

NAMI EDUCATION MEETING

JUNE 12, 2008

DR. BETTY GREENE- BRYANT COLLEGE LIVING EXPERIENCE IN ROCKVILLE AND BEYOND

Dr. Betty Greene-Bryant, Director of the College Living Experience (CLE) in Rockville, Maryland, was the featured speaker at the June Education meeting. Dr. Greene-Bryant has an EdD in Special Education and more than 25 years of experience working in the field of education and special education.

CLE is not a college itself; it is a private program owned by Educational Services of America. All CLE programs are located near colleges and teach independent living skills and social skills, provide academic subject tutors, and support students with everything involved in attending local institutions of higher education. CLE is currently operating in the following locations: Austin, Denver, Ft. Lauderdale, Chicago, Monterey, and Washington, .D.C./Rockville.

Typical CLE students range in age from 18 to 27 years old and stay in the program for two years. Some students have gone to college before with no assistance, some are coming right out of high school, and some are older students who are returning to school.

Dr. Greene-Bryant estimates that 40% of the students in CLE have Asperger's Syndrome and notes that most students have problems with organization, anxiety, reading or math, listening skills, and language or speaking. Some of the students are good visual or hands-on learners despite their other challenges. Many of the students are on medication.

The CLE program requires that its offices be located within one mile of a college and near to public transportation, student apartments, and a pharmacy. Travel training –teaching students learn to use public transportation – is part of the CLE program.

At the Rockville site, most of the students attend Montgomery College but some students attend Georgetown University and American University and CLE works with the disability offices of those colleges. Sixty percent of Rockville students live at the CLE-owned apartments and 30% live on the college campus, while 10% are day students who attend classes and independent living skills programs from 9 am to 7 pm.

There are three components to the CLE program: academic skills, social skills, and independent living skills. CLE runs coed and single-sex counseling groups, social activities in the evenings and on weekends, and social skills groups. CLE also provides resident advisers that live on-site in the students' apartment building. The program encourages students to become independent and self-sufficient and to make the transition to attending college without the support of CLE after a year or two.

For more information about the CLE program, contact Dr. Betty Greene-Bryant at 240-399-4279 x201, gbryant@esa-education.com or visit www.ExperienceCLE.com.