

About Us

For over 30 years, Advocates has been providing high quality, community based supports across Eastern and Central Massachusetts. Over 1000 dedicated staff offer a broad range of services including residential supports, outpatient mental health and substance abuse services, psychiatric emergency services, home-based services for children and families, community justice services, advocacy and benefits services, family supports, employment and vocational services and day habilitation programs.

Services are available for elders, families and individuals with mental health challenges, chemical dependency, developmental and intellectual disabilities, autism and pervasive development disabilities, brain injuries and other life challenges. Advocates is a nationally recognized provider for adults with Prader-Willi Syndrome, Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults with disabilities and individuals with developmental disabilities and co-occurring mental health needs. Our culturally sensitive programs and supports serve individuals and families from diverse backgrounds.

At the heart of all Advocates services is a commitment to partnering with the individuals we support and, where appropriate, their family members, so that they can lead full and satisfying lives of their own design. We practice a person-centered approach that respects the unique needs, wishes and abilities of each individual.

The work of Advocates extends beyond the walls of our programs and into the community. Through a range of public lectures, professional trainings, conferences and cultural events, we strive to build strong, inclusive communities that value the contributions of all members.

Our Mission

Advocates' mission is to help people achieve their hopes and dreams within the fabric of their communities. We partner with people with disabilities, elders, and those with other challenges to overcome personal obstacles and societal barriers so that they can obtain and keep homes, engage in work and other meaningful activities, and sustain satisfying relationships. We work to inspire communities to create opportunities for contribution and participation by all.

Project Able

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ADVOCATES

Vision Values Innovation

Overview

The primary responsibility of Project Able is to provide culturally competent family support services to Chinese and Vietnamese individuals with developmental disabilities, and their families. Project Able serves approximately 80 Chinese and Vietnamese families in the Metro Boston and South Shore areas. Referrals to Project Able are typically made by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation (DMR).

Project Able aims to develop each family's capacity to meet the needs of their family member with a developmental disability within their own communities. We work to overcome several challenges families face in obtaining supports for their loved one.

When dealing with family members with developmental disabilities, the Asian community faces many cultural barriers. Asian immigrant families rarely advocate for their needs, and many have come from regions where few services were available. Therefore, they may be unaware that services exist.

Cultural considerations preclude many from asking for assistance outside of the family unit. The stigma of mental retardation has led many to hide family members from the community. Project Able's

greatest accomplishment has been its success in overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers in order to get care for these families.

Program Supports

- Support groups in multiple dialects
- Assistance accessing community resources
- Assistance accessing health care and emergency services
- Family training
- Housing and benefits advocacy
- Employment support/Workplace advocacy
- Assistance with IEP and ISP participation
- Communication support
- Stipend to meet families' critical needs
- Recreational/Social opportunities

Family Governing Board

One of the project's most successful undertakings is the establishment of a Family Governing Board. The Board is comprised of seven elected members - four Chinese and three Vietnamese - who meet monthly. The Board controls the project's finances with its treasurer. The Board has the power to impact the selection and retention of staff through the negotiation with the Program Director.

Staff

The program has three case managers who speak, read and write Chinese and Vietnamese. They work in the community, conducting home visits and advocating for families at school meetings. All staff are trained and supervised for their particular assignments.

Normal office hours are Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Staff are also on call to provide services in case of an emergency. For more information, call the Project Able Office at 617-988-8132.