

WV Developmental Disabilities Council
Quarterly Meeting
January 22, 2008
Ramada Plaza Hotel, South Charleston, WV

MINUTES

Members Present: Christy Black, Robert Cain, Joyce Church, Richard Covert, Ronald Dean, Jeannie Elkins – Chair, Sandy Haberbosch, Jeff Marr, Clint Martin – Vice Chair, Libby Nester, Karen Robinson, Zila Schemel, Christina Smith, Kevin Smith, Jennifer Waybright, Carlos Lucero, Julie Shelton, Frank Kirkland, LuAnn Summers, Jane McCallister, Karen Ruddle, Clarice Hausch, and Janice Holland.

Members Absent: Kim Farley, Ginny Gattlieb, Jerry Ramsey, Parul Shah, Craig Curtis, John David Smith, Pat Moss, and Pat Winston.

Staff Present: Steve Wiseman, Jan Lilly-Stewart, and Linda Higgs.

Staff Absent: Jim Cremeans.

Guests: Marcus Canaday, Jeff McCroskey, and Martha Minter.

Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements: Jeannie called the meeting to order and thanked all those who traveled in the bad weather to be there. Members introduced themselves and Jeannie made the following announcements: 1) The Fair Shake Network's Legislative Training Day will be on Wednesday, Jan. 23rd, with Steve Gold speaking; 2) Thursday, Jan. 24th is Disability Advocacy Day at the Legislature; 3) Partner's in Policymaking Retreat/Reunion with Bobby Silverstein is scheduled for Apr. 11-12th; 4) Frank Kirkland, DD Director, has taken a position in NJ as the Director of DD for the southern region. There is no news on who his replacement will be; and 5) Governor appointed Members have received their annual Ethics Form which needs to be completed and returned to the Ethics Commission this month.

Mission Statement Reminder: Libby Nester read the Council's Mission Statement. Following this reminder, Jeannie went through the items in the Members' packets.

Public Comment: None.

Approval of October 23, 2007 Meeting Minutes: Kevin made and Jennifer seconded a motion to approve the Minutes as written. Motion carried.

New Business:

- **Appointment of Nominating Committee:** Jeannie announced her appointment of Clint, Jane, and Libby to form a Nominating Committee for the purpose of suggesting Members to the Council for terms beginning July 1, 2008. Clint will chair the Committee. The Council has 10 Members whose first terms will expire. These individuals are eligible to apply and be considered for a second term. There is also one vacancy due to Christy Bishop's move out-of-state, and one At-Large position which will be open with the expiration of Craig Curtis' second term.
- **Program Performance Report (PPR) 2007:** In Jim's absence, Steve reported to the Council on the completion of the Council's PPR to the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. He explained the types of information the Council must report on and told Members they will receive a written report in the form of a more user-friendly Annual Report.
- **Legislative Update:** Steve informed Members that a group of disability advocates, including Council representation, have met with House Speaker Thompson to discuss disability related issues. He also provided Members with copies of the *Legislative Priorities* for the current session and *Information Sheets* for many of the issues included in the *Priorities*. More information sheets will be distributed as they are developed. Council staff will do a better job on the development of information sheets next year since this was the first year they have been attempted.

Jan provided an update on the 2008 session to date, including highlights of some new disability related bills that have been introduced. She has obtained and reviewed a copy of the Governor's Budget and will be providing Members with information on it in the near future.

- **Other State/Federal Issues:** Steve provided an update to Members on several State initiatives and Council staff's frustration with many of them: 1) The MR/DD Waiver Self-Direction workgroup has been informed they should plan to complete their work in time for the next five year renewal of the Waiver (2010), rather than in a more immediate time frame. 2) Disability advocates state-wide are waiting for full implementation of the State's *Olmstead Plan*. Although some resolution may have been reached in moving forward recently, it has

been one year since the DHHR and the BoSS unveiled the “Transition Initiative,” with little to no progress being made. That initiative was marketed to advocates as a better option to seeking a federal “Money Follows the Person” grant. 3) There remains an unacknowledged institutional bias affecting people with dd in the form of Intermediate Care Facilities for people with Mental Retardation (ICFs/MR), nursing homes, and state operated facilities.

On the Federal level, the President signed the appropriations bill on Dec. 26, 2007, which may have some slight increases (or at least level funding) for DD Councils. Protection and Advocacy Programs may get an increase in some areas, but likely a decrease in dd advocacy programs. University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities have not received word yet.

At this point, Steve also informed Members that he and Sherry Shuman of the WVUCED will be working together to further discuss some potential collaborative work now that her staffing shortage has been resolved.

Jennifer asked if staff had any information on whether Home Of Your Own (HOYO) programs have received any more funding. Steve and Jan stated that the funding will remain the same as last year, and that other money has also been set aside by the WV Housing Development Fund for individuals with disabilities to purchase homes at low interest rates.

Clarice and Steve have each been contacted and asked to meet with an individual representing Mountain View Health HMO for individuals who are blind, aged, and/or disabled in WV. Steve stated he believes this is a part of WV’s Medicaid Redesign, although neither the representative from the Bureau of Senior Services nor the staff person from the Bureau for Medical Services who attended the meeting knew about this.

Other Business:

- Members’ Comments/Concerns: Due to time constraints, this agenda item was delayed until after the afternoon presentation on transition.
- Members’ Experiences with School Transition: To complement the afternoon informational session on School to Adult Life Transition, six Members (Clint, Karen Robinson, Richard, Jennifer, Zila, and Ginny) were asked to give a short description of the experiences they (or their child) had with transition from school to adult life in recent years. Due to the weather conditions, Ginny was unable to attend.

