



Summit *housing*

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Update on Marietta, Ohio

Karyn Berry had lived in Summit County for a long time with her dad, Tom, as her guardian. But as Tom got older, he realized it was getting more and more difficult for him to care for her. He started to talk to his daughter, Kim, about taking over his caretaking duties and moving Karyn, who has developmental disabilities and is non-verbal, down to Marietta to be closer to her sister. First, though, he needed to find a suitable place for Karyn to live.

"I'd been talking to people down there about better housing, and I couldn't find anything that made me comfortable," he says. "Eventually, I started talking about buying a house for Karyn and some other people to live in. I've been working with Summit Housing for 40 years. They develop and maintain housing for people with disabilities in the Akron area, so I asked them if they ever did any work outside the county. They said, 'Sure,' so we looked at some houses and found 206 Pebble Drive. They bought the house, and I donated some money toward it."

Karyn and three other women with developmental disabilities—Kay, Rose and Abi—were slated to move in on September 1, 2015.

Now as you may recall from a prior newsletter, things in the beginning did not go so smoothly with the neighbors, city council and the law director. However, with the help of Disability Rights Ohio, and a little education about people with disabilities, things have really changed.

Home Sweet Home

Kay takes a walk through the neighborhood with her aide every evening. She's sure to talk to people, and neighbors have started to greet her and wave.

"I like to talk to people," she says. "One of the neighbors talked to me, and I really liked that. I want the neighbors to know that I love my new house, and I like to do housework, especially dusting! I also love jewelry and nail polish, and I can watch TV in my bedroom anytime I want."

"After it all calmed down, I think the neighbors have seen that it's really not that bad to have people with disabilities in the neighborhood," reflects Rosie Reed, Kay's guardian. "Kay feels comfortable there. She doesn't feel like any of the neighbors are mean to her. And the staff in the house is excellent, taking the girls out to do things and interacting with them."

Tom Berry thinks breaking down these stereotypes is a matter of education, not just for the neighbors but people throughout the country.

If you experience difficulty with a neighborhood or community, Tom Jacobs is a wealth of information and experience. Please feel free to call him at 330.634.8722.

Sections of the above article were taken from The Disability Rights Ohio , October, November 2015 newsletter.

New Dual Diagnosis Facility

We spoke of a new pilot program with the Summit County DD Board and the ADM Board a few months ago and wanted to give you an update. This project is also being done in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and the Ohio Finance Agency. The vacant land has been purchased at 2935 Graham Road in Stow. The facility has been designed to include 4 apartments plus an office and common areas to include a laundry room and patio. The Stow Planning Department and City Council have given the approval to move forward. We hope to begin construction in August.

Because of the community good will and positive reputation Summit Housing has developed over the years, the project has been well received. Mayor Sara Kline had this to say about the projects future residents; "They are the people we love, the people we work with, the people we live next door to," she said,



adding that "people who live in this home, they are human beings."

We are thrilled to have this kind of community support and look forward to a successful project and great place to live. Stay tuned for future updates.