

**Date: 10-13-15**

**To: Commissioner Morna Murray, J.D.**

**From: Lisa Calvo, MS Position and Title** Behavior Modification Program Specialist at Southbury Training School Master in Science School Counseling Developmental Guidance- Social Emotional Educational Vocational and Career Development. I have been employed at the School in various roles since 1990 after a career in Business Management. This helped form my perspective on the continued success of DDS.

**Re: STS Recommendations**

**Please read how I formed these recommendations.**

I am writing to you as a Stakeholder who has been personally and professionally invested in providing services at STS for the past 25 years, enough time to make an informed assessment of the human resources, natural resources, interiors, exteriors and grounds of this facility. My recommendations are practical and focused on meeting many needs. 1)The individuals we serve first and foremost and 2) Business interests of the State of Connecticut and 3) Supporting the morale, hard work and hopefully continued employment of STS staff during uncertain times.

Over the past two years, I have enjoyed contributing my skills to improvement projects at STS. In 2013 I was assigned the task of designing a Startup Family Resource Center in Cottage 1 which opened in September of 2014. I designed the interiors and designated each room for specific purposes such as the Living Room for Group Work, A Resource Library with materials to advance the agency Mission and Vision in the areas of Family Education, Community Resources, Life Skills and Social Emotional Skills Development and Career Development. I designed the working offices for staff including our Self Advocate Coordinator. This building is operational and brings in many families for planning meetings and a variety of private providers however these services could be utilized more.

Since June of 2015, I have had the honor of using my creative skills and planning skills to allocate private funds to make Campus wide Exterior improvements through the Beautification Project at STS. The previous project, a redesign of Cottage 33 projected to be completed later this year. I collaborated and contributed creative ideas for sensory integration and treatments to Cottage 20. This Beautification project is my third project over the past two years. Each project more challenging than the previous, which has been so rewarding. This Beautification Project being the most challenging and rewarding to date with the most amount of responsibility. One goal is for the exterior of the houses on this Campus to look equal to the Historic Houses located just down the street .The Beautification project is in essence integrating STS on its own into the neighboring towns.

In my opinion, to move forward, we need to look back on the Principles STS was founded on and look at these in light of new advanced methods of care today. STS was established under the Leadership of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) who authorized the creation of this facility as part of his Works Progress (Projects) Administration. STS was intended to be a place where individuals with severe

intellectual, medical and physical disabilities could receive therapeutic care in a Beautiful restorative setting. In my opinion, the Future use of the STS Campus needs to remain as such, in some form.

**Please read my 10 recommendations with Justifications:**

**Recommendation #1 Respite Center to meet the needs of families on the waiting list.**

**Justification-** There are over 2,000 families on a waiting list. Although STS cannot accept new admissions to operate as a Residential Care facility (24 hours a day 365 days a year continuous), there are options for admitting, on a short term, people who need Specialized Care for a variety of Individual Needs. I have viewed the family forum on CTN. Our staff is uniquely qualified to provide these needed services. The buildings could have the elegance of the Historical Property (inside and outside) and function as an Inn providing World Class Accommodations and Superior Quality of Specialized Care for Individuals with Severe Medical and Behavioral Needs. Buildings that could be used this way Identified: 5 Yankee Drive, 4 Yankee Drive, the Apartments at 22 Colony Court and 26 Colony Court would make excellent respite centers and I think are still in excellent condition.

**Recommendation #2 Work Places, Job Creation and Job Training**

**Justification-** This is what STS was built to provide. If we cannot employ DDS Consumers from outside of STS on this property, we can think creatively whether sub dividing the land for purchase by Private Businesses with a contract negotiated to employ individuals receiving DDS services. DDS staff could remain employed assisting with supported employment. Partner with Schools and Community Technical Schools to develop apprenticeship training in trade skills: Woodworking, Metal Work, and Painting. Expanded to Handmade crafts such as Pottery. Roselle, Workshops- Public Private Partnerships DDS workforce and staff for creation of small businesses. DDS staff can remain employed supporting individuals and teaching and training. Job Development access could be expanded here There are endless possibilities for job creation on this Campus through channeling individuals with Special Needs unique skills and abilities. Behavioral “challenges” can be reconsidered to be great assets with the proper assessment and type of work.

