

**Bridgeport**  
**REAL CHOICE COMMUNITY INCLUSION TASK FORCE**  
Meeting Minutes  
September 10, 2004

- Place:** City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Wheeler Room A & B, Bridgeport, CT
- Present:** Jimmy Smith, Kathleen Hunter, Tony LaCava, Valerie Sorrentino, Judy Marella, Richard Hudson, April Griffin, Eileen Lopez-Cardone, Mike Boyer, Fred Frank, Jeri Boyd, Marie Jones, Gloria Davis, Tammy Papa, Richard Hudson, Loretta Williams, Mary Ellen Tatten, Ethel Miller-Reith.
- Guests:** Christine Gaynor, and Carrie Kramer
- Absent:** Roberta Yegidis, Dorothy Grant, Jowan Jackson, Brenda Dye, Rev. Harry Carrillo.

Valerie Sorrentino called the Real Choice Community Inclusion Task Force Meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Chris Gaynor and seconded by Tammy Papa. The decision to accept the minutes of the previous meeting was unanimous.

**OPD Updates:** - Valerie Sorrentino reported that the Office for Persons with Disabilities is in transition to move over to the Eisenhower Center located at 263 Golden Hill Street. She stated that Stan Koslowski is advising on what's needed for accessibility. The bathrooms are already being updated. The staff is very excited about the transition. Ms. Sorrentino also told the staff that April Griffin should be full-time in approximately two-weeks.

During our food drive for Thanksgiving the staff at the Eisenhower Center, Department on Aging, Veterans Affairs, and the Office for Persons with Disabilities would be teaming up to make Thanksgiving baskets to be given to approximately 400 families. The Office for Persons with Disabilities would also be having their annual toy drive this year.

**UCONN-Report-** Chris Gaynor reported that a Regional Forum on the Community Inclusion of People with Disabilities is scheduled for Thursday, October 7, 2004 from 9:30 to 12:00 noon in Ridgefield Connecticut. Ms. Gaynor also reported that in recognition of October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month, a Legislative Forum will be held on Friday, October 8, 2004 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am, in Hartford to address issues concerning employment for people with disabilities. There would be an array of speakers and consumers present to discuss these issues.

New Haven is continuing with the Newsletters. They are still doing the accessibility surveys at Theatre's, restaurants, and children's places. PCA is putting together a training manual for employees. This manual would help them understand how to screen, interview, and termination. The recruiting training teams are looking to recruit five people. Stipends and transportation are provided.

### **Team Reports**

**Public Attitude Team-** Tony LaCava reported that on the teams last meeting, Rev. Harry Carrillo agreed to be co-leader for the Public Attitudes team. Mr. LaCava stated that the next Public Attitudes meeting would be held on September 16, 2004 with Joyce Hamilton from Democracy Works, to plan the Board Training Sessions. Carrie Kramer from UCONN will also attend that meeting. Valerie Sorrentino will draft a letter to the Mayor. Jeri Boyd and April Griffin will contact interested individuals for the Board Training.

**Housing Team-** Kathleen Hunter reported that the team members met on August 18, 2004 and expressed concerns of regrouping and staying on target with the goals and objective of the grant. The following was discussed:

- A. Landlords concerned about tenants taking care of the rented property.
- B. Tenant being held responsible for their damage
- C. The need for tax incentive program in Bridgeport
- D. Educating landlords on incorporating the principles of universal design/housing.
- E. Incorporating the need for accessible housing in City's Consolidated Plan and the Bridgeport Housing Authority 5 year plan.
- F. Open Door Publication to be used as a guide for Housing Team.

### **Strategies:**

- A. Offer a workshop on accessible housing design for builders, landlords, architects, and city and BHA staff. (Kathy to discuss with CT Housing Coalition.)
- B. Develop a strategy for ensuring community input and feedback from various disability communities in Bridgeport. This could include the Task Force as a whole, the housing committee and/or people who attended the Community Conversation workshop.
- C. Incorporating principles of universal design into City's RFP process for housing.

Stan Koslowski offered his expertise in multiple family dwelling codes to the team and also informed the team about a small grant that was available.

Jeri Boyd discussed the need to update the e-mail list because of the breakdown in communication (members have not been receiving mailings.)

**Resource and Information Gap Team** – Judy Marella reported that the distribution of the magnets would start next week. There are 19 sites so far, some have coffee hours and some do not. The team will need a small budget for some refreshments. Mayor Fabrizi has agreed to visit one of the sites with team members. The Press would also be invited. Everything is in full swing. Eileen Lopez-Cordone is in charge of the 211-infoline staff. They plan to be ready for this task.

John Esteves along with Central High students are moving forward with the phonebook (yellow pages) project. The book will include information on available services as well as an area for personal data.

**Advocacy Infrastructure**- Roberta Yegidis began the meeting by reminding the team of the tour bus idea that was discussed at the last meeting. Ms. Yegidis asked the team if they would be converting an old bus or trying to get a new one? She suggested that some seats should be taken off the bus to make room for a wheelchair, portable screen, corkboard, pegboard, plexiglass for magazines and public information. She stated that a decision also has to be made on where the bus would tour.

In addition, the team discussed a Public Service Fair that would be set up for all Service Providers. The idea is to find out what services can be consolidated. Another plan discussed was an idea for a Legislative Breakfast/Tea to get Legislative support.

The team's majority ruled and the agreement was that they would focus on the plan to consolidate the services before getting the Legislators involved.

Jeri Boyd, Loretta Williams, and Jowanne Jackson have agreed to bring in sample applications from different Human Service agencies to review and try to develop one generic application that can be used by all Service Providers.

A website is to be developed by Pat Delcegno, Tom Coble and Richard Hudson.

Meeting adjourned by Valerie Sorrentino at 11:40 am.

**The next Meeting of Bridgeport Real Choice Task Force will be on November 5, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. in the Wheeler Room.**

Respectfully Submitted,

April S. Griffin  
Community Inclusion Specialist