity came to talk to each of the men, I inquired as to their lives, experiences and relationships in the town. To my surprise, the response of each man made clear that they had almost no social relationships with their neighbors or the other citizens of the town. None of them could identify a close friend or neighbor from the town and none were involved in any kind of organization, association or club. When I asked the staff members whether they knew of any community and social

relationships that the men had, they were unable to identify any other than a few shopkeepers.

Later I learned, by talking with other people within the state human service system, that the isolated circumstances of these five men tended to be the rule rather than the exception. Nonetheless, they were described as "deinstitutionalized," as being "in the community" and receiving "community services." It was then that I first realized that all of this community language obscured the basic fact that these men were completely isolated from community while surrounded by community services.

One wonders how it is possible, in a small town of 5,000 people, to find a typical house and have five residents live there for ten years without any effective community relationships. Indeed, if one would say to the average citizen, "I want you to take five men and buy a house in a neighborhood in a little town where those five men can live for ten years. And then I want you to be sure that they are unrelated in any significant way to their neighbors, that they will have no friends, and that they will be involved in none of the associational or social life of this town," I think that almost every citizen would say that this is an impossible task. Nonetheless, traveling throughout North America it has become clear to me that systems of human service providing activities called community services have managed to achieve what most citizens would believe impossible - the isolation of labelled people from community life even thought they are embedded in a typical home in a friendly neighborhood in an average town. Certainly, this unbelievable outcome makes clear that community services are not tools that bring labelled people into

community life.  Indeed, the truth is more probably that activities

called community services are the primary barrier between the five men

and their community.

Perhaps the issue can be clarified by speaking more accurately.
In this New England state, the human service system has relocated
labelled people from big institutions into houses in neighborhoods.
They now provide services to people who live in these houses and they
are called community services.  They are, in fact, services to people
who live in houses in neighborhoods.  They are not services that have
resulted in the people becoming a part of the community.

I would not want to suggest that there are services that will
"make people part of community."  Rather, it is my purpose to point
out that services provided in small local places are not services that
necessarily involve people in community.  Indeed, they are often the
major barrier to involvement in the community.  Therefore, it seems to
me that we should say that in this particular state, the system is now
providing local services.  And that the relocation of those services
to local places has had almost no positive effect on the participation
of labelled people in community life.

It should also be noted that two other initiatives associated
with the word community may also have very little effect on whether
labelled people are incorporated into the relationships characteristic
of community life.  The first of these initiatives has to do with
physical accessibility.  While physical access is an absolute
necessity for traversing the public space of our society, that fact
will not, in and of itself, insure that there will be social access to
the community.  In the small New England town, the five men were able

to access the physical public space, including two who moved in wheelchairs. However, this physical access was not the "ramp" to social accessibility. The empirical evidence abounds that for many labelled people, physical access is the necessary but not sufficient requirement for participation in community life.

A second initiative has to do with advocacy for rights. While it is absolutely essential that the legal and legislative tools that insure against discrimination and for physical accessibility be fought for vigorously, this legal advocacy will not assure incorporation into community life. This is because community relationships are volitional. They are an expression of consent and care. They cannot be mandated or enforced. They are beyond the reach of the law and a ramp. To achieve them is precisely beyond the most effective uses of law, technology and service.

How, then, can incorporation in community life be achieved? To attempt to answer this question, it is necessary to deal with definitions. What do we mean by community?

The answer to that question is nowhere definitive. One could spend a lifetime in a sociology department and never come to a definition of common agreement. Nonetheless, it seems to me that there is one definition that is so practically useful that it can become central to the work of those concerned about the incorporation of labelled people into community life.

This particular definition was provided by a French count who visited the United States in 1831. His name was Alexis DeToqieville. He was a European coming to observe a country being taken over by Europeans. Therefore, he expected to see a very familiar pattern of

social development.  Instead, he found that the settlers were creating

a new society with local communities formed around a unique invention.

These inventions were small groups of average citizens who would

appoint themselves to come together and form an organization to solve

problems.

DeToqueville was very impressed by these small groups and he

called them associations.  He said that they took on three unique New

World powers.  First, they were groups of citizens who decided they

had the power to decide what was a problem.  Second, they decided they

had the power to decide how to solve the problem.  Third, they often

decided that they would themselves become the key actors in

implementing the solution.

