



State of Connecticut Department of Developmental Services

DDS

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Terry's Commissioner Note

March 2012

It's been quite some time since I was able to get a Terry's/Commissioner's note out. My apologies but it's been a particularly busy time. The following will address some highlights of the last several weeks including the appointment of two new Regional Directors, a new art display, five Town Hall Meetings around the state, several trades meetings, several testimonies, the status of our mission and vision work and a word on our National Core Indicators (NCI) Project.

Regional Directors. As you all read recently, I am very pleased to have appointed two new Regional Directors. Although these are new appointments, Thomas Dailey has much experience at DDS, most recently having been the acting Regional Director in our North Region. His very responsive leadership there will be most evident in his new post in the South Region. As many know, Thomas had extensive background in several public and private sector positions over the years with his most recent being the Assistant Regional Director for Private Services in the South Region. Jordan Scheff has been a colleague for many years. He has provided strong leadership of his agency, MARCH Inc. over the last several years while growing the scope of their services significantly. He has worked with many DDS staff in the process. Jordan also has extensive experience working in the field in two of our neighboring states, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

The interview process for the Regional Director positions was very competitive with a good number of qualified candidates having applied. An initial review of all candidates was conducted by Deputy Commissioner Joe Drexler, our one remaining Regional Director Fritz Gorst, and our Director of Human Resources, Gerry Daley. A second review was conducted by two separate stakeholder groups, one for each region. These stakeholder groups included a self advocate, a parent, public and private sector staff. I personally interviewed the final three candidates for each region. I am grateful to everyone who participated in the interview process as well as to the great candidates we had to choose from. Lastly, I wanted to once again thank our entire Regional leadership team, Shannon O'Brien, Fritz Gorst, Thomas Dailey and Eugene Harvey for the very able guidance they gave the department over the last several months. As many of you know I have been particularly appreciative of Shannon's and Thomas's willingness to step up and leave their existing duties to take on the challenge of leading an entire region. Their success is a testament to their significant abilities and to a team of regional staff who also pitched in and worked hard to ensure continuity of operations, including Stacie Silva-Gordon and Jeannine Pettinico who stepped up to fill in for Thomas and Shannon.

Thanks again to Horizons for their continued commitment to promoting the extraordinary talent of some very gifted artists. Chris McNaboe and Julia Chapel were in Central Office recently and not only does my office have a new display but we now have a whole hallway adorned with work that was just displayed in New York at Sanford Smith's 20th Anniversary Outsider Art Fair and also at the Kerri Gallery in "New York City Meets Willimantic". Please feel free to

come by and see the outstanding work of Ricky Hagedorn, Vito Bonanno, Andy Lacouture, Bill McDonnell, Susan Oliver and Chris Platt. The diversity of the work and therefore the talents represented is just amazing!!!

Town Hall Meetings and Private Provider Forums. Joe Drexler and I have been on the road making the rounds to meet with DDS staff across the regions. We've met in Wallingford, Cheshire, Ella Grasso Center, East Hartford and Norwich. I also had the opportunity to attend four different provider meetings, make a visit to the Lower Fairfield Center to meet with families and have my routine meetings with our Self Advocate Coordinators. Joe and I, along with some DDS leadership staff meet on a monthly basis with private providers at locations that are rotated throughout the state. With all this travel we have had the opportunity to be able to share the general direction of the department and to address questions. It is important to me that I have the continued opportunity for "face time" with as many DDS stakeholders as possible.

For a "short" session, our work with the Legislature is very active. In addition to the travel that we've been engaged in, I have also had the "opportunity" to testify on a number of legislative proposal regarding agency issues before the Connecticut General Assembly. These include our legislative initiatives and our responses to proposed legislation from outside sources. All of this work can be found on the DDS website under "Legislative Affairs". From there you will find links of special note: "DDS Legislative Updates" and "DDS Testimony". I encourage you to visit these sites and see the large number of issues that DDS is involved with or tracking. My thanks to Christine Pollio Cooney and Rod O'Connor for doing so much work at the Capitol and for keeping all of our legislative web data current.

DDS 2012 Mission & Vision Update. I am very happy to report that all of the input that was given at our Mission/Vision day in January from more than 60 participants has been developed into a draft product. A hearty band of creative DDS staff I refer to as my "Think Tank" took the ideas from that day and in only a small number of meetings developed what I feel is a powerful Mission and Vision. This draft has been sent to John O'Brien to review and revise as he sees fit. Once we get this from John it will be sent to a small group of volunteer "readers" signed up to participate in the next level of review. Once this process is finished, we will post the almost final product to the website for final input. As the review process is completed, (hopefully in as brief a period as possible) we will begin to devise a marketing plan to distribute the Mission and Vision that will guide DDS into the future as widely as possible. The one product we have not yet completed is the development of a Statement of Values that are reflective of the mission and vision. It is our goal to have this completed within the next month through further conversations with our Self Advocate Coordinators.

National Core Indicators Project is underway! As many of you know Connecticut has participated in this national project in the past. It is the only tool that I am aware of that provides Connecticut the opportunity to measure our service delivery system against all of the other participating states. Because the project is so comprehensive I won't try to describe it here but will direct you to the following link: <http://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/>. This is the home page to the project and will provide a detailed overview. You can even track past measures by all the states that have participated in the past or are currently participating. Let me express my appreciation to the many DDS staff who have volunteered to do the very hard work of planning for and completing 400 surveys with individuals who receive DDS supports and services and for facilitating another 1,200 family surveys. Our intent is to widely publish the results of this effort and to promote much discussion about the results. Engaging in this project is part of a larger strategy to become a more data driven agency.

In the next weeks to come, with the bulk of testimony completed and Town Hall meetings done, We will be turning our attention to the introduction of our new mission and vision and the beginning of conversations around the implementation of the Five Year Plan.