

Dear Friends of Inglis:

As I write this letter to you, the holidays are upon us. This year I have so much to be thankful for. I am especially blessed to be a part of the Inglis community, serving nearly 1,000 people who are truly wonderful, caring and engaging people who also live with very challenging disabilities. Moreover, I am fortunate to support over 650 staff members who are among the most caring, capable and committed people and each day provide extraordinary care with kindness and compassion for our consumers. Finally, I am thankful for you. Without our hundreds of donors and volunteers, Inglis could not exist. Your generosity with your time, your treasure, your talents and sustained interest helps make Inglis the extraordinary place it is.

I am also proud of the great work being done at Inglis as we empower lives each day with ever more limited resources due to continual reductions in our Medicaid funding. Despite that, we are not standing still; we are continually working for an even brighter future for Inglis consumers, staff and the organization. Let me share three highlights.

### **Empowering Lives Through Advanced Technology**

Each day computers get more powerful, phones get more capable and the internet connects us more closely than ever before. We all appreciate these amazing technological innovations but no one benefits as much as our consumers and others with physical disabilities. Through the computer, even the most disabled people, can explore the world, stay abreast of the latest developments (or celebrity gossip), pursue a degree or find freelance work. Once they are on the web, they can choose to be disabled, or not, and no one knows the difference. More importantly, adapted technology brings people together.

Recently, a woman with MS came to live at Inglis. Unfortunately, she has not been able to talk or communicate for many years. Through the great work of our Computer Lab team, she is now a proficient user of the computer and can surf the net with the best. But most importantly, she can now communicate through email. She can now chat with her children – after seven long years of isolation. And, she writes with ‘a twinkle in her eye’, “I can finally YELL AT MY DAUGHTER AGAIN”!

All of this is made possible by our extraordinary Computer Lab team. Assistive Technology Professional **Dawn Waller**, Computer Lab Coordinator since 1996, is the mentor, coach and technology innovator who inspires residents every day to “get connected” – whether it’s by using a mouth stick, voice recognition software or specialized keyboards and mice. I am delighted to report that Dawn’s inspiring work has been recognized by **The Mayor’s Commission on People with Disabilities with their Access Achievement Award**. The Award was presented at a ceremony last month to recognize organizations and individuals “throughout the Philadelphia area that make an outstanding effort and commitment to increase access for people with disabilities.”

Thanks to Dawn and her colleagues, **Ryan Albert, LaTanya Toney** and **Jeffrey Stewart**, Inglis residents log more than 2,000 hours a month in the Lab. They use computers to participate in civic and social causes, obtain degrees through distance learning, create original art work, run businesses for web design and word processing, shop and stay in touch with family members all through the click of a button. I hope you will join me in congratulating Dawn and her team on this recognition of the work being done at Inglis.

Unfortunately, Medicaid does not support programs like our Lab despite the extraordinary benefits they bring to consumers' lives. As a result, I am very thankful for the generous donations from individuals, foundations and corporations that help offset the costs of this amazing program. I would welcome the opportunity to host you for a tour of the Computer Lab to personally experience this transformative work and to engage with our residents as they virtually explore the world.

### **The Economy – Providing Quality of Care and Quality of Life Despite Constant Reductions in Reimbursement**

Each and every day, Inglis staff across the region work tirelessly to empower our consumers to achieve their goals and live full lives. Often, they do this with limited resources and tight staffing levels. Why? Because as state and federal governments face huge deficits, they are quietly reducing Medicaid reimbursements.

Over the past five years, Inglis House, which receives 94.5% of its reimbursement from Medicaid, has seen those reimbursement rates fall by 18.5% despite serving an ever more medically complex and fragile resident community. Our team has done a great job of controlling costs and doing more with less. During that same five year period, our expenses have grown only by 1% without impacting quality of care or quality of life for our residents. I am proud of this nearly miraculous effort by everyone to control costs and concerned that sustaining it is taking a toll on our staff physically and emotionally.

We continue to negotiate with the state for better reimbursement and are hopeful to see some improvement as a result. Unfortunately, even our best case scenario will only partially close the gap and Inglis will continue to face operating losses into the future. With the recent elections behind us and the country appropriately concerned about state and federal budget deficits, we worry about further cuts. Should that occur, we will need your voice and your support to ensure that these cuts will not devastate our consumers, staff and Inglis as a whole. We will keep you up-to-date on these issues in the coming weeks and months.

### **Reinventing Inglis to Serve Future Generations**

Given the challenging economic environment and the growing needs of the community, we have embarked on a strategic planning effort to prepare Inglis to thrive into the future and serve the next generations even better than we do today. Our planning processes continue to engage consumers, family members, front line staff, managers and the Board in thoughtful and compelling discussions. The Board has established five strategic priorities for Inglis to pursue:

- **“Reinvent” Inglis House to enable residents to find purpose, autonomy and health in an even more homelike, supportive and cost effective environment;**
- **Increase the number of accessible, affordable and safe homes available in the Delaware Valley within five years;**
- **“Reinvent” the adult day program to create an engaging, homelike environment that fosters autonomy and personal growth;**
- **Establish the Inglis Collaborative as a catalyst for creating new knowledge and diffusing best practices for living life to the fullest;**
- **Build a strong foundation for long term sustainability through improved capabilities and infrastructure.**

Recently, I had the opportunity to participate with 43 of my colleagues – consumers, family and staff – to explore ways we can “reinvent” Inglis House for the future. Our initial conversations were the most compelling and moving I have ever experienced at work. Residents and staff spoke of both the extraordinary care that occurs at Inglis House and about the ways our traditional, institutional environment creates dependence and powerlessness in their lives. We made great progress in re-envisioning what Inglis can be during that two-day session. We have a long way to go but I am more confident than ever that together we will create an even more special place for our residents, their families and our staff. We look forward to sharing our thinking with you as we continue this journey into the future.

### **Looking Ahead to 2011**

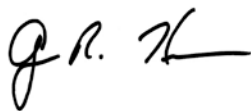
Inglis is delighted to partner with our friends at the **Please Touch Museum** with their **access/Ability Exhibition**, geared to families and children ages 5-12, on view **January 22 – April 24, 2011**. Inglis residents and staff, led by **Janet Turner**, Director of Social Enrichment Programs, will help train Museum volunteers, assist with programming and teach the children through play and conversation at the Museum. **Jai Sujan**, who is a tenant at Inglis Gardens at Germantown, has been a gallery attendant at Please Touch since it moved to Fairmount Park. We welcome this opportunity to expand our partnership with a unique Philadelphia treasure and look forward to seeing you and your family at the exhibit. Please visit our websites in the New Year to learn more at [www.inglis.org](http://www.inglis.org) and [www.pleasetouchmuseum.org](http://www.pleasetouchmuseum.org).

I hope you have found this update helpful and would appreciate your thoughts and suggestions. Please feel free to contact me at [gavin.kerr@inglis.org](mailto:gavin.kerr@inglis.org) or 215-581-0701.

Inglis is moving from Good to Great to meet the needs of our growing population of consumers. Your ongoing interest and support are invaluable as we prepare for the future. I encourage you to make a gift by clicking on <http://www.inglis.org/donate.jsp> to help people with disabilities achieve their goals.

I hope you and your family have a healthy and happy 2011.

Thankfully,



Gavin Kerr  
President & CEO