HAMILTON COUNTY
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
SERVICES

MARK'S COVENANT OF SUPPORT

TESTIMONIALS

If you haven't seen the video showing how Mark's Covenant of Support was created and what a Covenant looks like in practice, make sure you watch it at

HamiltonDDS.org/covenant.

Many people have been involved in Mark's Covenant of Support over the past 30 years. Not all of those voices could be captured in the video, but they were eager to share how meaningful that experience has been for them and for Mark. As you consider whether a Covenant of Support might be helpful to you or your loved one, read on to learn what those most involved in Mark's covenant have to say.

"The Covenant of Support provides opportunities to help Mark stay connected to his community and keep him from being isolated when at home. As Mark and I have gotten to know each other a friendship has developed that has enriched my life. Being in Mark's home gives me the opportunity to show my appreciation for the DSP's who support Mark. As Covenant members meet with each other we have become united in our commitment to helping Mark have a meaningful life, surrounded by friends who care about him and respect who he is as a person."

Jamie Hopkins
Covenant of Support Co-Facilitator

"The Covenant of Support provides me with a relationship with Mark that is transformative for me, and I hope also for him. Visiting with Mark lifts my spirits because Mark is such a genuine person. The Covenant of Support provides a structure to combat potential community isolation."

Susanne Bookser
Covenant of Support Co-Facilitator

"From a provider perspective the covenant of support is a game changer. The support extends beyond the person being supported, to the employees, who build relationships and gain insight about how best to provide services from people within the covenant. When such a community exists, friendships are made, staff retention increases, services improve and engagement is better. Everyone wins."

Susan Brownknight
Chief Executive Officer, LADD

"Being a part of a Covenant of Support is like having a second family! You (meaning me, Marcia) and other Covenant members have been available to Melinda and me around issues with Brandon and I have shared resources and ideas to benefit Mark. I have always been met with respect from others. The key benefit to me is the hope we are making a better and safer quality of life for Mark. ... The goal is to make a difference in his life; also to share knowledge and resources to help solve problems ensuring that his needs will be met even when Marcia is not there. Other individuals could also benefit from a Covenant of Support to help with problem solving, develop lifelong friendships ... "

John & Melinda Scheper
Mark's neighbors

"Mark's Covenant of Support was built out of love and a desire to allow him to have members of his community become family. His covenant is built on respect for Mark and the desire to enhance his life with friendship and sustenance. The commitment from the members is not one of obligation but from a place of compassion and love for a man who brings joy into their lives. This covenant has become his advocate, his cheerleader, and his protector. Some simple words to describe his covenant: Connection, Powerful, Friendship, Meaningful partnership, Individualization, Visionary."

Cindy Wright
Executive Director, Community Supports, Inc.

"The Covenant of Support offers an opportunity for individuals with developmental disabilities to connect with members of their community outside of their family and/or paid providers. It provides extra piece of mind for individuals and their families while also helping to build long lasting relationships outside of their traditional circle of support.

"When I was no longer working as professional member of Mark's team I welcomed the opportunity to become a member of his Covenant of Support. Doing so allowed me to consider Mark a true friend and not just a professional acquaintance. Who doesn't want another friend? The COS is, by design, made up of members who have formed connections with the person through various pathways. Some are former professionals. Some are family friends. Some are community members with a specific connection. What makes the COS special is that it not only provides a community of support and friendship for the individual but also for the members of the covenant. Through COS gatherings, members are able to develop new friendships with one another which, in turn, only serves to strengthen the trust and support felt by the individual."

Matthew Goodrich
Assistant Director SSA, HCDDS

"We come here for one;
But leave in communion with many;
For one and all;
Boundless in our possibilities."

Melissa Symes Metz
Covenant Member

"The reason that Mark's Covenant of Support is lasting is because PEOPLE CARE. It is an example of a parent who saw a need and made it happen. My advice is start building this community when your son or daughter is young. Then they have a chance to build enduring friendships and deeper commitments, the heartbeat of a meaningful life."

Trena Panko
COS member/teacher

"I am glad to share what I believe the value of the COS is based upon my wonderful experience as a member of Mark's covenant of support. For Mark, the COS was just more than a well-designed social service wrap around support model that provided him importantly needed support. The difference in Mark's COS was that it was even more encompassing to weave in essential 24/7 supports in an efficient, well authenticated, and cooperative way to involve all agencies and volunteer support efforts on one holistic and caring manner. By meeting regularly in Mark's home and personally engaging with him in community activities from which each COS member was drawn (in my case his high school before and after he graduated) , I was able to be well informed of his actual progress, and how well his overall plan of care was working. Also, it was a great way for me personally follow Mark's journey after graduation and see how well such a model really worked for the long term. Also, I learned how to use that model when I moved out of state and had to develop my own for my spouse. Every day I use the model I am reminded of Mark and the immense value of COS for any individual at any age from any social-economic, cultural background. Lastly, I thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship I experienced as a member of Mark's team as a retired person seeking ways to give back to the community for all I had received. By working together we made a positive difference in Mark's life."

Charles Woodward
Former Member of Covenant of Support