From DeToqueville's perspective, this was a uniquely powerful

instrument being created in America - these citizen associations.  He

saw them as the foundation stones of American communities.  He also

understood that they were the unique tools fashioning a new kind of

democracy.  In Europe, even after the revolutions, citizens rarely

took primary responsibility for problem definition, solution and

action.  They still depended upon elites, professions and authorities

to fulfill these functions.  In that sense, their votes were decisions

to give authority to others.  On the other hand, in the United States,

DeToqueville saw that citizens were reaching beyond the vote and

taking power unto themselves through these unique associations.  His

description of this unique American invention of a community of

associations is described in his famous book, Democracy in America.

As we consider the incorporation of labelled people into

community life, it seems to me that DeToqueville has provided us a

very useful definition. It is not focused upon those one-to-one relationships that might be called friendships. Rather, he focuses on the collective relationships that we understand as an association.

It should seem obvious that communities are collective associations. In that sense, they are more and different than friendships. We know, for example, that one can have a friendship with a labelled person in an institution. However, that does not mean that the person has been incorporated in community.

Similarly, it does not mean that the person is incorporated in community if we create a friendship with that person and engage in leisure activities outside of an institution because these activities do not mean that the person is engaged in collective relationships that are the essence of community.

Community is more than two people and more than a place. It is groups of people who work together on a face-to-face basis and are engaged in public rather than private life.

These kinds of associations that express and create community take several forms. Many of them are relatively formal with names and officers elected by the members. They may be the American Legion, the Church bowling league or the local Peace Fellowship.

A second kind of association is not so formal. It usually has no officers or public name. Nonetheless, it is a gathering of citizens who may solve problems, celebrate together or enjoy their social compact. These associations could be a poker club, a coffee clatch or gathering of neighbors who live on the block. The fact that they do not have a formal name and structure should not obscure the fact that they are a group of citizens who are often engaged in the critical'

dialogue that results in opinion formation and decision-making influencing the values and problem-solving capacities of citizens. Indeed, many Americans are primarily influenced in their decision-making and value formation by these informal groups. Then, they often disperse into the more formal groups where their ideas can be implemented by the more structured relationships.

A third form of association is less obvious because one could describe the place where it occurs as an enterprise or business. However, much associational activity takes place in restaurants, beauty parlors, barber shops, bars, hardware stores, etc. People gather in these places for purposes of interaction as well as transaction. Historically, most of the basic discussion about the formation of the government of the United States and its constitution appears to have occurred in inns and taverns.

Thus, we can understand associational life as being formal and informal with some of the informal associational activity occurring in commercial space. In sum, this represents the community from which most labelled people are excluded and into which they need to be incorporated if they are to become active citizens at the associational center of a democratic society.

It is important that we recognize the unique values of this community of public associational life. These values include the fact that associations are powerful. This power derives from the fact that they are groups of citizens whose pooled understanding, commitments, care and action are much greater than that of any individual or even the sum of the independent action of each of those individuals.

Therefore, if we believe that people who have been excluded need to become powerful, they need to be incorporated in associational life.

Another value of the community of associations is that associations are groups of people. Obviously, this means that 'there are many relationships possible. When we focus on creating one-to-one relationships, we place a heavy burden upon the care that we hope will exist between the two participants. However, in an association of fifteen people, any one of the participants have fourteen possible relationships and the probability that two or three of them will be care-filled is much greater. Therefore, it is reasonable to presume that in associations, the possibility of friendships of the heart are multiplied over efforts to establish one-to-one relationships.

Another value of the associations of community is that they tend to have great continuity. Indeed, it is sometimes a problem to end an association that has outlived its initial purposes. This continuity is a protection against the limits of one-to-one relationships that can be broken by mobility or change of heart.

In summary, the peculiar values of associational life are power, friendship and continuity.

