AveNEWS of Success: Innovative Ideas, One Person at a time

2018 TASH Conference
Melanie Miles, Dan Heldoorn, Trevor Shepard,
Steve Schreiber, Scott Shepard
Brief history of Avenues SLS…

• Avenues SLS was initially mentored through CHOICESS and Joe & Becky Donofrio beginning in 1993 as part of California’s CSLA Pilot Project on Supported Living.

• Avenues branched off into its own non-profit, and took 10 thoughtful years to meet and journey with 20 individuals on their path to building community and a home of their own.

• Since then, Avenues assisted one person to become her own vendor, 7 persons to exit institutional settings and mentored two SLS agencies from within to become self sustaining agencies supporting people in North LA County.
Although we are generally proud of the services Avenues SLS has provided, we identified some areas of need that we felt we needed to act on as an agency:

- We saw that many people had lost or forgotten skills we had taught them 10 to 20 years previously. In many cases, staff and families felt very comfortable with doing things “for” people, instead of teaching skills. We attributed some of this as sympathy, and in others due to low expectations.

- Even with increased legislative advocacy, we found that our “Direct Support Staff” were treated like babysitters when it comes to pay. We found a correlation with the terms “Care-Provider”, “Support Staff”, and “Babysitter” which we feel has led to decreased expectations and lower pay in the field of adult services. There does not seem to be a career path for our staff.

- Housing (lack of) has been an issue of increasing importance, especially since housing vouchers have ceased to become an available option in the past 10 years. If we can’t assist people to find affordable housing, where are we headed?
What have we done?

1. A renewed emphasis and training on **Systematic Instruction**, with a push to **eliminate verbal feedback during instruction**.
2. We changed our job titles and duty descriptions to **Instructional Coaches**, emphasizing that we coach, teach and instruct as opposed to “doing things for”. We also worked hard to discriminate what our IC’s do from what a “care-provider” does.
Avenues SLS is also in the process of working out curriculum for Instructional Coaches & Job Coaches to be implemented in our Community College system to develop and provide a certification program/AA degree specifically for Adult Services. This is at least a start for paving more of a career path for our staff.
**Housing:** Avenues SLS is working to make use of whatever community resources, grants and funds are found and available to create homeownership opportunities for the people we support who do not already own their own homes, or who do not have housing assistance.
Melanie: How I developed my day services to work for me

2018 TASH Conference
Portland, OR
My Life wasn’t as fun 20 years ago

I started hearing voices but it took the doctors a long time to figure out that I had Schizophrenia on top of my autism.

I gained 60 pounds in one year after starting to take new medications when I lived with my Mom and Dad.

After moving into my own place, I wanted to be more independent, but I needed staff to come over and help me get up and get ready for my day.

My family and support team helped me to achieve my goals of getting lots of volunteer and paid work, and I now go to the gym Monday through Saturday!
First I lived in an apartment
Then my family helped me to buy a condo
Now I live in my own house with a roommate
I’ve lost over 30 pounds!
Variety helps me forget about my voices and to focus on more important things!
My new Micro-Business: Melanie’s Arts & Crafts
It took me a while to get in a healthy routine of going to the gym 6 days a week and doing yoga & zumba. Everyone reminded me of my goal to live to be 100 and to get a new wardrobe, which helped motivate me to get up every day and go to the gym.
Working at the Avenues Office
Helping Out at the Food Pantry & Help the Children
I need things to look forward to (traveling, conferences, and fun places)
My checklist of important things 
I want my support staff to know

My Expectations for My Support Staff
by Melanie Miles

As my support staff, I expect you:

-To take me to the gym every day

-To ask my permission before making or answering personal phone calls

-To restrict your personal calls to 2 minutes when you are supporting me

-To speak in English only when talking to co-workers or others when you are around me

-To encourage and motivate me to do my regular routines

-To notice when I follow my diet and engage in healthy routines

-To remind me to sit down, close my eyes, and relax when I have eye spasms

-To stay back (give me space) when I am working at my volunteer sites. When you stay back, I still want you to pay attention to me and make sure I am doing a good job and not get on your cell phone while I am working.
I don’t like going to the same places and doing the same things every day. That’s why I need variety!

Talking to colleagues at TASH

Yoga & Zumba

Hollywood
Steve

Translation by Trevor and Scott
Steve lived in a condo in the Santa Clarita Valley with his roommate John for over 20 years; John made a one year commitment to be Steve’s roommate in 1995. This one year commitment lasted until December 2017.

