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## **The Arc Maryland responds to the \$1 Sale of Rosewood Property to Stevenson University**

The Rosewood-Stevenson University plan is of great interest to our constituency of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). We hope this purchase inspires Stevenson University to acknowledge the history of the people who lived in the former Institution as well as to make strides to improve inclusive opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

The \$1 sale of the property to Stevenson University requires \$20 Million in toxic cleanup to make the grounds safe for university students while people with I/DD under the care of the State, including those with complex and fragile medical conditions, resided for decades on this toxic dump. While Stevenson has committed to share in the cost of the cleanup, the state will also contribute a considerable amount of money toward this effort.

Our constituency has a stake in the sale of institution property. Under state law, proceeds from the sale of such properties go to benefit people on the state's waiting list for home and community services. The Arc was aware of a building partnership between the State and Stevenson University that had been in motion for several years. The Arc Maryland filed a Freedom of Information request for information about the plans for the Rosewood property and its toxic cleanup. The state failed to meet the FOI deadline; our request was routed to another state agency, with no response forthcoming.

The sale of the Rosewood Center property re-opens questions about the dark history of segregation and fairness to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Operated since the late 1800's, Rosewood was Maryland's oldest and largest state institution for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) when it closed in 2009. Designed with good intentions as the Asylum and Training School for the Feeble-Minded at a time when education rights and community services were virtually non-existent, Rosewood Center deteriorated into a literal house of horrors where thousands of children and adults were warehoused, as described by people who lived there. Disability Rights Maryland (after prior investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice) was investigating maltreatment and violations of federal rules for health and safety at the time the center closed.

Thousands of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities languish on Maryland's Community Services Waiting List. Governor Hogan included funding for those with the most urgent need to receive services, as well as the start of a Waiting List Initiative that will serve 800 children, adults and families. There is room for considerably more improvement to assure that all who are waiting for needed services will receive these services. The need remains critical.

The \$1 purchase will be instrumental in expansion of Stevenson University and the many fine programs it provides. We hope future students enjoy the new opportunities at the University. However, the \$1 sale means nothing will go to benefit individuals on the State's 8,000-person waiting list. We call upon the State of Maryland and Stevenson University to address some of the concerns through the following:

- Scholarships to students with I/DD to attend an inclusive education at Stevenson University. Legislation passed this year, sponsored by Senator Craig Zucker and Delegate Eric Ebersole, will provide grants to Maryland colleges and universities to design inclusive educational programs on Maryland's campuses. The James W. Hubbard Inclusive Higher Education Grant Program for individuals with I/DD has \$500,000 to begin a pilot grant program. Many more students could benefit from the Hubbard Fund with a significant infusion of scholarships dedicated by Stevenson University. We urge the participation of Stevenson University in this exciting endeavor.
- Adoption of college curriculum on the history and rights of persons with I/DD.
- Adoption of curriculum for teacher preparation students that includes inclusive education and opportunities for children and adults with I/DD.
- Stevenson University could house a permanent collection in its library to memorialize the lives, experiences and history of the people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who lived and died at Rosewood Institution and illustrate the gains society has made in ending such institutionalization.
- Providing the information requested by The Arc Maryland regarding toxic cleanup costs per our Public Information request dated December 22, 2016.

These are some examples of the many reasonable opportunities that will help future generations of students, teachers and upcoming leaders to be more equipped to support people with I/DD and their right to inclusive settings. We look forward to continuing the dialogue with Stevenson University and the Governor.

The Arc Maryland is the leading statewide non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to the rights and quality of life of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For more information about The Arc and our advocacy, please view our website at [www.thearcmd.org](http://www.thearcmd.org), or contact [akolp@thearcmd.org](mailto:akolp@thearcmd.org), by phone at w(410)571-9320 or c(443)-851-9351.