

## **Urban - Integrated Residential Community Development for Special Populations SARRC-ULI**

With autism impacting 1 in 166 children born today, there exists a serious concern amongst families, service providers and others, that residential services for post-school-age adults with autism must be created as an integral part of a healthy community's housing opportunities. The as-yet-unforeseen impact that millions of children and young adults who have already been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder will have upon families and government cannot be overstated. Today, these individuals are being cared for by parents who cannot outlive them, leaving them limited options for a reasonable quality of life. This special population has the potential to overwhelm an already burdened mental health system and create a crisis of tragic proportions for families who have struggled to give their children the very best support throughout their lives.

Autistic adult dependant children form a new population – too old for continued support through the special education services of a public school system and too fragile to live without support in the larger world. Their families face a complicated system of vocational rehabilitation services, Medicaid, disconnected government agencies and a huge lack of appropriate residential care options beyond the obvious ones of keeping them at home or within institutional settings.

SARRC and ASU have formed a unique partnership to research, articulate, design and establish an exceptional residential model of living for post-school-age autistic adults. SARRC's goal is to establish a replicable demonstration model so that individuals with autism and their families will be able to choose from a range of educational, recreational and vocational opportunities as well as affordable-living options. SARRC and ASU hope to develop a successful model of residential "living" (not merely residential existence in the institutional sense) for adults with autism and produce a set of principles and practices that can be replicated for similar residential communities in other states across the nation.

### **Phase 1 - Research and reporting on international best practices for special population residential living strategies and developments, including market studies.**

The outcomes of the initial research will include the findings for the existing residential living models for autistic adults that exist internationally. ASU College of Design faculty members Ahrentzen and Steele will lead this phase, researching and synthesizing the existing data and information on current models and options for autistic adults into a study document that sets forth the parameters for the design of a successful and replicable residential support model.

In addition, ASU researchers together with Elliott D. Pollack & Company will engage in a market analysis to quantify the potential population that would be candidates for this type of housing and the type of demand that may exist over time.