Maple Syrup Part II

Volume 95 and commentary from the Tri-Community & beyond

Who decides what a meaningful life is?

Let me start this letter with a quote by Cornelia Dubinsky, mother of Cheryl, who was killed by the worst school shooting in the history of American public schools on December 14, 2012.

“Who decides what a meaningful life is? I know it is often easy to use our fear of what we don’t understand to sway our opinions about what is and is not a meaningful life.”

This quote is perhaps one of the most important statements ever made by a family member of a victim of a mass shooting in America. It speaks directly to the question of who decides what is and is not a meaningful life.

In the context of the movie, it struck me how many times we have worked in the cold for years and years, and we bring little hope for others. How many of us think about the value of our work in the context of the lives we are saving. How many of us are willing to make those sacrifices for the sake of others. How many of us are willing to make those sacrifices for the sake of those we love.

When you have a family member with a disability, the future looks brighter for them. This future is not guarantee, especially for those with disabilities. Who decides what a meaningful life is? I am not sure what the right answer is. However, I do know that we all have a role to play in shaping what we consider meaningful.

When our culture finally sees that people in institutions need to be free to live more normal lives, their own homes with their families or in the community, and that it would be a much more cost-effective, the revolution has begun. There has been so much progress made, but I think there is still a lot of work to be done, and I think that many of us are willing to make those sacrifices for the sake of others.

For all the years I’ve been advocating before the legislature and speaking to public officials on behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, I’ve been saying that we need to see the people that we serve as having strong values to deserve and receive enough funding to actually lead a self-determined, purposeful life. Everyone, even just as much as that was our goal, and I think we need to keep meeting those goals.

This is to a cause to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are dependent on state and federal funding to support people with disabilities, and we need to do more to address the cost of living.

Why does this advocacy continue? Because it is a big part of the overall mission of fund us adequately, and we continue to make progress. It is a matter of more severe, more expensive care, and the need for more hospitalizations, more medical services, more institutionalization, more dependence on state and federal benefits and a need to live on our own, rather than using those savings for hospitalization costs.

The legislature understands that this is an issue that is not a just as simple as, “We need to do this, and we can do this.” It is a complex issue that requires significant resources. We need to address the cost of living, and the government needs to step up and provide the necessary funding.

The people who need this funding are the ones who are often the last to receive it. We need to make sure that they have a voice in our decisions and that they are not left out.

Many people who are involved in organizations that support people with disabilities are not aware of the funding that is available to them, and this can lead to confusion and frustration.

In order to change things, we need to start by educating people about the funding that is available. We also need to start by looking at the policies that are in place and how they can be improved.

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