



**“True friends
are those who
came into your
life, saw the
most negative
part of you, but
are not ready
to leave you,
no matter how
contagious you
are to them.”**

- Michael Bassey Johnson

this news is all too real!

No matter what your political inclination is, stories of “fake news” and altered statistics are being discussed everywhere. Unfortunately the statistics below are not fake, they illustrate the real news regarding the shortage of housing and support for adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

- The US has 5,000,000 citizens who have intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD).
- 3,500,000 adults with I/DD currently live with a family caregivers.
- Almost 1,000,000 adults with I/DD live with family caregivers that are over the age of 60.
- 77% of adults with I/DD do not receive publicly funded residential supports.
- 63% of individuals with I/DD are victims of abuse.
- 53% were not invited to social activities with friends for more than a year after High School.
- 30,000 individuals with I/DD live in a nursing facility or psychiatric ward.

**Statistics gathered from autismhousingnetwork.org*

These statistics speak for themselves — we desperately need more living options that provide support and choice for adults with I/DD!

To that end, Casa de Amma is leading the way by launching the new Independent Apartment Community (IAC) website. This website offers education, resources, networking, and support for those who want to create Independent Apartment Communities in their local area, and assists existing Independent Apartment Communities so they may best fulfill their mission in a sustainable and person-centered focus. IAC’s are housing and supported service models specifically directed to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They combine many unique features that often are not found in traditional or general housing and supported service models throughout the United States. IAC’s represent a unique, beneficial, and often preferred option for housing and supports for those with I/DD.

Take a moment to visit independentapartmentcommunities.com to learn more about what the IAC model is, who benefits, and how to start an IAC. Additionally, check out autismhousingnetwork.org for an extensive list of housing options and information.



a heartfelt celebration

Every February Casa de Amma celebrates friendship, fun and love at our annual Casa de Amore Valentines Dinner. Planning begins weeks before when residents are asked to place their “reservation” for a table prepared for their party — whether it be for a romantic dinner for two or a special group of friends. This year residents showed off their great friendships and meaningful relationships that have been nurtured here at Casa.

The staff appeared to have just as much fun as the residents while parading as waiters and waitresses. Many got into character with fake accents to give the residents a dining experience they would never forget. Casa chefs Carol and Sammi, went all out by offering two entree options that everyone thoroughly enjoyed. Dessert was one of the high points of the night, but nothing could be sweeter than seeing everyone strut their stuff on the dance floor and observing all the smiles. We were so moved with the expressions of love and friendship that we decided to ask our residents a few questions, their heartfelt answers are below.

What does love mean to you?

- Love is when you care about people and who they are. - Ellen
- Love means family and friends- loving and devoted hearts. - Meghan T.
- Love means friendship and showing how you care. - Lauren
- Love is unconditional and it something very beautiful. – Kristen
- Love means feeling special about a person and caring for them. – Adam
- Love is being there for someone and always helping them whenever they have a problem. - Todd

How has someone shown you love in a meaningful way?

- Will, my boyfriend gave me new books for Valentine’s day. - Ellen
- People helped me with things when I was having problems. - Robynn
- When my friends give me hugs it means a lot. - Kristen
- When my friends buy me something special for a holiday. - Adam
- My mom showed love to me when she hugged me when I was having a problem. - Todd

How do you spread love at Casa?

- Helping friends in hard times. – Ellen
- Trying to help out my friends and be nice. - Robynn
- Just being there for the person during good and bad times. – Meghan T.
- I share love through compliments. – Lauren
- By talking to everyone and being nice. - Adam
- I spread love at Casa by being open, kind and loving. – Kristen
- I spread love by always listening whenever someone is having a hard day. - Todd



www.casadeamma.org