**

Transcript: Laurence Clark – CENTRES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING in the USA

Laurence Clark:

I‘ve come to America to find out about Independent Living here. Today, I’m at Access Living in Chicago, to learn about Centres for Independent Living.

I’ve been invited to accompany Mani Komago, their long term Care Services Manager, who supports disabled people to leave nursing homes.

*[Mani and Laurence get into a people carrier and set off on the road]*

MANI

Alrighty, let’s do it! We have about, a forty five minute drive into the city.

Access Living - although it helps actually only poor, poor, poor people, we are in one of the fanciest neighbourhoods in Chicago. We are a headache for the State, because it’s much easier for them to just give all the money to a nursing home over there and let the nursing home take em’ and that, that just resolves that public problem.

Getting you out of the nursing home is a huge problem for the State because they themselves created the problem and you would think that the State would work with me, but they don’t, they work against us – and I’m not being cute, I’m not one to say cute things – it is a fact. The State needs the money that they get for the nursing homes. They get a lot of money. Nursing homes keep a lot of people employed – a lot of people.

The nursing homes have changed their tune lately. They’re not as harsh on us. The reason is, that they try to get rid of the people that they don’t like. And so they pass those on to me.

Laurence Clark:

In the UK, we still have nursing homes, but I think they’re a lot less common, There’s a lot less percentage of disabled people in them.

*[Mani gets out of the people carrier and walks into a nursing home]*

Laurence Clark:

Mani is working today to get somebody out of this nursing home. They won’t let us film in their unfortunately.

*[Mani walks out of the nursing home with James. They get into the people carrier and set off]*

Laurence Clark:

What was it like in there James? I didn’t get the pleasure of going in.

James:

It’s like, one – you don’t get that much privacy, bot that much privacy, but there’s always something happening around there that, sometimes it’ll upset you, sometimes it will make you laugh. But it’s been somewhat of a difficult emotional rollercoaster in there. Sometimes you have your ups, sometimes it’s downs, but, it was trying.

*[Laurence talks to another worker from Access Living]*

ACCESS LIVING WORKER:

There was once a survey that Access Living did, and what they found out was like, less than one percent of people need to be in places like this. You know, need. But the rest are here because they have no other choice.

*[Laurence talks to James]*

Laurence Clark:

you didn’t choose to go and live in there, right? That wasn’t your choice?

James:

It started out that the social worker said it would only be a couple of months. And that couple of months ended up that long period there.

Laurence Clark:

Did you know about Access Living, or did someone tell you about it?

James:

Someone was telling me about it, that’s how I found out about it.

*[James walks into his new apartment home]*

James:

I’m home…

Laurence Clark:

This is home!

*[James and Mani hug]*

Laurence Clark:

It was great to meet you James.

*[James and Laurence high five]*

JAMES:

Ok, see you later.

Laurence Clark:

It’s been really good to see this and see you get out, see you get here, it’s brilliant.

JAMES:

Yeah.

Laurence Clark:

Good luck.

JAMES:

It was long, but I made it!

Laurence Clark:

Cheers, bye.

JAMES:

Ok, see you later!

*[Laurence and Mani get back in the people carrier]*

MANI:

Let’s say you have severe diabetes, or you have some major arthritis, you’re not considered disabled, but you can’t work, you just can’t function because you can’t work. So you have no money. You still end up in a nursing home, but since you don’t have any money, we can’t get you out, because that’s one of the parameters, one of the requirements of the State.

If you have mental illness, but you have no physical disability, we can’t help you – you need to go to the mental illness place. Cognitive disabilities, or learning disabilities, those – you have to also have a physical disability for us to be able to help you. So you have to have both.

Laurence Clark:

See in the UK, that is something that we’re probably really strong on, that they’ll work with people with physical impairments, learning difficulties…

MANI:

Are there a lot of Centres for Independent Living?

Laurence Clark:

No.

MANI:

No?

Laurence Clark:

There are very few. In the last three years we’ve got a lot more because there was a government initiative to get one in every area and every locality. I’m not saying we haven’t got institutions, we have – we’ve still got some really awful places open still, but it seems to me that there’s a lot, lot more here.

*End*