Examples of H.O.P.E. Team Success

The power of one’s own community is awesome! The untapped resources are unlimited! When one has a methodology to involve their community around an individual with a disAbility, the possibilities are endless.

The Full Life Ahead Foundation of Hope uses a process called H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Envision). There are other methods by other names, but this is the process we follow and find that it produces consistent positive results. What is a H.O.P.E. Team? A H.O.P.E. Team is formed by bringing together family, friends, service providers and community to brainstorm and power think of possibilities for the individual once they have gone through a learning process with a facilitator (not a parent) to get to know the individual. The focus can be literally anything... from road blocks in school, to social situations, to finding a job or career, locating funding to start a business, or a way to live in the community with support... like I said, literally anything.

Jurdy’s Story

Jurdy is a delightful young lady with Cerebral Palsy who also happens to have visual impairments. She truly wanted to work, but the “system” had lost her and she had been sitting at home since she left school at 21. Her family made every connection they could; but Jurdy needed some support they couldn’t provide on the job, so success eluded them.

A H.O.P.E. Team was formed when Jurdy was 26, her strong interest in animals rose to forefront. Through this process, she visited the Birmingham Humane Society where asked if they needed any volunteers. They were thrilled and the she started right away. Ten days later, she was hired full time to be the receptionist and greeter. ClasTran (our para transit) picked her up and took her home each day freeing her mother from that responsibility – for the first time in 26 years.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services also contributed in numerous ways during the H.O.P.E. Team process. One of the unit supervisors stated that if a team had been assigned from Vocational Rehabilitation Services, it would have taken three years instead of three months to achieve this result. Next on Jurdy’s goals is her own log cabin on her parent’s acreage in Leeds. She also has participated in Partners in Policy Making in Alabama and was empowered by the knowledge she has gained about self-advocacy.
David's Story

David is a recent graduate of Georgia Tech University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. David has spinal muscular atrophy and uses a power wheelchair for mobility. He actively participated in the mini-Baja off-roading team, which do all of the designing, building, and racing of the cars competitively across the U.S and Canada. The team is responsible for fundraising, leadership, and all aspects of the running of the team. They have an advisor, but the team is responsible for everything. David was captain his senior year and took the lead in raising over $100,000 when their trailer with all tools, the car, etc, was stolen the previous year. They wound up with not one, but two cars that season. David designed the modifications to his own Suburban, which had to go to three different locations to achieve the final results. He has the only vehicle like it in the world!

David was offered a job designing prototypes for GM in Michigan upon graduation, but could not accept the job because he could not find accessible housing in the area or a cost effective solution to attendant care. David moved home to Stockton, AL to live with his parents while he looked for work.

Full Life Ahead entered the picture through the request of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. We involved Katherine Carol in Denver, CO, and Dave Hammis in Ohio to help, and through email they quickly got David working on a PASS and a life plan. David's first H.O.P.E. meeting was held at a regional training that Full Life Ahead was holding at the 4H Center and David began to catch the “hope” in the process! He scheduled the next one in his home community surrounded by “his” team!

David's DREAM is to have his own business modifying all types of vehicles for all individuals (think HotRod) with a side business designing and modifying adaptive equipment for individuals with disAbilities. A few key investors and he will be on his way with this unique concept and Alabama will have a true winner of a business.

In the meantime, David has accepted a job working for a ship building company and has been approved for the SAIL waiver. David has since moved to the Eastern Shore of Mobile Bay to CRC Manufacturing where he has more responsibility and autonomy. Next will be the challenge of finding attendants, then housing and independence. David is definitely a rising start and one of the true success stories!

Experience in the Community

In our experience, the community wants to help. They simply do not know how! What they need is a way to become informed about specific needs, for specific individuals. The H.O.P.E. process offers that in a friendly setting, with food, fun fellowship and networking opportunities. For more information, visit our website at FullLifeAhead.org and ask for our detailed handout on how a H.O.P.E. Team works and how to hold your first meeting.