

Change, Challenge, and the Work of Becoming Stronger



Change is rarely announced in advance, and it almost never arrives neatly packaged. More often, it shows up as uncertainty, disruption, or a difficult question we did not expect to face. Over time, I have come to believe that change is not something to be feared or avoided. It is something to be engaged, examined, and, when possible, shaped with intention.

At LIFTT, change has been a constant companion.

Like many nonprofit organizations, we have faced moments when the future felt uncertain. There were periods when funding was unstable and difficult decisions had to be made. Questions about sustainability, staffing, and long-term viability were not theoretical. They were real, immediate, and deeply felt. In those moments, the challenge was not only financial. It was human. How do you keep a team together when the path forward is unclear? How do you preserve morale, trust, and purpose when certainty is in short supply?

What carried us through those times was a shared commitment to the mission and a willingness to adapt rather than retreat. Instead of allowing uncertainty to divide us, we chose to communicate openly, think creatively, and stay anchored in why LIFTT exists in the first place: to support independence, dignity, and opportunity for the people we serve.

Those challenges pushed us to rethink how we sustain our work. We began exploring alternative sources of income, including offering certain services for a fee when appropriate and aligned with our mission. This was not a departure from our values. It was an expansion of how we live them. By diversifying revenue, we strengthened our ability to remain responsive, flexible, and resilient.

We also invested in building new programs that would both serve our community and strengthen organizational stability. Establishing our Vocational Rehabilitation services and participating in the Money Follows The Person program required persistence, learning, and coordination. These efforts did not happen overnight. They required navigating complex systems, developing expertise, and earning trust. Today, they stand as examples of how thoughtful growth can deepen impact while reinforcing sustainability.

At the same time, we committed ourselves to actively seeking new grants and private funding opportunities. This meant telling our story more clearly, building new partnerships, and articulating not only what we do, but why it matters. It meant being proactive rather than reactive, and strategic rather than tentative. Over time, those efforts have strengthened LIFTT's foundation and expanded what is possible.

Each of these challenges shaped us. They sharpened our vision. They taught us that resilience is not about avoiding difficulty, but about responding to it with clarity, courage, and collaboration.

Looking ahead, I see an organization that is stronger precisely because it has been tested. I see a team that understands change not as a threat, but as an invitation to innovate. I see programs like RideWell emerging not in spite of past challenges, but because of the lessons we learned along the way.

The future will bring new questions and new uncertainties. That is inevitable. What gives me confidence is knowing how this organization responds when the path is not obvious. We respond by listening, adapting, and moving forward together.

Thank you to our staff, partners, supporters, and the individuals we serve for being part of this ongoing journey. The work of independence, inclusion, and community is never finished, but it is work worth doing. Together, we

will continue to meet change with intention and build a future grounded in possibility.

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