Even after moving out, John continues to see Steve Regularly!
The first year:

Steve needed to learn that we would (and could) listen to him and that he could lead his own life.

The first month in his own place, Steve would push you out of his room and stay there.

He seemed to be depressed and not know how to direct his life.

We helped Steve develop a Communication Dictionary to teach others how he communicates.

- This is a living document, which has been and continues to be edited and evolved!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>When Steve:</strong></th>
<th><strong>It may mean:</strong></th>
<th><strong>We should:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Takes your hand and pulls on you</td>
<td>“I want to go”</td>
<td>Prompt Steve to touch the picture of the car/car keys then walk with him to the car. Then, use picture album to see if Steve points to a picture of a specific place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sings “Ahh-ahh-ahh”, Or “eee, eee, eee”, etc.</td>
<td>“I want something”</td>
<td>Say “show me”, and follow him to see what he wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Steve’s in a store or if he is around other people who don’t know him, and startles people with his noises;</td>
<td>“I’m happy”, “I’m enjoying this”, “I’m saying ‘Hi’”</td>
<td>Say “Hey Steve, you sure are happy” so that community members understand that Steve is happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stands up and begins to walk away or towards something</td>
<td>Then you should:</td>
<td>Say “Steve, you sure are happy”, or “Hey Steve, are you saying ‘Hi’?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He wants to use the bathroom, get a drink of water, or do something purposeful (he has a reason for standing up and moving)! He may also be attempting to get a twig or branch to twirl in his hand</td>
<td>Follow him and see where he is going (his initiating getting up has a purpose!). Do not simply try to stop him or tell him to sit down, as he may have a toileting accident or need a drink.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We also started some new community routines and found a new neurologist who respected and strived to understand Steve.

Steve’s happiness improved. He now demands that you take him out in the community and spend time around other people. He learned that we would listen to him and respond to his initiation. We identified other ways for Steve to experience vestibular motion (season pass at Six Flags, snow skiing, etc.)
Steve’s Own Place

When John, Steve’s roommate of over 20 years, gave Scott and Lori notice, it was realized that this was a good opportunity for Steve to look into owning his own house.

Factors in Steve’s Case that helped this decision:
- Steve’s stairs in previous apartments
- Steve’s ongoing health, accessibility
- Good investment
- Found a perfect place that fits all his needs and anticipated future needs in a great area.
- Overall quality of life would be improved
What makes Steve’s home his:

Steve CLEARLY chose the house among the choices.
Steve has the key
Steve collects the rent
Steve makes sure that you listen to him (or else you will hear about it from Steve)
People knowing (and respecting) his “language”
Steve has full access around his house and the ability to communicate his desires.
Some of the modifications and strategies that Steve appreciates
Steve has overall had more responsibility in his new house, and is thriving!
Getting older means having a plan for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc.
Recently, Steve joined a new gym, which meant making new relationships.
Hello! My name is Steve. I’m a very social and outgoing guy, and am genuinely looking forward to meeting you all. Before meeting, I thought it might be a good idea to let you know a bit more about me.

**How to best Support me:**

- I’m not the best with words, but I’m very good at communicating in my own way. First and most importantly- **the louder I am, the happier I am!** When you hear me, that’s always a good thing!
- **I really like to be around other people** and will often sing and laugh when I’m having a great time.
- I definitely will be having a great time here at the gym, so please **come say hi to me when you hear me!**

As a social guy, I like to interact with people as much as possible. I really think people’s eyes are the most beautiful feature, so I often will get captivated by especially beautiful eyes and get a closer look.

- If I come up to you and hold eye contact, it’s my way of greeting you and starting a small conversation. I may even serenade you if I’m particularly happy.
- It would be polite for you to acknowledge my greeting and say hello back!

**Some more things about my life**

- **I live in my own place,** a beautiful house right next to Cal-Arts. I have a roommate who pays his own rent and also spends some time supporting me.
- **I enjoy doing a wide variety of volunteer work** around Santa Clarita each day.
- Just like a lot of people here at the health club, I always have some **coaches** with me. I have different coaches every day because I enjoy spending time with lots of different people, and I appreciate all the help they give me.

