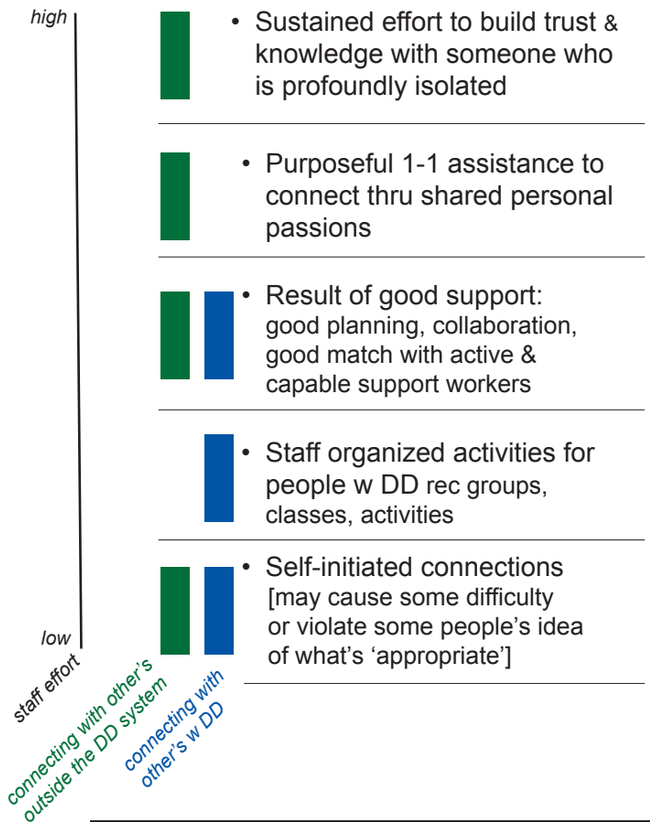
Individual Focus



System Redesign

E.g. after-school program shifts pattern from multiple 1-1 outside assistants to teams where all have responsibility for all thus creating richer & more intense interactions

Collective Action

Organized & sustained effort to make social change in alliance with other community groups by discovering common interests & learning by taking action together.

*This is the County's **desired focus** of investment & learning*

Our primary reason for investing in connecting people w DD to people without DD is to improve the quality of everyone's life. We expect that economies will sometimes result, but economies are a secondary reason for the effort.

*To benefit as many people as possible, the work of community building calls for active support from all those who assist a person **and** for people with a gift for connecting & organizing who can devote a significant part of their time to it. This work is different from recruiting volunteers to take up tasks that staff would otherwise do. The knowledge and connections necessary to do it well emerge from the work itself: People who do the work can support one another to learn to do it better but abstract lists of contracts, which can help identify activities, are of little or no use in building memberships or in organizing. Here it is trust based person-to-person contact that matters.*

Organize & plan with families entering services to develop, extend & preserve valued roles & natural supports. Minimize the idea of a complete handover to services & increase the number of families that see services as only one important element in a good life.

Organize & plan with people & families to respond to likely system changes with creativity, resilience, & assertiveness.

Build a culture within service providing agencies that highly values & strongly encourages direct support work that connects people & assists people to preserve & grow in their memberships.

Support community building work: find ways to preserve current efforts; increase the number of people who have time to dedicate; bring people interested in community building together for mutual support; invest in continuing learning opportunities.

A Discussion on Community Building with People with Developmental Disabilities in Dane County

22 August 2007

Summary by John O'Brien