Our founding parents, through their actions and words, established a foundation with each collective step. Their belief was that, with or without our support, individuals were ready to take their place in the workforce. They were strong for having endured. Our mission, now, as we begin our 50th year, is to provide opportunities for them to naturally engage in environments that a neurotypical person would. Our organization has a robust team of professionals, “We speak for our sons and daughters.” Their message is preceded by decades upon decades of institutional living. The history of community-based services for people with disabilities is person-centered and strength-based. Although initial efforts were met with resistance, they served an important purpose by providing a community for those who had come.

Even then, in understanding and acceptance of disabilities, to the community-based model emerged. In the 1950s, the efforts of a few groups throughout the United States led to a slow, sadden process of parents who began assuming roles and responsibilities. “We are now in the midst of changing the paradigm from the traditional model of institutional living in the community. Not because it is better, but because of our environment and the people we serve. This evolution from a place of isolation to a place of integration has been a shift that we must adapt our services to the needs of the people we serve. At the helm of Becoming Independent, it is first and foremost a mandate from the people we serve. As a result of the shift in the way we operate, there are new roles and responsibilities for the leadership to maintain the mandate from the people we serve.”

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**Inclusion for All**

‘We are not just around you; we are within your community. Do the best you can until you know what you want. Then, either you know, or you're still learning’—these are the words that have been reflected in the values held in this new state. We are in the midst of changing the paradigm from the traditional model of institutional living in the community. Not because it is better, but because of our environment and the people we serve. This evolution from a place of isolation to a place of integration has been a shift that we must adapt our services to the needs of the people we serve. At the helm of Becoming Independent, it is first and foremost a mandate from the people we serve. As a result of the shift in the way we operate, there are new roles and responsibilities for the leadership to maintain the mandate from the people we serve.’

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