Unfortunately, it is difficult for some people to see that this community of associations is the center of our democratic society. This is because they are mainly trained in understanding those forms of social organization called services, corporations or government. These are social forms or systems that have organization charts and large signs that allow one to know they are there. This is not true of the associational network that comprises the democratic community. To see it, one has to look more closely. Nonetheless, it is not

difficult to draw a map of the community of associations if one uses

their citizen rather than their professional knowledge. Almost

everyone would recognize that their city, town, neighborhood or

community incorporates at least the following kinds of groups:

Artistic Organizations
Business Organizations
Charitable Groups & Drives
Church Groups
Civic Events
Collectors Groups
Community Support Groups
Elderly Groups
Ethnic Associations
Health & Fitness Groups
Interest Clubs
Men's Groups
Mutual Support (Self-Help) Groups
Neighborhood and Block Clubs
Outdoor Groups
Political Organizations
School Groups
Service Clubs
Social Cause Groups
Sports Leagues
Study Groups
Veteran Groups
Women's Groups
Youth Groups
Etc...

This very limited list of customary community associations only

incorporates the more formal groups. It does not incorporate the

millions of informal groups and commercial places for associational

activity.

There are simple methods for finding the more formal associations

in any place in North America. In order to help those who are not

able to see the community life around them, the Center for Urban

Affairs and Policy Research at Northwestern has developed a guide to

mapping their local associations.*

Once we have understood the nature of the community of
associations that is the center of our democracy, we can begin to
consider those methods that lead to excluded people being incorporated
into this community life. It is critical that we understand this
process of incorporation because the primary problem of most people
who are labelled is that they are excluded from the power and
protection of community life. Paradoxically, they are excluded
because they are said to be in special need while their special need
is to be included in community life.

How does incorporation of the excluded occur?

Obviously, some people who have been excluded forge a path back
into community on their own. This is often a heroic struggle that
requires great commitment and persistence. And while we know that
this escape into inclusion is infrequent, it is equally clear that
community life is a common vision of many of those who live in a world
surrounded by nothing but services.**

A second entry into community life is created by family and
friends. They have a vision for their labelled relative or friend
that reaches beyond access to community services. They break through
the hidden pedagogy of the human service system that teaches that a
good life is a fully serviced life. They see, instead, that a good

---

* Getting Connected, Publications Department, Center for Urban
  Affairs & Policy Research, Northwestern University, 2040 Sheridan
  Road, Evanston, IL, 60208, $2.50.

** A vivid description by one person who escaped the world of service
   is the article by Patrick Worth, President of Ontario People First
   in the TASH Newsletter, May 1989, Volume 15, Issue 5, Pages 1-3.

life is filled with the care, power and continuity of community.

Unfortunately, the visions and struggles of labelled people, their relatives and friends have had only limited effect in surmounting the barriers of community services. The most telling evidence of the power of prevailing exclusion is the segregation that is so commonly the rule in community life. Most citizens have infrequent opportunities to be joined in their common life by people who have been given one of the labels established by the service industry. This is true in spite of the industry's growing misuse of the word "community" in connection with service activities.

The common life of North America is so segregated that the absence of experience with those who are excluded has led many citizens to imagine that these labelled people are somehow inappropriate for community life. Many have come to believe that labelled people are so incapacitated that their lives literally depend upon separate and expert attention. Having accepted this proposition, most citizens lead segregated lives in which they can only imagine labelled people. The result is that the very isolation created by services has stimulated many fantasies in the popular mind. Many citizens imagine that human beings labelled developmentally disabled are unacceptable in everyday life and helpfully isolated by the professional care that is the only "good thing" that a "good society" can do for them.

Because it is so infrequently the case that excluded people and their families are able to overcome the barriers of service and incorporate themselves into community life, we have found that the most frequently successful incorporation has taken place as a result

of people who have assumed a special responsibility to guide excluded people out of service and into the realms of community life.

For the last five years we have engaged in a continuing study of the initiatives of these individuals who serve as "community guides." They are unique, unschooled in their efforts, and guided by their individual creativity and insight. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize about the process by which many excluded people are guided into community life. However, it is possible to describe some patterns of the work while recognizing that they do not describe the methods of all guides and that each guide is a person mainly informed by a personal vision of community rather than a program.

In order to understand the process by which most guides incorporate people into the community of associational life, it is necessary to understand the nature of that life.

First, community life is a web of relationships that are informal. This web is the hidden structure of everyday life. Therefore, community life may appear to be disorganized and ephemeral when compared with the order and visibility of the charts, manuals, structures and forms of the powerful organization we call systems. The "invisibility" of the structure of community does not mean that it is either unorganized or powerless. Indeed, community is, in its' structure, like the wind. There is no visible presence but a powerful manifestation. It is into the connectedness of everyday life - the order, continuity and care of community - that effective guides are introducing excluded people. They are not introducing one person to another. Rather, they are bringing a person into the web of

associational life that can act as a powerful force in that person's life.