**So, remember:**

1. **LOUD = HAPPY**
2. I truly enjoy interacting with people
3. I hope you will all greet me and say hello! I look forwards to getting to know everyone!
Giving out flowers at the SCV Convalescent Hospital every Tuesday
Shopping for the SCV Food Pantry
Dropping off food to the Food Pantry
Spending time with family
Steve helps teach us the importance of learning to listen.
Julie: Why I needed to get my own Business
- I get to cook what I want
- I don’t have to share a room with someone else
- I can have my cat Pebbles with me
- I don’t have a group home manager or a boss I don’t like telling me what to do
- I like to make my own schedule
- I don’t like to work every day
I am working at bellringing over the Holidays, and now I also have my own business where I can work when I want (I set my own schedule!)
Let me tell you about my business that I started!
I work when I want and I am my own boss (VERY Important to me)
State of California
SECRETARY OF STATE
BUSINESS PROGRAMS DIVISION
NAME RESERVATION CERTIFICATE

JULIE STECKEL
28415 INDUSTRY DR. #502
VALENCIA, CA 91355

RESERVATION # 201806790071
ISSUE DATE 03/08/18
EXPIRES 05/07/18

RE: JULIE'S BLOOMS ON THE GO, LLC

The above-referenced name is reserved for a period of sixty (60) days, commencing on the above issue date, for use by the addressee as specified by California Corporations Code section 201(c), 2601(c), 5122(c), 7122(d), 9122(c), 12302(d), 15901.09 or 17701.09.

NOTE: This reservation does not guarantee that the reserved name complies with all federal and state laws. At the time of filing the document containing the reserved name, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have complied with all federal and state laws, including specific name requirements. In some circumstances, the reserved name may require additional approval/consent pursuant to applicable law at the time of filing. Name styles for particular types of business entities and the need for consent/approval required by law are not considered at the time of the name reservation.

Therefore, no financial commitment relating to the proposed name should be made based on the reservation, as the business entity is not created or qualified until the appropriate documents have been submitted to, and filed by, the Secretary of State.
I have Instructional Coaches that teach and coach me around purchasing flowers, doing special order arrangements, and at the Swap Meet and other places where I sell flower arrangements.
During the day, I do lots of things to keep busy:

Santa Clarita Athletic Club
Soles for Souls
Placerita Nature Center
I enjoy working at the Dollar Tree, where I get a paycheck
Another job I have at A Little Patch of Earth
In the Holiday season, I also work at a third job
Holidays are big traditions with my family.
Just 2 years after Kristol and I moved into our first apartment, we committed to another big change...
Since our rent kept going up, we decided to buy a place of our own! (67% invested by Kristol and 33% invested by Javen)
Dan Heldoorn
When I was a Kid

Dan’s Journey

A look at Dan’s life and how strong family involvement and individualized supports can help lead to a more inclusive life.
I went to Lokrantz Special Ed Center

- Dan attended a SPED Center in LAUSD during Elementary School. (He learned a lot about autism there).
My First Job as Ring Bearer

Job: Ring Bearer
Accommodation: (ring TIED to pillow)
Job Complete!
Mulholland Middle School
A push for electives…

With some early advocacy, Dan transferred to a Gen Ed Campus and took some electives (like Gen Ed Music) where he got better grades than in the SPED Special Day Class. Here is his graduation day.
My Apartment in Canyon Country

Dan moved into his own apartment with a young couple in Santa Clarita at age 19. Dan pays his share of the rent and utilities.
Dan received transition services based out of College of the Canyons. Services included C.O.C. classes, work experiences and Community Based Instruction.
Swim Class at C.O.C.
Soccer Class
Soccer
More soccer...
At the Gym
Dan started his first job at OSH when he turned 21. Avenues helped get him the job during his last semester at school as he was transitioning to life after school. Dan used these pictures in his job interview for his next job.
More duties at OSH
More of Dan at OSH
Break-time
Watering the indoor plants at Lowe’s (5 years at Lowe’s until I had some knee problems)
I made a slide show of my OSH duties for my Lowe’s interview.
Sweeping away the water
Moving the Plants with the Hand Jack
Using the Dust Pan
Watering Outside Plants
Break time at Lowes
Buying candy to fill my candy machines
Filling my candy machines
I do my chores too.
Hot Air balloon with my roommate
For more info and to receive a pdf of our presentation:

- Avenues Supported Living Services
- scottshepard@avesls.org
- AvenuesSLS.org