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Mayor

**DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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Real Choice Systems Task Force Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2004

Present: Marc Gallucci, Judy Puglisi, Ronald Manning, Maureen Novak,
Reed Smith, Iris Thompson
Absent: Eileen Lopez-Cordone, Toni Page, Pierrette Comulada Silverman,
Heiwa Salovitz, Christine Reardon, Robin Tousey-Ayers,
Robin Wadsworth
Staff: Michelle Duprey, Kristin Barber
A.J. Papanikou Center Staff: Stan Kosloski

Michelle Duprey opened the meeting.

Minutes

The minutes of the August 2004 meeting were reviewed and members were asked if they had any corrections to the minutes. There were no corrections to the minutes and they were accepted as written.

Access Monitoring of Restaurants/Cultural Facilities

There were recently five restaurants scheduled for evaluation for accessibility. These restaurants included Zinc, Bentara Malaysian Restaurant, India Palace, Modern Pizza and the Mediteranea. There was a discussion regarding these restaurants and the need to get permission from them to publish the results in the Real Choice Newsletter.

Discussion continued regarding additional restaurants to evaluate. The Athenian Diner and a Japanese restaurant were suggested as well as looking for restaurants outside of the downtown area.

Maureen Novak asked whether there was funding for the restaurants to make accessibility alterations. Mr. Gallucci stated that between tax credits and a deduction there was sufficient incentive but that in his experience the loss of business during construction, is a disincentive. There was further discussion regarding locating additional restaurants and Mr. Gallucci suggested looking at the restaurants at Wooster Square. He pointed out the need for a curb cut near Libby Pastry Shop at the take out window as there is a curb cut platform that blocks people from being able to access the area. There was mention of a new steak house in that area. Kristin Barber said she would check out the Wooster

Square and Westville area for restaurants, which would agree to be evaluated. Judy Puglisi also suggested we look at vegetarian restaurants such as Edge of the Woods.

Disability Mentoring Day

Michelle Duprey shared the outcome of Disability Mentoring Day with the Task Force members. There was a reception the evening before DMD. We had eleven mentees this year. All of the mentees enjoyed the experience and one of them may become an intern at Corporation Counsel for the City of New Haven.

Currently we are awaiting feedback evaluations from the mentors. There was a question asked about the mentees and what types of disabilities were present. There was a mixture of disabilities.

Medicaid Pilot: Mr. Gallucci discussed a pilot program that would help to identify gaps for persons with disabilities to obtain employment. He mentioned that model cities would be targeted for this 1.5 year project. The Center for Disability Rights is subcontracting this project to help identify young adults who need assistance with transition to employment. Mr. Gallucci brought up this topic as he thought that some of these youths might benefit from Disability Mentoring Day.

DMD received media coverage by Channel 3 and it was highlighted in the evening news. Ms. Duprey described the event and thought that it may be more helpful for the mentors to meet a week ahead of time, as they want more information about the mentee in order to plan the day's events.

Real Choices in New Haven Newsletter

The Task Force talked about the latest edition of the newsletter. Mr. Gallucci commented on the article regarding accessible stargazing. He said there were some folks who had recently transitioned to the community from nursing homes, and he thought that was a great activity for them.

There was also some discussion regarding the "Artspace" event, which celebrated the installation of an automatic door opener at the accessible entrance.

The group also talked about the Youth Leadership program, for which the applications come out in December. Karen Holiday has the contact information regarding that opportunity.

Iris Thompson brought up the "Heart of the City" initiative whereby banners are painted and then hung up around the green. The program runs from January to March. Judy Puglisi and Marc Gallucci were interested in this art program and took the information.

Status of the formation of a Non-Profit organization

Michelle Duprey shared with the group the status of the formation of the non-profit. The application is ready to be sent to the State for processing and then to the federal office for a non-profit status.

Once it is formed, grant opportunities will be explored. The non-profit can act as a fiduciary. There was further discussion as to whether the Board of Education can work with various projects in the community under this non-profit and further discussion ensued.

Other Business

Stan Kosloski talked about developing regional support for disability/inclusion issues. There will be a meeting with Ridgefield coming up and the Southeastern part of the state is now being organized.

The next meeting will take place on January 25th or the 26th if there is inclement weather. The meeting will start at 10:00 am instead of 9:30am.

