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IMAGINE MAKES TOUGH DECISION ABOUT RECYCLING

Over the last year, recycling markets have plummeted throughout the United States causing smaller recyclers to make tough decisions about future operations. Imagine the Possibilities is currently in this position and has come to the difficult decision to discontinue recycling services in Jackson County effective June 30, 2020.

This decision is being made with several considerations in mind. First, Imagine cannot continue to lose money in recycling, negatively impacting the agency's mission. "If we were to continue with recycling, we would lose \$180,000 per year based on markets today" said Todd Seifert, Chief Executive Officer. Second, Imagine has started a sewing operation utilizing a generous grant from the local mental health region. Seifert further explains, "We are currently making and selling pet beds, blankets and pillows. We hope this activity materializes into more work opportunities for the folks we serve. We are in the process of developing a marketing plan to develop an e-commerce store for the pet products being produced." Last, Imagine continues to talk with businesses and look for new job opportunities to replace the recycling jobs lost. Agency leadership reports that they have a few active leads and hope to secure additional work in the near future.

In addition to these factors, Imagine offers day habilitation services, which may be an alternative for folks who are nearing retirement age. Imagine also continues to look for "supported employment" opportunities in the community for those folks wanting this service.

As funding for services becomes increasingly constricted, agencies can no longer support programs or business operations that don't, at a minimum, break even financially. "Careful attention to this reality is the exact reason for our

successful growth over the last several years. As we create efficiencies administratively and within our programs, our simple goal is to ensure there are enough funds to pay for services and support our ongoing mission” says Seifert.

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