

The Pioneer Network

DECLARATION OF *Interdependence*

The Spirit of '06



WE BEGAN YEARS AGO AS A MOVEMENT TO AFFIRM THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THOSE LIVING AND WORKING IN LONG-TERM CARE SETTINGS. WE LEARNED THAT WHERE INDIVIDUALS ARE EMPOWERED AND HONORING OF RELATIONSHIPS, THE PROCESS OF *creating home and community* REKINDLES THE HUMAN SPIRIT AND MENDS OUR FRAYED SOCIAL FABRIC.

Our collective journey of transformational change is inspired by a spirit of openness.

- It is an openness *to see* those who live and work with us with an honest reckoning of the present, and a progressive vision of the future.
- It is an openness *to hear* the voices of those who have been too often silenced in the decision-making process, and *to listen* to their self-directed preferences.
- It is an openness *to speak* from the heart and *to act* through a respectful awareness of community life and teamwork.

Openness to change and new possibility sustains us through inevitable periods of conflict and disruption. It helps us overcome the real world hurdles on our path toward de-institutionalized services and individualized care. It creates the energy for us to realize our leadership potential in our organizations and in our broader communities.

Today we invoke a spirit of openness to usher in a new era of aging in community. We declare our *interdependence*, and we invite each other into a dialogue about

how to make interdependence our true way of being and living in community.

INTERDEPENDENCE: Reliance on one another for mutual support or sustenance

Each of us has our own unique passions, capacities and strengths. We recognize these gifts as self-evident. And yet interdependence is not self-evident — it requires acts of intention.

As human beings, we live by and through cooperation with others — it is our destiny. In spite of the emphasis placed on being independent, in reality we are all interdependent. The nature of our cooperation with and relationship to others changes as we grow, mature, and age. These relationships form the basis of all true communities. Therefore, we seek to understand and possess the skills necessary to be interdependent in healthy, productive ways.

In declaring our interdependence, we recognize that when we are united, we have endless possibilities; when we are partners, we build community; when we are proactive together, we reduce our fear of change, and when we cultivate the common ground, we grow individually and collectively.



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