

BUILDING FIVE STAR COMMUNITIES



COLLABORATION



OPPORTUNITY



POSSIBILITY



SUCCESS

2010 STRATEGIC PLAN



THE ABILITY CENTER
OF GREATER TOLEDO
CELEBRATING
90 YEARS OF
PEOPLE
HELPING
PEOPLE
1920-2010

 THE ABILITY CENTER
OF GREATER TOLEDO

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE SINCE 1920

The Ability Center's Move Toward "Five Star Quality" Services: 2009-2010 Strategic Plan

Introduction

At their March 2009 meeting, The Ability Center's Board of Trustees approved the development of a plan that will move all programs and services toward "Five Star Quality". Derrick Dufresne and Mike Mayer of **Community Resource Associates** developed the concept of "Five Star Quality" Service (relative to delivery of disability services) and describe it as follows:

*"Disability systems can only bring people to "Three Star Quality". No matter what we do, no matter what kind of staff we have, if the activity, program or service is **disability system-based**, it cannot achieve more than "Three Star Quality". "Three Star Quality" is good, "Four Star Quality" is better and "Five Star Quality" is great.*

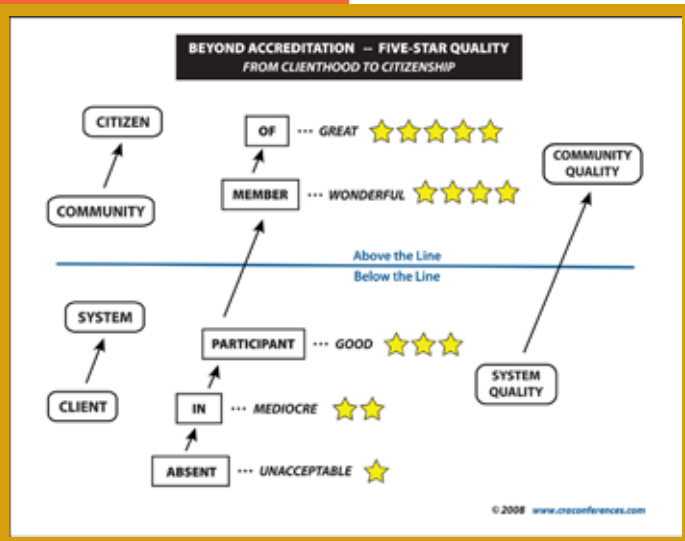
*There is a line that delineates and differentiates levels **Four and Five Star Quality** from level **Three Star** and below. **Four and Five Star Quality** can*

*only be defined **by the community** - not by the disability system. It is that line that distinguishes the journey that makes and helps people be better clients" (**Three Star**) or allows people to practice "citizenship" (**Five Star**), their birthright. **Citizenship is not anything that we bestow upon people with disabilities. They have it as a result of their birthright**".*

By striving to achieve "Five Star Quality", The Ability Center will assist consumers with the achievement of their goals and the move from "client" to "citizen" status; from merely being **in** the community (*inclusion: Three Star, good*) to being **of** the community (*citizenship: Five Star, great*). The goals listed in this plan are steps that

will assist consumers with the transition to an individualized **Five Star** community setting. Each goal is assigned to specific staff, accompanied by specific activities, timelines, and indicators of success. Ultimately, success will be measured by each individual who successfully achieves their goals and becomes a full participating member of their community. The **Five Star** rating indicates that natural supports are provided **by community organizations** with "**invisible**" assistance from The Ability Center.

July 26, 2010 will mark the 20th anniversary of **The Americans with Disabilities Act** being signed into law. This law has led to the removal of many attitudinal and physical barriers to community inclusion. However, there is a significant difference between being "**in**" the community and being "**of**" the community. **Five Star Quality** service aims to assist



Within the heart
of each community,
everyone belongs.



consumers with being full participating members of their communities. As an indication that change is still needed, *The National Organization on Disability/Harris Survey (2004)* reports that people with disabilities feel more isolated from their communities, participate in fewer community activities, and are less satisfied with their community participation than citizens without disabilities. Community participation represents the degree of connection that citizens with disabilities have to their physical and social surroundings. ***A “community” is where life takes place; anywhere people feel “at home.”*** Unfortunately, data show that people with disabilities, ***more than any other minority group***, are isolated and set apart from the greater society (*A. Condeluci, Cultural Shifting, 2002*). In most cases, it is not the person’s disability that causes this greater level of isolation and dissatisfaction. Negative attitudes and low expectations are the most common barriers to community acceptance reported to Ability Center staff by individuals living with disabilities and their family members.

The goals listed in this plan represent the beginning of a multi-year transition process for The Ability Center that will lead to **Five Star Quality Services** for people with disabilities. That change will increase the involvement of our community partners (*businesses, recreation providers, social service agencies and volunteers*) and facilitate opportunities for consumers to become full participating members of their communities.

*For more information about Five Star Quality Services, please visit:
www.abilitycenter.org*

There is a significant difference between being “in” the community and being “of” the community.

Inclusive Book Club meeting at a local Coffee House - “in” and “of” the community



The Ability Center of Greater Toledo Strategic Plan Goals for 2009-2010

Administration

- ✦ Move ACT-Ottawa County to Sutton Center location.
- ✦ Purchase accounting software that streamlines grant-processing abilities.
- ✦ Continue to work with programs to improve budget efficiency.
- ✦ Work with Board to identify allocations and budget changes associated with *Five Star Quality* service.

Program Development

- ✦ Develop a partner network focused on implementing community strategies for Five-Star communities.
- ✦ Coordinate best practice training opportunities for Ability Center staff and program partners.
- ✦ Develop a plan for all current program and funding partners to learn about *Five Star Quality* services.
- ✦ Assist at least two community partners to obtain funding for *Five Star Quality* programs.
- ✦ Facilitate the development of a plan that will move ACT toward *Five Star Quality* service over the next five years.