**Recommendation #3 Assist Public Schools/Regional School District with Educational Support**

**Justification:** What STS was built as, a School. Some public Schools need assistance educating students with Special Needs especially with the rise in Autism Diagnosis. This has been a part of public forums that schools need a partnership to help provide services. It seems some schools may have challenges keeping up with the demands and we may be able to help. In my opinion we are leaders in the field of Autism, Behavioral Services, Special Education and Gifted and Talented. STS could Partner with Regional School Districts to assist in Education and Training Opportunities for Intellectually Disabled, Gifted and Talented students, Montessori Methods, Function as a Magnet School or Regional School District.

**Recommendation #4 Crawford Hall- Multiple Uses: Create an Elite Wedding/ Banquet/Inn and Conference Center with a Spa and Tavern.**

**Justification-** All of these uses can work at Crawford Hall and are profitable financially. The Architecture of the Crawford Hall Building with the Faux Balconies and Turrets would be a big draw for Weddings. The training room has Historical tall windows and could be redesigned as a Ballroom. Further enhancing this, the area across the Street at Lake Stibbs could become a Rose Garden. There could be a fountain installed inside the Lake. Think Wedding Pictures/Big Demand. This location has something to offer year round, just think Fall Foliage and the Litchfield Hills.

**Work Opportunities Crawford-** Individuals receiving DDS Services can work at the Inn and DDS employees can remain employed working on the design and rebuilding of this Interior. This could cost significantly less than if the work was contracted out completely. STS staff have years of experience redesigning historic buildings.

**The Conference Center** would advance the vision of a Teaching and “Learning” Facility at DDS. Dual use DDS Employees can share their wealth of on the job training hosting conferences with areas of Autism, Support for Dementia, Pica, and Dual Diagnosis.

DDS could provide training and be the recipients of training from others, even World Wide. For example, Host National Association for the Dually Diagnosed Conferences. Inn rooms could be expanded into the closed Cottages nearby on the circle.

**Spa** Develop a Spa on premises dual purpose for individuals with special needs, physical disabilities.

Develop a Pub Located Downstairs by the old Dietary area. In Colonial American history would be called a Tavern or meeting place to discuss ideas.

### **Recommendation # 5 Renovate Roselle Auditorium with Elegant and Historical Features.**

**Justification-** Respect the “roots” of the Town of Southbury and the Southbury Training School through re locating the Southbury Playhouse to Roselle School. This idea would provide Culture, Entertainment and the Arts to individuals residing here at this time and to the other patrons. This can employ individuals receiving DDS services.

This is also going back to the STS history when individuals staged their own plays and Christmas Productions. Classical music, Broadway shows, Classic Movies can be shown here. Guest Speakers could also be invited to share their History and Perspective in the Field. Due to specific medical regimes, our aging and medically complex individuals sometimes need to have treatments every two hours. Consider how that affects travel time to and from a destination. Bringing the Community closer to them and into their home (Campus) could provide them easier access to Quality Entertainment.

STS staff has years of experience with Historical repairs and can design and rebuild the interiors. It would probably cost less than contracting out.

### **Recommendation #6 Develop with Department of Agriculture a Fruit Farm and Vineyard.**

**Justification-** Again respecting the foundations that Southbury Training School was built on, a working farm. These would be very profitable and are tourist attractions and would enhance job creation for DDS

Consumers. Through working on the Beautification Project I have worked with various farms and have received interest in employing DDS consumers looking for employment.

Enhance seasonal activities- Corn Maze, Sleigh Rides in the winter working with Horse Farms nearby and building on the Christmas Tree Farm at STS consider developing an Ice Skating rink.

Meals served at the Farm with eggs and produce from the farm. This has been successful in an area of Connecticut with similar features. This is very family oriented.

Hold "Community Dinners" on the Farm, Invite Celebrity Chefs (who may contribute specialized meals for people with specific dietary/medical needs).

