

Case #7: Adult Child with Down Syndrome Finds Way to Gain Independence

The Background

Marcus is a twenty two year old adult with Down Syndrome and lives with his parents, Sue and Bill. While Marcus was a teenager his parents saw him exhibit many qualities of independence. He looked forward to challenges and took great pride in his accomplishments. He parents cultivated and reinforced those characteristics throughout high school. Marcus attended a vocational school and then started a part time job upon graduation. His new job quickly turned into a full time job. Marcus is now pushing to live independently and his parents have procrastinated doing the research for his options and alternatives.

The Challenges

Sue has been struggling with the decision of Marcus' independence. She just always thought Marcus would live with them. Bill and Sue discussed some options with Marcus. They ranged from moving in with a friend that lived above his parent's garage to the entire family moving into a duplex home with Marcus on one side and his parents on the other.

The Obstacles:

- While Marcus had many great skills and was actually earning a good wage at his job, Bill and Sue felt that they would need to remain close to assist Marcus as needed.

- Marcus was making a good wage at his job and felt that he should have complete independence. He had several friends and wanted to have them over whenever he wanted.
- One of Marcus' friends recently was able to move into his own apartment and he feels that he should be able to do the same thing.



The Family Alternative Care Solution (FACS)

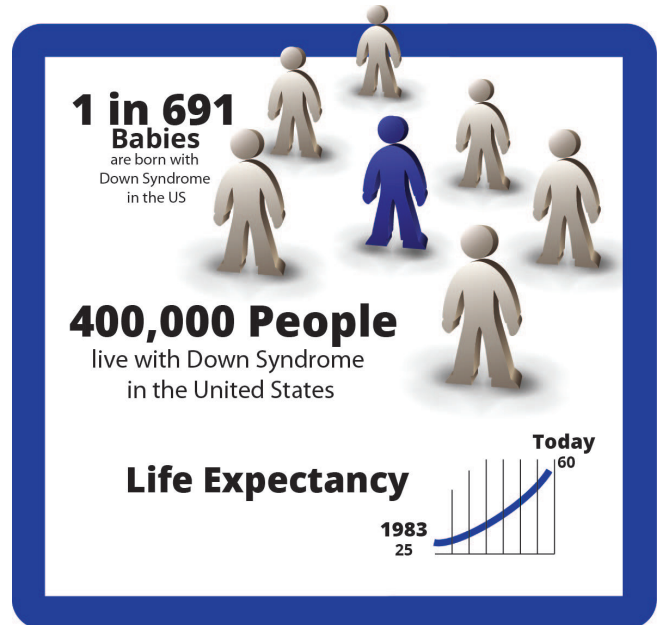
After much review and discussion between the family members, Sue finally called Better Living Express and talked with a FACS Advisor. She explained her concerns and Marcus' wants and needs. She described their current home and the discussions they had with Marcus wanting his independence. After listening to Sue, the

FACS Advisor recommended two options: 1) Add an addition on their existing home that would have a separate entrance, bedroom, and bathroom, or 2) Add a backyard cottage that could function as a guest house/apartment for Marcus while still being on the same property within the fenced in yard. After a few days of discussing the options, Marcus opted for the backyard cottage with the support of Bill and Sue. This option provided the better benefits:

- Marcus was able to have separate access to the cottage and live virtually independently.
- Bill and Sue were just across the yard and could insure Marcus' safety and well-being.
- Marcus could use some of the money that he was making from his job to help offset the payment and Bill and Sue were able to tap some equity they had built in their home to fund a large part of the cottage.

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Marcus reflected on his accomplishment of getting his new cottage. It was a source of pride for him. He was helping to make the payment which also re-enforced his feeling of independence. Sue thought this was a great option and summed it up by saying, “This was the best option we could have chosen. We get to live apart but together everyday.”



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