2011 Ivymount Post-School Follow-up Study: A Brief Summary of Findings on Multiple Learning Needs and Autism Program Alumni

Executive Summary

This report summarizes select findings from the 2011 Ivymount Post-School Follow-up Study: Full Report on Multiple Learning Needs and Autism Program Alumni. One of the main purposes of the follow-up study was to better understand alumni’s post-school experiences. Findings are based on interviews with the parents of 43 Ivymount alumni who left the Autism Program and/or the Multiple Learning Program and Post-High School Program between 2004-2010. Topics covered include employment experiences, adult education, transportation issues, living arrangements, social and community life, and transition to post-school life.

In summary, findings indicate that most Ivymount alumni live busy, satisfying lives, yet continue to experience significant challenges. Most are employed, yet the majority work as volunteers or receive minimum wages for their work. A significant number have received some sort of adult education. Most continue to live at home, and are content doing so, but for those who seek residential placements, waitlists are long. Most participate regularly in both structured and unstructured opportunities for social interaction, yet do not always have adequate opportunities and/or social skills for developing and sustaining meaningful relationships. While overall satisfaction with post-school life tends to be high, concerns relating to employment, future living arrangements, and disability-related health and behavioral issues remain.

Key findings related to alumni’s employment experiences include the following:

- 93% of Ivymount alumni are currently employed.
- 42% are employed in a paid capacity.
- Most alumni work between 10-30 hours per week.
- Most jobs are entry-level and require limited skill sets, although job tasks and locations vary significantly. For example, jobs involve physical tasks, customer interaction, desk/office work, and/or the assembly and production of arts and crafts.
- Almost all alumni receive funding to participate in an employment support program of some kind.
- 84% of alumni are either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with their current employment situations.

Key findings related to alumni’s experiences with adult education include the following:

- Approximately 38% of alumni have participated in an adult education program, most offering functional academic and job readiness training for young adults with disabilities.
- 86% were “very satisfied” with their adult education experiences.
Key findings related to alumni’s current living arrangements include the following:

- 79% of alumni live with one or both parents, and 14% are in supported living.
- Of those alumni living with parents or other family members, 56% are on a waitlist to receive funding for residential support.
- Parents reported that 79% of alumni are “very satisfied” with their current living arrangements.

Key findings related to alumni’s social and community life include the following:

- 79% of alumni have regular opportunities for structured social interaction with peers.
- Opportunities for structured social interaction take a variety of forms. Most commonly, alumni participate in organized sports groups or social clubs that offer regular activities for individuals with disabilities.
- All alumni have regular opportunities for unstructured social interactions with family members, and 73% have opportunities for unstructured social interactions with peers.
- Parents reported that 79% of alumni are “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with their social lives.

Key findings related to the overall quality of alumni’s post-school life include the following:

- 84% of parents reported that alumni’s overall quality of life was either “excellent” or “good.”
- 58% of parents reported that alumni required either “much less support” or “somewhat less support” than they did five years ago.

Ivymount School wishes to thank all the alumni families who participated in interviews for sharing their time, insights, and experiences. Study results will be used to help Ivymount staff better prepare current and future students for post-school life.

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