

Bridgeport
REAL CHOICE COMMUNITY INCLUSION TASK FORCE
Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2003

Place: City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Wheeler Room A & B, Bridgeport, CT

Present: Karen Roseman, Jeri L. Boyd, Tony LaCava, Marta Bisciglia, Pat Delcegno, Roberta Yegidis, Kathleen Hunter, Fred Frank, Valerie Sorrentino, Eileen Lopez-Cordone, Ethel Miller-Reith, Jimmy Smith, Gloria A. Davis, Brenda Dye, Reverend David Miller, Richard Hudson, Emma P. Schulman, and Lynn Egan.

Guests: Christine Gaynor, Susan Zimmerman, Lisa Ziobre, Kimberly Pisinski, Patti Clay, Joyce Armstrong, Trina Dolan and Lourdes Bataille.

Absent: Michael Boyer, Bert Carter, Judy Marella, Loretta Williams, Tammy Papa, Marie Bennett, Collin Vice, Dorothy Grant, Jowanne Jackson, Jill Bruno, Adaline DeMarrais, Mary Bruce and Laura Micklus.

Karen Roseman called the Real Choice Community Inclusion Task Force Meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. She gave remarks of welcome to the group and also made a bereavement announcement regarding the sudden death this week of Diana Laboy-Lugo a member of the task force. She continued with a moment of silence in memory of Diana. She started around the table introduction by each person in attendance.

Karen called for the approval of minutes; Eileen Lopez-Cordone noted two corrections; the minutes were approved with the corrections (that she was present at the September 12th meeting and the Resource and Information Gap Team had met once). A motion was made by Eileen Lopez-Cordone and seconded by Gloria Davis for approval with the corrections and was unanimously approved by the members.

Chris Gaynor, of the A.J. Pappanikou Center congratulated Mayor Fabrizi for his victory and genuine support for the task force. She remarked about the Community Conversation, the positive community response and the numbers of individuals attending. In addition, Christine explained that a second Real Choice System Change Grant would be conducting focus groups in order to obtain and exchange information regarding personal assistance. She distributed registration forms explaining the CHOICE (Connecticut Has Opportunities for Independence, Choice, and Empowerment) focus groups to be held in Bridgeport, Manchester and Groton between December and January. The first focus group will be at Family Services Woodfield on December 8, 2003 from 10:00 am-12:00 Noon.

She informed the task force that they could contact Andy Bate at the Center at 1-860-679-1569 for more information or registration.

Susan Zimmerman gave an update on Groton and New Haven's progress. She explained that Groton Task Force continues to meet twice a month. The awareness training for employees is expanding to include additional employees. They are also conducting Respect Training (Anti-Bullying Campaign) at Groton schools and the consensus of our task force is that it would be an excellent idea to conduct the same training at Bridgeport schools. Also, Groton is planning a Kids Fair Training including information on preschool services and inclusion support for day care providers. They also conducted a summer recreation program that included Kids on the Block, which depicts inclusion skits by puppets.

The New Haven Task Force's next meeting is 11/18/03. In October, they published their first quarterly newsletter and received positive feedback from the community. They also participated in the National Disability Mentoring Day on October 18th.

Patti Clay and Joyce Armstrong presented policy, research and training efforts for under served young adults that are being conducted with Center for Medicaid/Medicare Services (CMS) and Social Security. Additionally, they explained the Medicare Infrastructure Grant that CMS is collaborating and coordinating. Its major focus is full inclusion informing people with disabilities about service availability, sharing information, assisting individuals to access services that they need and transition to work programs. Further information is available from Joyce Armstrong at 1-860-424-4977 or Patti Clay at 1-860-424-4849.

The Real Choice Team Meeting reports were as follows:

Public Attitude Team - Co- Chairperson, Karen Roseman discussed the Community Conversation held at the Barnum Museum on November 5th. The program was very successful. A total of 72 people attended the evening meeting in the rain and inclement weather. The group divided into five tables for discussion regarding serving on boards/commissions/committees. Discussion was lively and fruitful. Sign-up for continuing involvement in boards/commission/committee training resulted in 34 interested individuals. Karen thanked co-chairperson Tony LaCava and task force members Jeri Boyd, Tammy Papa, Fred Frank, Laura Micklus, Bert Carter and Ethel Miller-Reith for their help with organizing and participating in the Community Conversation. She especially noted the support from Tammy Papa who successfully used this forum for her Lighthouse Program. See attachment for information used and results ascertained from the Community Conversation.

Housing Team - Kathleen Hunter, Co-Chairperson reported that the team was continuing to meet on a regular basis and the next meeting will be held on 12/11/03 at 10:00 p.m. at The Bridgeport Housing Authority. The team continues to identify the number of accessible housing units available to people with disabilities. In addition team members are planning to address restrictive zoning issues with the Zoning Board and the City Council, with the assistance of the Fair Housing Office. They are also exploring Home of Your Own Program and Individual Developing Account (IDA) initiatives for buying one's own home.

Resource and information Gap Team - Chairperson, Eileen Lopez-Cordone reported that the team has been meeting regularly planning a handy resource handout for distribution. A sub-committee of the team, (Marta, Fred, and Eileen) have also been meeting regularly to sort ideas. They developed a jigsaw puzzle format in the shape of a phone. The major focus now is deciding on formats for the phone, material to use for the phone, and distribution methods of the phone.

Diminishing Infrastructure – Co-Chairperson, Roberta Yegidis reported that the team met twice in October. They discussed the two main objectives of the grant which are: the team will increase service levels by a minimum of 10% and a minimum of one meeting will be held with Legislators and local elected officials annually to advocate for increase information, referral, and advocacy resources. The team wants to locate individuals with experience working with and planning events for legislators and local elected officials.

Old Business - Karen Roseman expressed her gratitude for the high level of motivation and commitment of each team and the work they are accomplishing. She reported to the task force on the status of hiring our part-time staff. A total of fifty-four applications were received and sixteen applicants are scheduled for interviews. The position should be filled by the end of the month. Valerie Sorrentino, Jeri Boyd, and Karen will be conducting the interviews.

The next Meeting of Bridgeport Real Choice Task Force will be on January 9, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. in the Wheeler Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeri L. Boyd