

WESTMORELAND  
COUNTY'S  
LIFESHARING  
COALITION

Having a  
place to go is  
HOME,

Having  
someone  
to love  
is  
FAMILY,

Having both  
is  
A  
WONDERFUL  
LIFE!

**GET  
INVOLVED**

PA Lifesharing Coalition  
Meeting: August 21, 2014  
State College PA

Westmoreland Lifesharing  
Coalition Meeting:  
October 9, 2014 10:00 am  
NHS Human Services, 531  
Main Street, Greensburg  
PA

# Lifesharing; What's it All About?

ISSUE 5

SUMMER / FALL 2014

## The Supports Coordinator's Perspective

The SC plays a vital role in looking out for the health and safety of the individual. Lifesharing is one of the services that can have a positive effect on the individual's health and safety. Supports Coordinators Barb Hinger and Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer provide their insights into Lifesharing.

### **As an SC, what positive Lifesharing experiences have you or your clients had?**

**Barb** - I have not had anyone in the Lifesharing program, however I think it would be a great experience and currently have one individual on my caseload that would LOVE a Lifesharing home.

**Jennifer** - Before going into a Lifesharing home, the individual I support was in a Personal Care Home and Dom Care Home and being in a family unit has given her the structure and attention that she needs.

### **What do you see as a benefit to Lifesharing?**

**Barb** - It would benefit the individual I am thinking of because he would love to feel that he had others in his life like a normal family. He currently lives in a Personal Care Home and he has no family or social contacts.

**Jennifer** - The individual I support is able to be in a family environment and get the one on one supports that she needs. She would not do well with shift changes in a traditional residential group home. A routine that she can stick to is imperative and the Lifesharing home is able to meet this need.

### **What do you see as the hindrance to Lifesharing?**

**Barb** - FUNDING! FUNDING! FUNDING! I think there are many people that would like to do Lifesharing but the lack of funding is always an issue.

**Jennifer** - Lifesharing takes the right family and the right client. Finding the right match can be hard and frustrating.

### **What do you hear as the reasons individuals or families don't want to do Lifesharing?**

**Barb** - Most families do not want to leave group homes because they think that is the golden ticket. A lot of the individuals we support are older and they have been with providers and staff most of their lives, family does not want to change those situations, but the obstacles are likely to be overcome with education and resources. Some other families also have mentioned if health and safety issues arise and the Lifesharing family can no longer care for the individual they would be concerned as to where their loved ones would be placed. Families are sometimes uncomfortable choosing a service that they do not know that much about.

**Jennifer** - Families often do not want to choose Lifesharing because they feel that if they cannot keep their loved one in a private home then how can another person do it. Even though Lifesharing has been around for a while, I feel that it is still a new service to the individuals we support and families are sometimes uncomfortable choosing a service that they do not know that much about.

While Lifesharing is not for every individual, it is a viable alternative to group homes for many folks. As reflected by Barb and Jennifer, Lifesharing has many benefits for an individual.

~Written by; Dawn Brown, SC Supervisor-  
Westmoreland Casemanagement and Supports, Inc.

## Lifesharing: Sharing our Hearts and Homes

October 20 & 21, 2014

SAVE

.....the.....

DATES

Please look for full details about this  
conference to be sent out in August!

### **What:**

Pennsylvania  
Lifesharing Coalition's  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Lifesharing  
Conference

### **When:**

Monday & Tuesday,  
October 20 & 21, 2014

### **Where:**

Ramada Inn  
1450 Atherton Street  
State College PA 15801  
1-866-460-7456

## Putting in the Extra Mile A family's story

Life Sharing.....you not only open your home but your hearts, too. Jim and Jan H. exemplify this in so many ways. They have done Family Living/Life Sharing for almost 20 years. Jim and Jan cared for Jay most of that time. As his medical and physical needs increased, they stretched themselves to be able to continue to care for him and keep him in *his* home. Jim and Jan learned how to care for Jay's vent, from suctioning, to cleaning it. He had a trach also and they were trained in the care for it. Patty also lived with Jim and Jan, and wanted to be on the go all the time. They made sure she went to her favorite places such as King's and her day program. She was full of life and loved to talk. Even with the medical needs of Jay, they travelled to Florida two years in a row. They went to local parks and a safari ride in Eastern Pennsylvania. Jim and Jan advocated for each individual as a parent would for their child. It was hard for Jim and Jan when Jay and Patty passed away within a month of each other. I know for a fact that there isn't a day that goes by that Jim and Jan don't think about them and miss them. Even with this experience, they continue in Life Sharing and currently have one individual that has found a *home* with them. Jim and Jan are loving and caring people and are one of the best examples of what a Life Sharing Provider is. I am privileged to know them and to count them as friends.

~Written by; Debbie Brewer, Lifesharing Program Specialist-PASSAVANT

### What is Lifesharing? Find out More!

|                  |  |                |  |
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**The Mission of Westmoreland County's Lifesharing Coalition is to increase awareness, so that Lifesharing is a commonly recognized concept for providers, Supports Coordination Organizations, individuals and the community as a whole. We aim to encourage people to expand their family circle by inviting others to share their homes, their families, and their lives.**



#### Do you have something to say?

Any suggestions or questions,  
please contact Jamie Boehme  
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**We would love to hear from you!**