

## **Darcy Elks, West Chester, Pennsylvania**

**May 2023**

I first became aware of the Wolf's work around 1972–73. Honestly, I cannot remember exactly how I found out about Normalization. As an 18-year-old I had volunteered in Willowbrook for a short period of time. The conditions were appalling, and I did not last in that role too long. However, the experience in the institution sent me on a search for justice and a better way to support people. Somewhere in that search I heard about WW's work. I read Normalization and never turned back. Somehow, I got connected with the TI - I think it was through a graduate course I was taking - anyway I ended up going to PASS 2 where Wolf was the main trainer. This was my first exposure to the TI I think. I think I have attended all of the TI workshops although I have not been able to attend the updated versions of some of them. The Training Institute and the mentoring of Wolf shaped and informed my life's work. I had a calling to seek justice on behalf of devalued people – especially people with intellectual impairments. I know that I was sent to the TI to be equipped for that work. Wolf was such a dedicated mentor. His expectations were very high – maybe the highest I had ever had in my life. He invested so much energy and effort into teaching me. I cannot express what a huge difference he made in my life and through the years, I have tried to “pay it forward.”

My fondest memories: traveling home with WW from a workshop we did together—it was a fairly long drive and we were deep in conversation about Stringfellow's work and the Fall; Attending WW's course lectures at Syracuse University and in his home; the deep friendships I developed with colleagues at the TI; meeting so many interesting people through WW; and, oh, I don't want to forget the garbage collecting—something I never envisioned doing. I use what I learned to this day in my work, mentoring, accompanying families, and in my personal life re: our children. My profound gratitude to the Lord for bringing me to Wolf and for the vision that Wolf helped me have for myself.