

**DDS-South Region
Regional Advisory and Planning Council
Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2013**

Members Present: Chair Diane Martin, Carol Cooney, April Dipollina, Susan Gardner, Lauralyn Lewis, and Thomas Dailey, Regional Director, DDS South Region.

Members Absent: Jean Brookman, Michael Del Sole, Jeff DePina, Lori Richardson, and Danielle Shepard.

Chairperson's Report

- **Call to Order** – Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.
- **Public Comment** – None presented.
- **Approval of Minutes** – In the absence of a quorum, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

Regional Director's Report

- **Café to Go on Prevention of Abuse/Neglect** – Following the success of the Creative Housing Cafés to Go, the region has decided to hold a series of Cafés to Go on the prevention of abuse and neglect. The planning group, to include the RD, Lead Investigator, Abuse Neglect Liaison, and Self Advocate staff, is working on development. A call to participate in the process will be issued to providers, consumers and families, staff, and other stakeholders. Additional details to follow.
- **Hartford Courant Series on Abuse and Neglect** – Recently, the Hartford Courant ran a series of articles on the abuse and neglect of individuals in the DDS service system. While the events described were horrific, the Courant failed to report on the numerous systems and safeguards implemented by DDS over the last 30 years toward the prevention of abuse and neglect. Discussion ensued on these systems.
- **Respite** – South Region respite centers hope to return to a four-day schedule in the near future. The region hopes to expand operations to seven days a week if possible for some weeks during summer. Requests for respite center visits should be made through the individual's case manager or the Helpline, for individuals who do not have an assigned case manager. DDS respite center services are targeted for people who do not have residential funding. Members of the Council expressed the importance of this service.
- **Equestrian Program at Camp Harkness** – A letter of intent was issued to High Hopes to operate a riding program at Camp Harkness this summer. There will be four horses on site; two for riding, one for carriage rides, and one for equine training. Discussion on the user agreement ensued. The agreement will reflect the program's availability to all individuals with disabilities.

- **FEMA** – FEMA approved \$180K in damage relief to repair Camp Harkness and other properties damaged by Storm Sandy.
- **Wallingford Office** – The South Region is currently considering plans to relocate the Wallingford office when the lease expires.
- **Meriden Campus** – The CT Judicial Department will be demolishing the old Kimball building on the Meriden Campus to make way for a new Juvenile Courthouse.
- **Budget** – The legislature is considering the proposed budget for FYs 2014 and 2015 over the next few months. The proposed budget may include the annualization of some of the recent cuts administered to private providers. The proposed budget for DDS looks good. Commissioner Macy testified before the Appropriations Committee in support of the Governor’s proposed budget on February 15. Member Lewis commented that she viewed the testimony on CT-N. She found the testimony to be extremely informative and would appreciate receiving notice of hearings in advance. The session ends on June 5.

The Regional Director’s office will email to the Council a link to the Legislative Affairs’ page on the DDS website. Council members will also be polled to determine their interest in receiving bi-weekly legislative updates via the list serve.

Old Business

- **2012-2013 Council Priorities Update**
 - **Creative Housing** – The eastern area parent workgroup met and determined the following priorities:
 - Pursue legislative action
 - Pursue development of a social media site
 - Parents of Non-DDS eligible individuals

This workgroup meets the second Wednesday of the month in Groton.

The Café to Go on February 21 in Branford went very well. Next steps will be to contact parents interested in forming a second workgroup to continue the discussion. CT FSN South Central Regional Coordinator Deb Pagano, with the assistance of Member Lewis, will lead the effort. Discussion ensued on DDS’ role in either workgroup going forward.

The Creative Housing Sub-Committee is planning to repeat the entire process (DDS Overview, Family Stories, and Creative Housing Café to Go) on both sides of the region this fall. Discussion ensued on the possibility of using the on-going parent workgroup meeting dates for this purpose. Technology may allow for meetings to be held on both sides of the region on the same date. The possibility of broadcasting the meetings on the social media website once it’s up and running was explored.

A suggestion was made to invite a private provider to an upcoming workgroup meeting to explain residential costs to families. Member Dipollina said she has plans to set something up. The Regional Director's office will forward to the Council a grid on provider rates, for their information.

- **Education and Outreach** - The Education and Outreach Sub-Committee has accomplished the goal of creating a letter to be used in educating stakeholders about DDS. Going forward they would like to merge efforts with the creative housing workgroups to continue to educate families about the realities of housing availability and the importance of fostering independent living skills.

New Business

- **National Core Indicator Survey (NCI)** – Chair Martin discussed the possibility of Council members participating in the National Core Indicator Survey Project as interviewers. The results of this consumer satisfaction survey are used to analyze data and provide feedback on best practices on the delivery of services to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DDS South Regional Advisory and Planning Council is May 15, 2013, at 6:00 p.m., at the Henry Carter Hull Library, Clinton. A presentation on the level of need assessment tool and manual is planned.

Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Minutes Recorded by:
Jolie Crescimano-Goss
Executive Secretary, DDS-SR