

Aging parent caregivers in desperate need of help

Courtney, age 25, has significant needs and depends on her father and me for care and supervision. We anticipated her being supported in a group home by this time, having been on agency waiting lists, and on the New York Cares list for 10 years. However, there is no place for her to go, because not enough homes are being developed due to lack of state funding.

Meanwhile, parental care giving continues, including toileting, hand washing, tooth brushing, showering, shampooing, preparing food, dressing a few times a day, etc.

Additionally, there are responsibilities such as doctor appointments, meetings and bureaucratic paperwork that accompany her disability. Add in work and other family responsibilities and you can probably understand why parents cannot be caregivers forever.

For 25 years, beyond anticipated parental responsibilities and beyond capable limits - well, it feels that way at times, but God gets you through - we have dealt with chronic stress and demands in ways only people in our situation can truly understand.

Reports suggest that less than 10 percent of people waiting for a residential opportunity will receive placement this year. Courtney won't be one of them; there are those needier, who may have only one caregiver or a crisis situation.

Our state leaders should prove that New York really does care by putting people first and providing needed and ample funding for residential placements, to replace aging parent caregivers.

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