Clint (Nicholas Co.) reported that transition services for him were begun in 10th grade. He believes they should begin sooner, and that if a student plans to attend college, the school system should do a better job of insuring the student is prepared to do so.

Richard (Boone Co.) spoke of two programs in that county school system, Partners and Building Bridges, that were beneficial in preparing his son for transition from school to work and adult life. Richard feels that it was important for his son to be taught part of a job, rather than him having to learn the whole job. He believes that parents and advocates can also help a lot by suggesting various types of trainings, jobs, etc. of which they are aware.

Jennifer (Harrison Co.) spoke of how she actually began preparing for transition when she entered Kindergarten by insisting on being included with students who did not have disabilities. She was able to go to the Technical Center during high school to take classes in Health Assistant's program and attended Fairmont State College for two years, although her counselor wanted her to become a counselor rather than pursue training in the health care field she was interested in. She believes it is important to keep transition in mind in anything you begin, follow your heart, and stay determined.

Karen (Kanawha Co.) spoke from the perspective of a parent whose child acquired her developmental disability during her junior year of high school. She helped the Council be aware of the unique obstacles involved when families are suddenly thrust into the special education system. She believes there needs to be more advocates to assist families, particularly those very new to this system, and that goals should be individualized for each student rather than pulled from a book of goals. Her daughter was in developmental rehabilitation at DRS for quite some time after exiting high school, which she sees as an indication that she was not ready to leave school.

Zila (Ritchie Co.) was in a special education class during her freshman year, but moved into more inclusive class situations for her sophomore year. She spoke of feeling left out and shunned by her friends. She feels high school was very rough, and she is glad to have graduated and moved on.

School to Adult Life Transition: Jeff McCroskey – Community Access, Inc., Jeannie, and Karen Ruddle made a presentation to the Council on transition services for individuals with developmental disabilities preparing to leave high school.

Jeff gave a brief history of special education services for individuals with dd and a history of the agency he started (Community Access) in 1992

with a grant from the WV Developmental Disabilities (Planning) Council. He then provided information on the current grant he has with the Council, the School Transition to Employment Project. Jeff believes strongly that familiarity with each individual is the key to assisting them in meeting their goals.

Jeannie related her son's experiences with transitioning from school to work in Boone County. She spoke of the assistance provided by her son's Autism Itinerant Teacher beginning in 4th grade to transition to junior high, and a school based job in junior high that helped to ease the transition to high school. Her son was also positively assisted by the Boone County Building Bridges program which assists students in determining their interests by trying out different types of work in the community. Jeannie credits her involvement with the WV chapter of the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) with helping her learn to negotiate the supports and services her son needed to be successfully employed after high school. She also impressed upon Members the belief that it can be done! As she put it... "we live as out in the middle of nowhere as there is," and there are at least 5 people in the area who have transitioned to real jobs in their small community.

Jeannie went on to mention the work she and Jim are doing as members of a State Transition Group, along with Karen Ruddle. She was happy to report that Karen agreed at the last meeting to ask Kathy Dantoni to incorporate sections specifically for parents of individuals with developmental disabilities into "Coaching Your Student to Success, A Parent's Handbook," for its next publication.

Karen continued the presentation by reporting on her role as the General/Special Education Coordinator for the WV Department of Education (DOE). She reported that only 6% of students with disabilities elect to receive adult services and supports when exiting high school. She also showed Members how to navigate the DOE website, including some areas that may be of particular interest to them, such as policies that are open for public comment. She spoke of policies other than Policy 2419 that Members should also be aware of, including Policy 2510, concerning graduation requirements. She will be providing a copy of her presentation to the Council office so that it can be shared with Members.

Members' Comments/Concerns/Feedback Forms: Members returned to this Agenda item following the transition presentation, and were encouraged to complete the feedback forms at this time.

Jeff shared his opinion of examples of other things that are important to obtaining a good education and being better prepared for a transition, including being on time and eating well, with which Carlos agreed.

Christy shared her concerns related to school inclusion, particularly for children with Down's Syndrome. As the President of the WV Chapter of the Down's Syndrome Association, she has been receiving numerous calls from all around the state from parents whose children are not being served appropriately. Christy cited three recent calls regarding children who were being denied inclusive education in three different counties. She also stated that some of the systems established to help parents are not being responsive enough.

Christina remarked, as a follow-up to the transition presentation, the Policy 2525 is also a "hodgepodge of yuck." She also informed Members that a "Circle of Friends" mentoring program training will be held in Kansas in April, 2008. It will be a two day training. The Arc of the MOV can take 5 people for the WV team. If other Members are interested in attending, they should contact Christina for further information, including the dates.

Jan's Transition: It is anticipated that this will be the last Council meeting for Jan as a staff person, as she is reluctantly planning to retire. Steve advised Members that when Jan has an official retirement date, the Council will host a function to honor her service to the Council. He briefly spoke of her educational and employment history in the disability field and with the Council. He read from a speech Jan gave as the keynote presenter at the 1999 WV Human Rights Summit, "The Road to Equality."

Jan spoke of the past 16 years being the best of her life, as she went to work for the Council, "the best job in the world", moved to Charleston, got married, and bought a house, "which may not have been one of the best things."

Members will have cake and time to wish Jan well following adjournment of the meeting.

Adjournment: Frank moved and Ron seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.