Human Resources

- ✦ Develop a recruitment plan that will enable ACT to seek out and hire highly qualified individuals with disabilities.
- ✦ Develop a wellness program for staff.
- ✦ Implement a staff mentoring program that assures ongoing leadership development for ACT and the communities it serves.
- ✦ Develop a Yearly Training Schedule for all staff that supports achievement of organizational goals.

Public Relations

- ✦ Inform and educate consumers and community about *Five-Star Quality* programs.
- ✦ Develop a *Five Star Recognition Program* as a tool for highlighting the work of community partners.
- ✦ Ensure that our *Five Star* philosophy and direction will be a major part of the year-long **ACT 90th Anniversary Celebration**.



Ottawa County Youth Leadership's Recipe for Community Soup:

one part: me
one part: you
equal parts:
everybody else

Season to taste
with:
equity, access,
love and respect.





Dawn Petersen, Director of Youth and Transition Services, and Jenny Barlos, Client Services Director for Assistance Dogs of America, Inc., speak with a consumer about college options.



Having this job has allowed me to buy a car and help my mother pay bills. And I've met some great people at the park.

Youth and Transition Services

- ✦ Hire a full-time Community Inclusion Coordinator.
- ✦ Re-develop ILIVE and CP Sports programs to be more community-based and consumer driven.
- ✦ Network with and become more involved with all of the local school systems, from pre-kindergarten to high school.
- ✦ Create a pre-transition program designed to improve education and outreach to parents of young children with disabilities to increase their Independent Living options.
- ✦ Develop a best practice mentoring program leading to increased successful Independent Living outcomes for youth.
- ✦ Further develop a best practice Independent Living Skills program for youth.
- ✦ Create a Recreation Coordination program that provides inclusive opportunities for youth to fully participate in their communities.
- ✦ Develop an Employment Program that leads to paid employment and or volunteer experiences for youth living with disabilities.
- ✦ Enhance collaboration with community organizations to provide a seamless flow for youth with disabilities to access their community.
- ✦ Hire a half-time graduate assistant or undergraduate student to coordinate a mentor program.

Information and Referral

- ✘ Support the Agency by creating and tracking The Ability Center's *Five Star* grid of community/consumer supports.
- ✘ Act as the hub for customer service/follow-up for the agency by monitoring and evaluating consumer feedback.
- ✘ Develop a best practices Peer Support program leading to Independent Living outcomes for individuals living with disabilities.
- ✘ Further develop the concept and position of the **Dream Manager** (*Adult Independent Living skills*).
- ✘ Continue to keep current with all benefits counseling and support consumers in their strides towards independence.
- ✘ Conduct regular outreach to persons with recently acquired disabilities and others who may benefit from Independent Living programs and services.
- ✘ Increase outreach to minority populations with disabilities.



With the right information and proper tools, one can dream bigger dreams, open bigger doors. Knowledge really is power.

Housing Resource Center

- ✘ Increase community education with regards to the benefits of "Visitability" and "Universal Design features".
- ✘ Increase the ability and capacity of local community service organizations with building ramps for consumers.
- ✘ Successfully Transition 25 people out of Nursing Homes and into the community using *Home Choice/Access Success Funds*.
- ✘ Provide follow-up process to ensure consumers are better connected with their communities.
- ✘ Create an **Access Database** that will manage, schedule and project program capacities.
- ✘ Increase capacity of staff to build ramps.
- ✘ Secure funding for new tools and equipment.
- ✘ Complete 72 ramp projects meeting requirements of all contracts.

Access means everything. With this ramp I am connected to the world.



A community that excludes even one of its members is no community at all.

Advocacy

Public Policy

- ✘ Educate specific legislators about community inclusion, self-determination and IL philosophy.
- ✘ Develop statements on behalf of ACT to address public policy positions on disability issues.
- ✘ Educate and engage at least 12 consumers on the political process and specific issues.
- ✘ Support/oppose specific legislation as it pertains to Ohioans with disabilities and in accordance with ACT's public policy positions.
- ✘ Coordinate activities of the **Ohio Disability Vote Coalition** including regular meetings of the steering committee, monthly communication with membership, pursuing new funding resources and collaborating with the **National Disability Vote Alliance**.

Local Advocacy

- ✘ Provide advocacy leadership and coordination involving local disability organizations to remove systemic barriers to community inclusion.
- ✘ Identify other advocacy agencies with whom to collaborate in the pursuit of *Five Star Quality*.
- ✘ Increase collaboration with disability-related agencies, civil rights organizations and non profit legal agencies to address systemic issues that prevent individuals with disabilities from becoming full participants in their communities.
- ✘ Assist individuals with disabilities to increase their self-advocacy skills by creating grass roots advocacy.





Photo: Tim Kershner

“Imagine a world of diversity and interdependence where people are respected simply for who they are; where commonalities are recognized and bring us closer; where differences are celebrated for what they provide: opportunities to bring something unique and individual to our community. Ours is a mission to enlighten.”



THE ABILITY CENTER OF GREATER TOLEDO

abilitycenter.org

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Our Mission: To assist people with disabilities to live, work and socialize within a fully accessible community.

Our Vision: We believe in and support equitable and inclusive communities for people living with disabilities.

The Ability Center of Greater Toledo is a Center for Independent Living providing advocacy, information & referral, independent living skills training, community living and peer support services. The Ability Center serves the seven counties of northwest Ohio, actively seeks partnerships with community organizations and supports individuals with disabilities and their families to achieve our vision.

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