

April 1, 2019 Falls Church City Council Presentation

When we last met in January 2018, Aurora House was encouraged to report that we had been evaluated for the Independent Living Program and had been verbally advised that we would be receiving documentation indicating approval.

At issue had been providing for those in need who, based upon the previous license, had to leave at 18 years of age. Aurora House sought to provide for a continuum of care.

Aurora house was also challenged in maintaining full facility utilization. Over the last 5- 7 years, the philosophy of providing care to young women had evolved. Aurora House has a 30-year history providing care to troubled young women and their families so those girls would mature into productive members of society.

In January 2018 Aurora House utilization was at 43%. Following instituting the Independent Living Program, in January 2019 Aurora House utilization is at 61%.

Thirty years ago, juvenile delinquency, promiscuity, theft and truancy were typical behavior of troubled teens. Overtime the symptoms have evolved to include substance abuse, domestic violence, school violence and it is now well recognized that the child is part of a family system that may need to be reset. Thirty years ago, girls came to Aurora House for a year or more at a time. Now, they arrive for a number of months. Maintaining utilization is challenging. The short time of enrollment has required that the highly skilled staff at Aurora House hit the ground running and execute a finely tuned program that graduates young women in very short order, who are focused on becoming meaningful members of society. Over 70% go directly into college.

The Independent Living Program provides young women ages 16 – 20 with the skills necessary to become independent productive adults.

On February 12, 2018, Aurora House's Independent living program received its license from the Department of Juvenile Justice. The Aurora House girl's residential facility license was modified to accept resident into the Independent Living Program through age 20 and those residents would be included in the house's rated capacity of 12.

A requirement was that the ILP girls would need to live separately from the younger residents – they are typically facing different challenges than the residential house residents.

Aurora House is able to maintain separate living arrangements and did not needing to make structural changes to the facility to accommodate the dual programs.

The ILT program is located on the first floor in what was previously two counselor's offices. Those two apartments share a hall bathroom. The counselor's offices were moved upstairs.

The first resident initiated the ILP on April 2, 2018. Since that time, Aurora house has overseen the living and maturation of 6 ILP residents. At this time, four have been successful in the program, have maintained full time employment and have set up their own home situation. One has transitioned to a more intensive substance abuse program elsewhere.

There continues to be sustained demand for spaces in our Independent Living program from all jurisdictions (Falls Church, Arlington, Alexandria and Fairfax. Rachel Kindell and Nancy Vincent continue to mature the IL program meeting the need of the population. In January a new contract was signed with Evidence Based Associates that funds residents stepping down from the Department of Juvenile Justice. The first applicant to come through the Evidence Based Associate program into ILP moved in January 2019.

I. MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

The Independent Living Program is a community-based residential facility with a philosophy of responsible involvement that provides a unique opportunity for young women to acquire independent living skills, including obtaining employment, opening a savings account, managing their finances, etc.

The Aurora House ILP is a 2-bed unit where young women learn the necessary skills to successfully return to the community and live on their own.

- The staff provides guidance to each resident by helping them determine and achieve their individual goals.
- The staff provides opportunities for personal development and strives to create a supportive and therapeutic environment with a focus on employment and independent living skills.
- The staff provide guidance to each resident by helping them determine and achieve their individual goals and potential.

The program is based on the successful completion of distinct levels. Each level has a major focus. Prior to obtaining Level I, the resident must successfully complete the approximately four-week Orientation process, where they become acquainted with the program and the local community. During that time, they complete between 40 and 60 hours of Community Service. This prepares residents for the responsibilities of employment, and provides references for their resume. There are 3 levels after joining the house:

- Level I (6 weeks): Pre-Employment (Obtaining employment)
- Level II (8 weeks): Employment (Maintaining employment)
- Level III (6 weeks): Independence (Securing post-TLP Plans)

Upon program completion, the resident returns to the community, they will be on After-Care for approximately three months.

The Program

The program is based on the belief that each resident is responsible and accountable for their behavior.

Each resident is involved in their individualized treatment including their Individual Counseling sessions, Family Counseling sessions, treatment team meetings, and weekly House Meetings

Within 14 days of placement in ILP Aurora House will complete the assessment of strengths and needs of the resident including:

Money Management and consumer awareness

1. Food Management
2. Personal Appearance
3. Social Skills

4. Health and Sexuality
5. Housekeeping
6. Transportation
7. Education/career planning
8. Job seeking skills
9. Job maintenance skills
10. Emergency and Safety Skills
11. Knowledge of Community resources
12. Interpersonal skills/social skills
13. Legal Skills
14. Leisure activities
15. Housing

ILP resident are supervised by staff at all times when they are with other residents.

ILP ENVIRONMENT PROVISIONS

ILP offers residents a structured environment

ILP TREATMENT COMPONENTS & LIFE SKILLS

ILP offers residents strategies and objects according this the service plan.

