



**“I am no bird;
and no net
ensnares me:
I am a free
human being
with an
independent
will.”**

Charlotte Brontë



the hidden dangers of ‘independence’

Recently we celebrated Independence Day and the unique freedoms we enjoy in the United States. With the 4th of July comes the celebration of American freedom, specifically looking back to being free of the rule of England. In the world of adults with disabilities, independence is probably the most popular word there is. Of course, independence is a very important concept and critical to a quality life for all of us.

Put simply, independence is the ability for a person to make important life choices on their own, free from the coercion and undue influence of others. Sometimes though, independence can simply be perceived “as doing things without any help.” Things like living on my own, cooking for myself, going to a doctor on my own, or handling my finances completely free of assistance — can become synonymous with independence.

At Casa de Amma we believe each person should have the right to make important life choices on their own, free from the coercion and undue influence of others, as much as is possible. We prefer to focus more on interdependence than “doing things myself.” Sure, when possible, and if desired, a person should be able to handle their responsibilities without someone looking over their shoulder but the concept of interdependence acknowledges that we all need others to supplement areas we struggle in — and there is no shame in that.

When independence is misunderstood there are two hidden dangers; isolation and vulnerability. All too often an adult with a disability has been made to believe that they have only really succeeded if they can do everything on their own. This same adult then often comes home to an apartment all by themselves, sitting down to a microwave meal with only a TV to accompany them. Surrounded by neighbors, but completely absent of true friendships, a misguided idea of independence can have many negative effects. It can be a challenge, but it’s very important that we all acknowledge the desire of people with disabilities to make their own important life decisions and also at the same time be careful not to wrongly promote the idea that needing support is lacking independence.

People can be free to independently choose how their life is to be lived while at the same time acknowledging areas where support will make them more successful and happy. So next time you hear of an adult who lives in a supported environment and has acknowledged challenge areas where they have asked for supplemented efforts, don’t believe that they aren’t independent. They very well may be making important life choices on their own, but asking for help as needed to ensure they aren’t isolated and vulnerable, — and that is something to be celebrated!



imagine, believe and achieve!

The 4th Annual Casa Triathlon was held on June 24th and it was bigger and better than ever! This year we had twenty-eight residents compete in multiple events, ten staff competing side-by-side, and over twenty-five volunteers helping to pull the day together.

It was a great testament of our amazing community and the “all-in” attitude at Casa.

As is the case with all of the Healthy Lifestyle Events, residents began training eight weeks prior, through the three weekly CasaFit exercise classes offered, and the open gym sessions — all led by our amazing Healthy Lifestyle Consultant Hilary Mann. Hilary’s skill and hard work allowed every resident to improve their fitness from last year and finish with better results. Many even worked their way up to more challenging events this year — whether it was moving from a walk to a run, going from a three-wheel bike to a two-wheeler, or doing three challenges instead of just one or two. To be specific, twenty-eight participants completed two or more events and twelve participants completed three events back to back. Nine personal records in the Bike and Swim were set this year, and the events themselves were more challenging than ever! There was a longer swim for advanced swimmers, a longer more challenging marathon course at 1.5 miles, longer three-wheel bike course, and a longer strength/agility course. All the resident’s hard work really paid off as people saw that no matter their disability, they could succeed when they worked hard.

Thank you to all the volunteers who came out and helped make this event such a success. If you weren’t there, take a look at the great photos from the day and we’re sure you’ll agree it was an amazing event!

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Casa de Amma / 27231 Calle Arroyo / San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 / (949) 496-9001