The second critical element of community life is that it is based upon the assumption that everybody has a capacity. It is upon that capacity that the power of community is built and the relationships endure. In contrast, we must recognize that most systems of service are essentially focused upon the deficiencies of others - IQ scores, grades not completed in school, broken legs, etc.

While it is true that each of us has what might be considered deficiencies, each of us also has many capacities. Communities are those social spaces where capacities are connected, expressed and manifested. Service systems are those social spaces where deficiencies are identified, adjusted, treated or cured.

Each of us has deficiencies and capacities. However, the tools of systems developed to deal with deficiency are structurally inappropriate and ineffective in communities because communities are social spaces for the expression of capacities. This is why most service systems never really become effective as agents for people entering community life. No matter how hard they try, their very nature is based upon deficiencies. Their name betrays this fact and their methods grow from that fact. Therefore, they are by their nature the inverse of community and unlikely places from which a person would enter community life.

This is not to say that individuals do not need, at specific times and places, specific kinds of professional service and therapy. It is to say, however, that these professional forms of intervention

are inappropriate in community life where the capacity of each individual is the central fact around which relationships are built.

The community of our interest, then, is the group of informally interconnected people focused upon the capacity of each. When people come together around these values, their collectivity is called an association. An association is a structure for the activity of citizens. Thus, we are not just talking about incorporating people in community. Rather, we mean to bring them into life as citizens by incorporating them into the relationships where their capacities can be expressed. This is, of course, the center of a democratic society. For those who believe in empowerment, it is here, surrounded by citizens rather than services that the power of labelled people is most fruitfully and creatively expressed.

It is because citizen space is based upon capacity that most guides are people whose focus is upon the capacities of those who have been excluded. They have an eye for the gift, the potential, the interest, the skill, the smile, the capacity of those who are said to be "in special need." Focusing upon these capacities, they introduce people into community life by pointing beyond the need to the gift. And they understand, as does every religious faith, that every single person has a gift. Indeed, it is the faith of many of us in the West that democracy is mainly noted for its ability to evoke and magnify each of these gifts of common people. Therefore, every guide we have interviewed has been a person focused on capacities rather than deficiencies. They see the excluded person as having a disability called clienthood. They seek the opportunity for expression that can

be manifested once clienthood is escaped, the gift is offered and citizenship is established.

Several guides have pointed out to us that they were once involved in service systems and did not realize that their entire understanding of the people they called clients was focused upon "fixing" them. They report that their most basic change, once they decided to become a guide, was to stop "fixing people."

A second attribute of most, but not all, effective guides is that they are well connected in the interrelationships of community life. They are personally part of the web of everyday life. They have invested much of life's energy and vitality in associational activity. Based upon these connections, they are able to make many effective contacts quickly because they know people who know other people. Through this associational web, they are able to guide the outsider into diverse, multiple relationships.

It is obvious that one cannot go to a school or buy the connectedness these guides have established through years of association with community life. Being connected in community life means that you have invested your life in community. This is why most guides come from community life rather than service systems. A person interested in human services can spend money and receive training that will achieve the capacity to fix others. There is, however, no school, program, curriculum or money that can connect a person to associational community life. This is why efforts to "train" service professionals to guide excluded people into community life have been so repetitively unsuccessful.

It is only common sense to recognize that community incorporation most effectively takes place through the actions of those people who are well connected in community reaching into a service system and guiding a labelled person out into the communal world they know. It is, on the other hand, non-sensical to train and assign a person expert within a service system to guide a person out to community. In fact, large numbers of people in human service systems are young, working in communities where they were not raised, newly arrived themselves and generally inactive in the associational forms that are central to the life of the citizen. To depend upon these people to become active in "integrating clients into community life" is nearly a non-sequitur.

If one wanted to become a part of Tibetan life, it would not be reasonable to hire a professor of chemistry at an American university to act as your guide. Rather, one would be better advised to hire a Tibetan yak caravan driver who could help one negotiate the physical and social terrain of a different society. This is not to denigrate the knowledge or utility of a chemistry professor. It is, however, to recognize that his expertise is in no significant way relevant to the task of Tibetan guiding.

