

My husband and I adopted our daughter from Romania in 1991 when she was three years old. Even so, she was the size of an 18-month old baby, had never been out of her crib, had never used her teeth to eat and was still in diapers. We figured with love and a nurturing family she would "catch-up" soon would be able to do most things a three year old could do.

We were wrong. Long story short, she was mis-diagnosed and on a lethal combination of meds before she went into Children's Hospital in Seattle where she stayed for her first admission of 4 weeks. The general umbrella of diagnoses is autism with a host of underlying contributors. We kept her in our home until she was 17 years old. At that time she was starting to attack us and it was deemed unsafe to leave her alone with only one parent so we made the hardest decision of our lives to have her placed out of home.

She was placed in a children's group home and at first it seemed like a "God-send". She was still attending her same school and the staff at the group home really enjoyed working with her. But then her meds became ineffective and she "went off the deep end" and started attacking staff and others. The default course of action was to call the police. They came and took her to a 72-hour holding facility which is normally used for drunks and drug users. It was totally inappropriate for our daughter.

Memory is hazy at this point but somehow our daughter was accepted at FHMC where 24/7 medical, psychiatric, and psychological therapy is available. She has always tended to be on a roller coaster with her meds and how she is affected by them, and close medical monitoring is needed. We are afraid that if she is sent out into the community again, these safety nets won't catch her and she will wind up again in a frightening, strange environment. That in itself would create such mental anguish for her that a mental or physical evaluation would be almost impossible.

Our daughter has been in a group home before and it didn't work. She functions best in a highly structured, close knit environment. Francis Haddon provides that. Sending her out in the community might be the fashionable, hip thing to do but it doesn't work for our daughter. She has thrived since arriving at FHMC and we have rested easy knowing that she is well taken care of and safe. Uprooting the residents of FHMC will cause long term psychological harm. These residents thrive on routine and we know this first hand having had our daughter with us for so many years.

We can't believe there is anything better out there for our daughter. She is safe and happy and if the need arises, the medical attention she needs is there at a moment's notice. This is what is most important to us. That she have 24/7 medical care. We know what harm can be done if she is left without proper supervision.

The staff at Francis Haddon Morgan Center are God's angels on earth, taking care of the most fragile and most dependant citizens of our state. We need to preserve these services to continue to properly care for our loved ones.

Sue and Rick  
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