



Charlottesville Region Autism Action Group

Updates from the March 24, 2021 CRAAG Meeting

Many thanks to the 35 individuals who attended the evening meeting to discuss CRAAG's **2021 Housing, Supports and Services Survey**. This included twenty-eight family members and seven professionals representing CA Human Services, Compass, The Faison Center, and Region Ten Case Management. Thanks to everyone who joined us that evening!

The survey, created by a team of CRAAG supporters, asked respondents about their needs, hopes, and concerns in the next five years. The target audience was self-advocates, high school students who will graduate this year and next, and their families.

We had no idea what to expect in terms of self-advocate or family participation in the survey and greatly appreciated the time and effort of the 80 respondents. Upon completing the survey, sixty-five of these individuals self-identified in order to stay connected to CRAAG or participate in networking with other families. We were also encouraged by the support of local partners who circulated the survey to the families they serve, including these organizations:

- The Arc of the Piedmont
- Charlottesville Parks and Rec Department - Adaptive Recreation Program
- The Faison Center
- FutureWorks
- Moms in Motion
- Parent Resource Center (PREP)
- Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC)
- Region Ten Community Services Board – Case Management Department
- Special Olympics
- Virginia Institute of Autism (VIA)

[Click here to see presentation slides from the meeting](#). The meeting was structured to cover:

- Initial data of the **2021 Housing, Supports and Services Survey**
- Initial takeaways from the Survey
- Next steps in our advocacy

One of the key takeaways concerned apparent knowledge gaps by survey respondents, even those with DD waivers. These gaps included:

- Confusion about the definition and options available in the waivers
- Questions about what waiver or if they had a waiver
- Lack of knowledge of support system
- Limited ability to identify support for trying to understand and navigate “the system”

The knowledge gap was evident from the large number of technical questions to the professionals about:

- What can be done about high turnover/low wages for direct care professionals?
- Who can explain the status of low income housing development in the City and County?
- Could we develop a City Center NOVA/Our Stomping Ground option?
- Is there any flexibility in DBHDS housing regulations and licensing?
- How to identify properties that may be available to adults with DD?
- How the service gaps and shortages of licensed providers in our area is effecting people’s ability to find housing options?
- Are VIA or Faison interested in providing housing supports and services?

One suggestion that resonated with many others, was the idea that CRAAG create subgroups to generate housing options that suit their family members’ needs. Bob Kreps, CRAAG Chairperson, spoke for many when he said that a core group of family members was in agreement with the idea of subgroups and would bring a proposal to the next meeting on April 28th.

CRAAG promised to publish a more in depth analysis of the **2021 Housing, Supports and Services Survey** in the near future.

April 16, 2021