

A Brief History of Endless Options Inc.

Endless Options Inc. was formed in the spring of 1982, with services beginning in July of that same year. We are a not for profit educational organization, with a 501(c) 3 status. We have always been governed by a volunteer board of directors.

Our first services were day habilitation, and for a brief time we were known as the Fayette Habilitation Center. We operated out of the Old Daly School in Fayette until 1991.

During that time we tried our hand at a variety of things, including a site in Stover Missouri that also provided day habilitation, transportation partnerships with the SB40 board (SB40 tax levy was passed in Howard County in 1983), partnering with Keller Memorial Hospital Food Service to transport and provide hot lunches for staff and person's served, several employment options, and recreational trips. During this time period we partnered with the then called Howard County Association for the handicapped (SB40) to provide some transportation in the county. That program didn't last more than a year or two, but was the beginning of a relationship that would serve us well throughout.

In 1991 we realized many years of work and dedication by the board and staff and moved into a new facility built with FmHA loan dollars. Our current facility at 222 East Davis continues to serve us, although we have had growing pains and modifications along the way.

In the 1990's we entered into the world of Missouri Medicaid Waiver services, which allowed us to pull down federal dollars for services for eligible participants. At that time there was only one waiver, now there are five, and who knows what the future holds.

Also in the 1990's we began to provide residential services, using the supported living model. That program has been as low as 2 people receiving services and as high as 8. We purposely keep it small while taking on some consumers with higher needs for behavioral reasons. Supported Employment contracts with Vocational Rehabilitation began during this period, with efforts being made to serve a variety of disabilities in the employment arena. In 1997 we opened The Attic, a resale shop on the square, to provide employment and assessment sites for our employment program. Our first CARF accreditation was earned in 1995, and we have been nationally accredited since that time.

By 2000 we were looking for other ways to serve in our community and to provide services that meet the needs of our changing community. We continued to work through Vocational rehabilitation with a supported employment contract, but overall employment opportunities continued to elude those we served. There just weren't local jobs available.

In July of 2008 we were funded by the Howard County Sheltered Services Board to provide Transition from School to Work and Adulthood services in conjunction with the three school districts in Howard County. That grant, along with another from the Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities helped launch that program, but it had limited success. Even so, we could see that there is much work to be done in that area, and in June 2010 as we were nearing the end of our relationship with Vocational Rehabilitation as a funder, Services for Independent Living stepped up as a

provider of those community based services that will assure our young citizens the tools they need to make a positive transition.

Also during this time frame a new business, EO Recycles, was begun in January 2009, as a way for people with developmental disabilities to work part time, earning minimum wage, doing real work. This business has benefited greatly from several grants for equipment needs from the Mid-Missouri Solid Waste Management District H, and is a recognized community partner in Howard County. In July 2010 both The Attic and EO Recycles moved under the employment umbrella of the agency. In January 2012 we entered a three year contract with Boonslick Industries Inc. in Boonville, collaboration for sales of recyclables and education within Howard County. In June 2012 EO Recycles moved out of the main facility on East Davis to a new location on Church Street, on the square. Visibility increased dramatically. At the same time, we entered an agreement with AA Waste Management to accept their curbside recycling from the city of Fayette, as a larger than average weekly drop off. The other idea at the new location was to increase income by selling used or repurposed furniture through EO Recycles. A Director of Employment Services was created and hired in July 2013. This would allow us to continue to develop services based on employment skills in the community through the Medicaid waivers available through the Division of Developmental Disabilities. EO Recycles continued to grow and increase the amounts recycled until late February 2013, when a snow storm caused a collapse in our site on Church Street. After a month of searching we leased a new space at 504 Cleveland, with plenty of room to continue to grow. Additional weekly drop off's continued, with New Franklin being added to the curbside pick up and subsequent drop off for us.

Another collaboration that has been a benefit to both Endless Options and Howard County is the contracting with Endless Options by the Howard County Sheltered Services Board (SB40) to provide an Administrative Agent to manage their day to day operations. Previously, for many years, that board relied on its membership to also take care of the business of funding. Since 2008 we have worked with the board to manage their grants and payments eligibility questions and as a liaison at the state association Missouri Association of Counties with Developmental Disability Services.

In January 2011, local service coordination became a reality when our first employee was hired to set it up and begin service provision, partnering with the Howard County Sheltered Services Board. This will increase the number of people served by Endless Options by about two thirds, while bringing the local model for service coordination to all citizens with developmental disabilities and their families in Howard County.

In October 2011 we undertook providing services to young people, after school, in our now named "High Five" program. We have high expectations for results and growth in this area, but we are proceeding slowly and deliberately to provide the best services possible.

We are set for growth in both employment services and service coordination, while we have recently overhauled the day program to make it appeal to a wider range of people, and more easily tailored to individual needs.

Other improvements continue to move us ahead in the area of technology. We now have a web page presence on the World Wide Web, use technology to our best advantage from

both a business administration and a data collection point of view, and for more effective communication.

We believe we are a valued business in our community. Employees and persons served are involved in a variety of civic activities, from volunteering at the local senior center delivering home delivered meals faithfully to helping out at the food pantry on a regular business, as well as many other intermittent volunteer jobs that are completed by our staff or those we serve. We have a “can do” spirit and reputation.