



31 Saint James Avenue
Suite 710
Boston, MA 02116

(617) 266-5657 Phone/TTY
(617) 266-4343 Fax

Email: info@tacinc.org
www.tacinc.org

January 5, 2010

Dear Friends,

As some of you may already know, Julia Bick passed away last evening in North Carolina after a long illness. In a poignant coincidence of events, Julia died just hours after President Obama signed the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Investment Act of 2010 into law. Along with Frank Melville, this groundbreaking legislation – which resurrects HUD’s Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program – is Julia’s legacy.

Julia was truly an inspiration to many people who have dedicated their careers to the goal of expanding permanent and affordable housing opportunities for people with the most significant and long term disabilities. Julia and I first met shortly after TAC was founded 18 years ago, and she stayed in constant touch with us until her illness required her to leave the job she loved so much. She carefully followed the long and slow progress of the Melville Act through Congress, and I know she would be thrilled that this federal housing policy goal has finally been achieved.

It was Julia’s vision, along with her sustained and relentless efforts within the State of North Carolina human services system, that led to the creation of the North Carolina “model” of integrated supportive housing – and ultimately to the innovations in the Melville Act. Along with her “side-kick” Mark Shelburne from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, Julia led the work that has created more than 2,200 affordable and integrated housing units for people with disabilities across the entire state of North Carolina.

Julia – in her typical fashion – took a innovative idea and did absolutely everything necessary to “made it really work on the ground”. More importantly, the successful outcomes from the North Carolina program ultimately influenced the State of Louisiana to adopt the North Carolina “model” as the foundation for Louisiana’s post-Katrina/Rita 3,000 unit permanent supportive housing initiative. Subsequently, the States of New Mexico and Pennsylvania – and finally the federal government – understood the wisdom and opportunity embedded within Julia’s vision for community living for people with disabilities.

It was truly an honor and a privilege to work with Julia Bick and I will miss her very much. But her work will go on – and that is all she would have wanted.

Ann O’Hara