A similar point needs to be made about human service professionals as community guides. It is rarely one of their primary attributes that they have been broadly active through time in the associational life of community, recognized mainly as a citizen rather than a professional. This is not to denigrate their expert knowledge. Rather, it is to say that it is as unreasonable to ask them to be guides as it is to ask the chemistry professor.

The third common characteristic of community guides is that they

achieve their ends because they are trusted and not because they have

institutional authority.  This point is a correlate of the second.  If

they are well connected, it is because they are trusted.  And that

trust is the result of their having invested their lives and

commitments in the lives of others in the informal web of

associational life.

It is almost a truism to say that a person who is well connected

is a person who is trusted.  One begets the other.  In working through

a framework of trust, the guides never identify themselves with

systems.  They do not say that they are from the Department of Mental

Deficiency, Division of Experimentation, Bureau of Community Programs.

Instead, they say "I'm a friend of your sister Mary and she said that

I should ask you about the choir that you direct.  I have a friend who

loves to sing and has a beautiful voice and I think that you might

like to have her in your choir."  In this way, the guide is

introducing a person who is excluded based on her capacity to sing.

She is making the introduction through a relationship with a trusted

relative.  She is seeking engagement of the excluded person in an

association of community life - a local choir.  In two sentences, the

guide is able to bring together the capacity, the connectedness and

the trust that are the visible pathways into community life.

Another reason the guide does not want to be identified with a

service agency is that the very name of the agency will serve to label

the excluded person in the community.  We have found that a leading

disability experienced by guides is public identification with human

service agencies.  They are attempting to disengage people from the

systems of deficiency and reengage them in the associations of capacity. In doing this, every guide goes to great lengths to act as an agent of community and its trust networks rather than an agent of a system and its outside authoritative structures.

The fourth characteristic of almost all community guides is that they believe strongly that the community is a reservoir of hospitality that is waiting to be offered. It is their job to lead someone to ask for that hospitality.

This belief in hospitable community is a critical ingredient in the work of successful guides. When one meets many of these guides, you can personally experience the strength of their belief in community. When you experience their vivacious expectations of success, you understand that they are "making an offer you can't refuse" when they introduce an excluded person to a citizen active in associational life. They are not apologetic or begging or asking for charity or help. Rather, they are enthusiastically presenting the gift of one to the hospitality of the other.

In their enthusiastic commitment, they overcome many of the first doubts that may exist in the minds of citizens who have little experience with people whose lives have been surrounded by services. This is an important component of the work because these first doubts are usually overcome once the relationship is established. However, the initial doubts must be overcome and the guide's belief that most of the community is prepared and willing to offer hospitality to the excluded is central to their success.

Many of the guides' belief in community hospitality has grown as they have found, sometimes even to their own surprise, how many

citizens will respond to the capacities and gifts of an excluded
person. Indeed, the repeated experiences they report gives the lie to
the proposition that most people who are labelled are excluded because
they have been rejected by the community. They consistently find that
there is a broad community readiness to incorporate people who have
been excluded. They find that hospitality is prevalent throughout the
associations of North America. What is not present is a consistent
effort to seek that hospitality for strangers who have been lost in
the human service world.

A careful caveat should be noted here. Guides do not find that
every person in every neighborhood is hospitable. We know this is
true whether we are disabled or not. There are, at all times and in
all places, some unfriendly and inhospitable people. However, the
guides report that the great majority of people are hospitable and
open to diversity. It is the obvious task of the guide to relate to
this part of the community rather than focus on those who are negative
or resistant.

Unfortunately, many people in human service systems have had
negative experiences as they have tried to parachute small
institutions called group homes into neighborhoods. Frequently, the
local residents will resist this professional vision of "community
integration." However, the very same neighbors, asked to meet and
involve one person named Sam Jones who has been labelled
"developmentally disabled" will welcome that person into their
collective life.

It is important to recognize that the visions of human service
systems for communities are often unacceptable precisely because they

are not community visions. They are visions of systems creating little systems in local places. Neighbors who reject these micro-systems are not rejecting labelled people. They are rejecting a bad idea created by service professionals.

Community guides recognize that they will fail as agents of micro-system ideas. Instead, they are an agent of a person named Mary. They are bringing her - Mary - into a collective life where everybody has a name rather than a place. It is because of this personal approach that they are successful. Clearly, they will find some people who are unaccepting and a few who are degrading. However, they are well enough connected to know where these people are and how to avoid them or neutralize their effect.

