

## ASHTONS SPEECH:

My name is Ashton Kennedy. I have blonde hair and blue eyes and I am in a wheelchair. I've faced barriers finding inclusive housing because the only option that is safe and feasible is institutions that aren't always the most inclusive places for people with intellectual disabilities. When I decided to move out, my mom was worried about me living on my own, so we found this facility that appeared to provide a level of security and safety. At this time, I had limited family support as I was moving from my hometown in Northern Alberta to Calgary, Alberta. I didn't want to live in a group living scenario, so it appeared to have the happy medium between what my mom wanted and what I wanted. The facility I live in provides home care-based services with 45 residences. There are common areas where residents can gather, and each resident has their own suite. I have now lived in this housing location for 5 years.

I am currently trying to get out of my current living but with the way the housing crisis is I am facing multiple barriers such as: rent and finding accessible, safe, and possible housing. Some of the barriers that we face in the institution is the place I live there is currently 2 staff to 45 residents during the night which is unsafe because they try to limit the number of calls that we have during the night. That is putting the residents at risk for health concerns. They expect us to all be in bed and sleeping by 9:00 or 10:00 which is not always feasible as it does not consider the preferences of each resident.

Some of the barriers I have faced in finding inclusive housing is the amount of PDD funding. With the budget cuts that they are doing to PDD currently there is not enough funding for the amount of care that I would need if I lived in fully inclusive housing. If housing was more readily available, I would be more apt and willing to move out of the current living facility because my main worry about leaving is that I'll end up in a place that is not feasible and have to move again or be in a worse position than I am now. I have been trying to explore other living options but due to some of the barriers that I have been explaining to you that I have been facing, I have not yet been able to find a new place.

During the pandemic, I experienced barriers due to funding that still exists today. However, the reasoning behind the lack of funding have changed but its still the same outcome. Reasons that have been given about a lack of funding are about the pandemic or the government that is in power.

If inclusive housing was more readily available, I would have already accessed it because it feels like a scenario I could see myself living in my entire life. If resources were more available everywhere, I would have more options of where I would want to live. If small towns had better accessible and inclusive housing options, I would get more of a choice

about where I want to live. People with disabilities are not given the same opportunities to own a home as everyone else and there are way more obstacles put in the way about owning a home due to financial barriers and having too many assets on social assistance.

Thank you, Ashton Kennedy