SERVICE PLAN:

1. *Community Service*- 60 hours at a local non-profit organization.
2. *Job seeking and Maintenance*- Looking for a job, filling out of applications, the job interview and maintaining full-time employment.
3. *Money management and Consumer Awareness*- Shopping wisely, opening and maintaining a savings account, setting up and following a budget in preparations of their return to the community.
4. *Transportation*- Use of public transportation, and possibly pursuing a driver's license.
5. *Food management*- The grocery store, reading nutritional labels, comparison shopping, meal planning and cooking safety.
6. *Educational and Career planning*- If needed, high school completion or GED, and familiarization with vocational schools and/or colleges.
7. *Leisure Activities/Hobbies and Community Resources*– Participation in program activities and positive personal interests in the community. They may also utilize local resources, (i.e. AA/NA, counselors, family, mentors, etc.).
8. *Housing* – Search for and acquire suitable and affordable housing.

9. *Personal Appearance*- Familiarization with laundry, dressing appropriately, observing their weight, haircuts, and hygiene products.
10. *Housekeeping*- Daily room maintenance, assigned daily and weekly building chores consistent with ability, an allowance will be provided.
11. *Health/Sexuality*- Visit to the Arlington County Health Dept. gathering information about health and sexuality. They will learn to good health maintenance practices, disease prevention, and self-care when ill.
12. *Emergency and Safety Skill* – Learn the building’s emergency and safety procedures, basic First Aid and become certified in First Aid.
13. *Legal Skills*- Residents will become familiar with their rights and the grievance policy. They are allowed to call their attorney, social worker, counselor or CASA worker and they may visit them at the facility.
14. *Interpersonal Skills/Social Relations*- Residents will work on building a positive support group out in the community with friends/family, church or religious groups, school, co-workers.

ILP RESIDENT CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Cooperate with staff, follow rules and the schedule of the house
2. Participate in all program activities, (house meetings, mandatory activities, individual counseling sessions, school, alcohol and drug treatment)
3. Attend community service, work and school regularly, if applicable
4. Be actively involved in writing and following your Level Treatment Plan
5. Demonstrate respect for others and for property
6. Keep a neat and clean appearance daily
7. Keep room neat and clean daily, complete daily chores

EXPECTATIONS AND RULES

There are different types of consequences a resident can earn at ILP when they are involved in a program violation.

A resident can earn an Unacceptable Treatment Mark for a variety of violations, which are divided into three main categories:

U-10 is earned for a program rule violation

U-20 is earned for a treatment violation

U-30 is earned for a major/serious violation

It is the hope of the ILP staff that each resident maintain a positive level of points to maintain their privileges and Community Time. If a resident ends their week with negative points, they will lose all of their Community Time for the week.

Depending on a resident's level, they must have a certain number of weeks successful (end in positive points) to advance to the next level.

Major Violations at ILP: If a resident commits a major violation, they could be placed on a Behavior Modification Plan, a Behavior Contract, or be terminated from ILP.

Behavior Contract (B.C.): This 3 weeks contract is to inform the resident, his Parole/ Probation Counselor and family that her inappropriate behaviors are unacceptable.

Behavior Modification Plan (B.M.P.): This 3-5 week plan depends on the problem area/s, needs, and goals. The purpose is to re-focus the resident when they are having difficulty adjusting to the Independent Living Program, or is uncooperative with the program.

Standards & Expectations

1. Wake-up, Quiet Hour, & Bedtime
2. Meals and Food
3. Hygiene, Clothes & Dress
- 4.. Bedrooms
5. Laundry
6. Sick Day
7. Unit and Resident Phone
8. Music, TV and Movies
9. Unit Computer
10. Recreation Room & Outdoors
11. Vehicle transportation
12. Building & peer interaction restrictions
13. Personal Belongings after Discharge

RIGHTS OF RESIDENTS

ILP RESIDENT'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Residents have the right to have a Primary Counselor who will provide advice, direction, and support on a weekly basis.
- B. Residents have the right to know their status and progress in the program. They have the right to participate in decisions regarding their progress and treatment.
- C. Residents have the right to a Treatment Service Plan for each level they are on, which is designed to meet their specific needs. It is a resident's responsibility to comply with a Treatment Service Plan once implemented.

- D. Residents have the right to be free from harmful and dangerous treatment and situations. It is a resident's responsibility not to harm or endanger another person.
- E. Residents have the right to take their prescribed medications, which are only dispensed by trained staff. Residents are responsible for advising staff when prescriptions are needed and for informing staff of any adverse side effects.
- F. Residents have the right to obtain proper medical treatment when needed. It is a resident's responsibility to inform staff when they are not feeling well, to follow their doctor's orders, and take the prescribed medication. .
- G. Residents have the right to three nutritional meals a day and two snacks. It is their responsibility to be present when meals and snacks are served.
- H. It is a resident's right to receive approved visitors during the scheduled weekly times, as well as, refuse visitors.
- I. To have all personal records, treatment and court reports kept confidential.
- J. To earn money by performing house chores and employment.
- K. Residents have the right to participate in recreational activities.
- L. Residents have the right to attend religious services of their choice.
- M. Residents have the right to make and receive two personal phone calls a day.
- N. Residents may grieve or appeal any perceived violation of these rights. The resident is responsible for submitting the grievance properly.
- O.** Not to have meals and/or water withheld from any resident for any reason.