### **Recommendation #7 Consider Leasing out property to small businesses**

**Justification-** If Private small businesses operate inside the Campus it would bring the Community in. At one time I pursued a Graduate degree in Social Work and I learned about Community Development and how redistricting can be used to integrate people and resources. From what I know so far, leases, sales or subdivisions of the property are in process.

STS was at one time in history, State of the Art and a Leader in care which led to increased admissions and the challenges keeping up with the demands for quality services when funding was reduced. This led to the situation STS faced years ago and continues to face now. I agree that STS needs to downsize operations to remain viable, however I would consider this "rightsizing". I think to operate most efficiently and effectively the STS campus may bring in new individuals and needs to remain at a manageable amount of individuals being served so as not to affect the quality of services again.

Some business ideas that would be person centered providing community integration on the campus (such as a bookstore, music store) in the buildings that cannot be residential. Select small business proposals for the only reason to enhance the quality of life of the individuals continuing to live here at this time. Create small businesses such as a Bakery using Fruit from the Farm, Baked Breads, Gourmet Soups, Cupcakes or Specialty Cakes , A Tailor/Bridal Shop- with a dual purpose. At STS people with Physical Disabilities and Behavioral needs need specialized clothing a specific material or modified to fit certain challenges. I think a Science Center, Natural History Museum and Interactive Sensory museum would be assets on the STS Campus. A goal of the Settlement Agreement is an integrated setting which enables individuals with disabilities to interact with non-disabled individuals to "the fullest extent possible". Actually redesigning the Campus and bringing Private Businesses into the property would help address that task, in part, for the individuals who continue to live here at this time. I have traveled in the U.S. and abroad and have observed how integrated communities can be. There is a development trend of mixed use properties that is very appealing due to the accessibility of activities and necessities.

### **Recommendation #8 Re use of Cottages**

**Cottage 3** Medical Services. I designed a Cottage Garden at Cottage 3 with the idea of future use of this Cottage for individuals and families to enjoy this space while in the midst of serious medical consultations. This Cottage is operational at this time and can be used more to assist others in need. Our

PCP physicians are uniquely qualified to address the needs of Individuals and Families on a waiting list for care. Services can be expanded to include APRN level assistance.

**Cottage 10** could become Leisure and Recreation, Unified Special Olympics and YMCA offices.

Justification- Our population here is aging and bridging into retirement and there is a shift to more leisure based care. These services could be used by DDS consumers outside of STS. A meeting place for Unified teams means disabled individuals interact with non- disabled individuals and learn to work as a team. YMCA camp has been successful and if services are expanded to utilize more of the Grounds at different times of year planning and development could take place here.

**Cottage 11** I have 18 years of experience in the Psychology Department. Staff are uniquely qualified to provide a wide array of Psychological Services, Dementia Care, Autism Treatment and care. This could be outpatient.

**Cottage 12** Justification- provide in-patient and outpatient or short term OT PT services. The staff has worked with a full range of disabilities over the years and has a wealth of knowledge and practical experience. There is a very large (now) enclosed Porch that would make an excellent rehabilitation area.

**Recommendation #9 Consider repurposing the Health Care Unit Building as an expanded YMCA.**

**Justification-** This would bring the Community into STS and DDS staff can use the facility to stay healthy, especially under uncertain times in the Agency. Perhaps Sloan Fitness Center could be expanded into this building for use by individuals living here. This building was built around 1940 and the Façade has Beautiful Architecture. Individuals at STS and DDS staff could use the services to stay healthy. It looks like there would be ample parking or parking could expand.

**Recommendation #10 Consider Relocating the Town Hall to the STS Campus**

**Justification-** Consider relocating the Town Hall into the Campus possibly the Administration Building or Roselle School. There was some discussion of using Roselle as a Community Center. The Town Hall is the Center of Community life and while being respectful of the individuals living here, this could help integrate the STS Campus into the community.

**Thank you for taking the time to consider my ideas and for making this process inclusive. It is an honor to contribute ideas for the future use of this facility.**

**Respectfully,**

*Lisa Calvo, MS BMPS*

*Southbury Training School /DDS West Region*