

# **A Place In the World-- Marketplace & Community Building Strategies**

## ***A Market Analysis and Toolkit That Defines and Shares How to Build Community in Supportive Housing Properties***

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Autism Housing Network & Other Collaborators

**Abstract:** This study aims to define the marketplace of housing and support options for neurodiverse populations to better equip public, private and not-for-profit sectors individually and through collaboration to meet the ever-increasing demand. By creating the foundational nomenclature for describing housing and service delivery models, the market can begin to respond nationwide with clear examples for replication. We will set forth 10 strategies for how public, private and not-for-profit interests can build, grow and align communities to serve the vast and diverse needs of people with autism and other neuro-diversities. This overview and analysis will offer the universal language needed for exploration, explanation, engagement and expansion of supportive housing development across North America.

### **A. Overview of Project**

This project aims to develop the foundational nomenclature and offer a suite of best-practice reports to drive public-private-nonprofit partnerships in addressing the national supportive housing crisis.

#### **Market Overview**

In 2009, the first study to focus on the residential concerns of adults with autism and related disorders was published. It was designed to advance the development of replicable residential models that offer quality, affordable housing options within the fabric of their communities. *Opening Doors: A Discussion of Residential Options for Adults Living with Autism and Related Disorders* was a collaborative project by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Arizona, Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center (SARRC), the Arizona State University (ASU) Stardust Center for Affordable Homes and the Family and the ASU Herberger Institute School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. Further, the study explored the financial catalysts needed to spur new investment by the private and public sectors to meet projected demand and advocates for the creation of public-private-nonprofit collaborations to address long-term living, residential concerns.

This study was a catalyst for the development of the *Autism Housing Network (AHN)* developed by Madison House Autism Foundation in response to barriers identified in the *Opening Doors* study. The AHN is the only online platform that offers home seekers, project starters, and existing residential options a hub of housing information to connect a network of innovators. While this offers an excellent starting resource, research is not yet available to share on what it takes to build an inclusive, successful environment ready for move-in.

## **Identification of Pressing Needs**

Following are four critical elements that will advance the nascent market of housing development for special populations:

1. A market analysis and universal nomenclature describing the various housing models and long-term support service options available to potential developers and the neurodiverse population.
2. Research on the assessment/evaluation processes, alignment of needs/interests and preparation for transitioning to a new home
3. Strategies for cultivating collaborations and building community
4. "Supportive Housing Development Toolkit," compiling promising and best practice models of various models

The Housing Toolkit is envisioned to provide guidance and exercises that respond to:

- Identifying Your Market: Who are you building for? What are you offering?
- Siting Property: Do's and don'ts; dealing with zoning obstacles and NIMBYism
- Getting Ready: Helping families logistically, financially and emotionally prepare
- Preparing for Move-In: Resident selection, support coordination and community life
- Staffing: Administrative needs and the empowering of direct support professionals as community liaisons

The Housing Toolkit can also include mechanisms for new community reporting and evaluations, adding to the greater body of much needed research.

## **Benefits:**

"A Place in the World" will lay the foundation needed for maturing this niche market, making it attractive to private investors. Citing examples and best practices from currently or soon to be operating properties, this toolkit will help ensure more successful outcomes and save substantial time and resources by preventing communities from isolation and reinvention.

Consider the following:

- A universal language offering a clear description of housing and support models despite variation across state government authorities
- Residents and families benefiting from improved and easier transition and long-term assimilation plans
- Aware and accepting community cultures enhancing the lives of residents, likely resulting in reduced medical and other provider expenses
- Greater efficiencies enabling housing developers and operator to learn from best practices and obstacles encountered by others
- Shared alliances and leveraged resources encouraging more public and private home and community options that serve vulnerable adults and reduce already-burdened government budgets.

## **B. Starting Point: Market Analysis & Report 1 of Toolkit**

### **Market Analysis**

A universal language is needed to engage the private, government and philanthropic sectors in expanding supportive housing options for citizens with autism and other cognitive differences. Consumers and developers must understand who's being served through the real estate and collection of supports, amenities, services and hard/soft infrastructure, and broader community and culture.

This foundational "A Place in the World" report will include:

- Market Overview
  - First Place/Novogradac report, Autism Speaks, AJ Drexel, Opening Doors (summary of other findings) for content
- Market Segmentation
  - to include private, government, nonprofit entities (AHN/First Place)
- Market Language - nomenclature, definitions (ULI/First Place/AHN)
  - Description of physical housing models
  - Funding structures for aligning services and support with residential housing
  - Analysis of public funding streams for long term support services in each state
  - Use of natural supports and community resources
- Universal Processes - for applications, evaluations, corresponding eligibility
  - Strategies for working with local jurisdictions
  - Interest survey template
  - Application template
  - Quality of Life surveys at move-in and after 1 year of living on one's own
- Info/Resources Available
  - AHN
  - Learn4Independence (First Place curriculum) (Licensing)
  - BILT (AGI/Autism Speaks) (Licensing)
  - 360 Health & Wellness (First Place) (Licensing)
  - Other curriculums or active consultants

### **Toolkit Report 1**

#### ***Move-In: Resident Selection, Support Coordination & Culture Building***

As long-awaited communities break ground and residents prepare for move-in day, the importance of early investment in plans that will determine residents' ability to adapt and thrive in their new home cannot be understated. An inclusive community culture begins with the principles of universal design and goes far beyond the physical components. Making a community "home" and building a culture that empowers and brings residents together requires substantial thought, effort and experience.

This initial report will bring together the collective knowledge of well-established supportive housing communities and recently launched projects to share best practices, identify pitfalls, and offer the insights that result from evaluating both expected and unforeseen events after residents have moved in.

Offering truly person-centered housing and community support options takes intentional steps in fiscal, physical and culture building activities. Our hope is that this resource will help emerging communities plan for and intentionally create the foundations for relational community that bring comfort, security, growth, independence and interdependence to residents and their families.

Information will be gathered through onsite visits to existing and emerging housing communities, in-person and virtual interviews, open forum discussions hosted by the Autism Housing Network (Madison House Autism Foundation) and the First Place Global Leadership Institute, surveys and feedback from current residents, families and providers.

### **Timeline**

May - September 2017	Research, development of questionnaires Site visits to 4 regions Scholarly research on community building in diverse settings In person and online interviews with residents and families
July 2017 - December 2017	Research and completion of content for Market Analysis
July 2017 - June 2018	Early implementation in First Place AZ documenting activities, Evaluating results, and measuring outcomes
July 2018 - November 2018	Continue interviews, data collection, evaluation Completion of content for Toolkit Develop marketing plan
December 2018	Market Analysis and Toolkit completed for release early 2019

### **Distribution**

Distribution channels for the report would include downloads available through the Autism Housing Network, First Place AZ, Madison House Autism Foundation and other websites, shared at conferences, and made available as part of housing workshops offered to community groups.

### **Outcomes/Goals**

- Targeted connections and shared rhetoric expands access to private investors for this emerging market.
- One hundred (100) new projects are launched in the next five years.
- Fifty (50) emerging projects utilize the [quality of life framework] to continually track quality of life of residents.
- Retention rates of transition to independent living increase.