Guides are not influenced by the fact that some neighbors have rejected some group homes. This is because guides are not dealing in groups of people. They are dealing in Marys. Theirs is a world beyond community services. A world of relationships with people who know and trust each other and expect that it is a part of their joy to offer hospitality.

Just as every individual has capacities and deficiencies, every community has hospitality and rejection. A community guide is a person who knows the terrain of hospitality and avoids the mountains of rejection.

A fifth characteristic of most effective community guides is that they learn that they must say goodbye to the person they guide into community life. This is not a natural step. Nonetheless, most guides report that they have learned that in order for the fullness of

community hospitality and citizen incorporation to occur, they must leave the scene. They are guides, not servants.

Just as our Tibetan guide will leave us when we reach the inn in Lhasa rather than sleeping in our bedroom and eating at our table, so the community guide learns to leave when the hospitality of the community has been offered and the excluded person brought into the new house of community life.

In summary, effective guides tend to incorporate at least five elements in their work:

       ... They focus on the gifts and capacities of excluded people.

       ... They are well connected in associational life.

       ... The paths they walk into community life are based on relationships of trust rather than the authority of systems.

       ... They believe strongly that the community is filled with hospitality for strangers.

       ... They learn to leave the person they guide so that the community can surround them and become responsible for their lives.*

While most guides are people who do not need "policies" to guide them and are, in fact, unsure of what a policy is, there are those in systems who need policies in order to understand practice. For such policy and systems operatives, it is possible to summarize the elements of the work of guides in the following policy statement:

> "It is our policy to reduce dependence on human services by increasing interdependence in community life through a focus on the gifts and capacities of people who have been excluded from community life because of their labels."

* A detailed report of the work of community guides, The Gift of Hospitality, is available from the Publications Department, Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, 2040 Sheridan Road, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, 60208, $4.00.

It is important to note that in this policy statement there is a recognition that there are many dependency creating human services. It is those services that the guides attempt to replace with associational life. However, it is also clear that there are human services that do not create dependence and could be designed to support community life. There has been very little systematic effort to attempt to distinguish between these two kinds of services. However, a preliminary hypothesis is that services that are heavily focused on deficiency tend to be pathways out of community and into the exclusion of a serviced life. At the same time, it is clear that there are some supportive activities, often provided by people with no degrees, that are important aspects of insuring that people with labels remain in community life. They might appropriately be called community services.

We need a rigorous examination of public investments so that we can distinguish between services that lead people out of community and into dependency and those activities that support people in community life. In an effort to assist policymakers in large public and private agencies to examine their resource allocation from this perspective, we have developed a guide to creating an "Environmental Budget." This budget distinguishes between those dollars spent for deficiency oriented services and those dollars focused on the maintenance and expansion of community opportunities.*

* "An Accounting System Designed to Monitor the Environments We Invest in for Labelled People," Northwestern University, Center for Urban Affairs & Policy Research, 2040 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL, 60208. Copies free upon request.

This Budget is a tool that can be used by any professional or group of professionals who would like to undertake a rigorous analysis of the actual emphasis of the expenditures of their organization. It allows them to determine the nature and value of the allocations that are focused on deficiency and dependency as against those that are designed to provide the support necessary to insure that those individuals in danger of falling out of community will be strengthened in their capacity to remain in the center of everyday life.

Finally, we are reminded that the policy statement indicates that it is our goal to "increase interdependence in community life." It is critical here that we emphasize the word "interdependence." The goal is not to create independence - except from systems. Rather, we are recognizing that every life in community is, by definition, one that is interdependent. It is filled with trusting relationships. It is empowered by the collective wisdom of citizens in discourse.

Community is not about independence. It is about the common life that is lived in such a way that the unique creativity of each is a contribution to the other. The crisis we have created in the lives of excluded people is that they are disassociated from their fellow citizens.

We cannot undo that terrible exclusion by a thoughtless attempt to create illusory independence. Nor can we undo it by creating a friendship with a person who lives in exclusion.

Our goal should be clear. We are seeking nothing less than a life surrounded by the richness and diversity of community. A collective life. A common life. An everyday life. A powerful life that gains its joy from the creativity and connectedness that comes when we join in association as citizens to create an inclusive world.