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**Real Choice Systems Task Force Meeting Minutes**

February 3, 2004

Present: Marc Gallucci, Marla Hinz, Toni Page, Judy Puglisi,  
Ronald Manning, Marita Shurkus, Iris Thompson  
Absent: Maureen Novak, Pierrette Comulada Silverman,  
Heiwa Salovitz, Reed Smith, Robin Tousey-Ayers, Robin  
Wadsworth  
Staff: Michelle Duprey, Kristin Barber

A.J. Papanikou Center Staff: Susan Zimmerman

Michelle Duprey opened the meeting and introductions were made. Marita Shurkus joined us in Christine Reardon's absence.

***Minutes***

The minutes of the November meeting were reviewed and members were asked if they had any corrections to the minutes. Ron Manning stated that he thought we had discussed sending copies of the mentee evaluations to the employers from Disability Mentoring Day. This had not been discussed at our last meeting, all were in agreement that this is a good idea. Mentee evaluations will be sent to employers who participated in 2003. Toni Page made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Judy Puglisi seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

***Access Evaluations***

Michelle Duprey reviewed the grant efforts for 2003. There were six restaurant evaluations were planned in 2003. Seven restaurants were evaluated for accessibility. All of the restaurants received a copy of their written evaluations, as well as information on tax credits and a booklet entitled "Disability Etiquette." The restaurants that are not substantially accessible will not be highlighted in the newsletter until they make the needed changes.

Arts and cultural facilities in New Haven will be approached for the next round of evaluations. The Shubert Theater, Peabody Museum of Natural History, Connecticut Children's Museum, Neighborhood Music School, and Creative Arts Workshop have all been approached about receiving accessibility evaluations. Michelle explained that these evaluations will cost more than the ones conducted at restaurants because they will be more extensive. Therefore, there will be

fewer sites evaluated than was specified in the grant. The group agreed that this was an acceptable approach. The members were asked to let the department know if they had any other places of interest that they wished to have evaluated.

### ***Newsletter***

The December 2003 edition of *Real Choices in New Haven* has been completed for some time; however, it has not yet gone to the printer due to administrative delays and funding constraints. Michelle anticipates that complications will be resolved shortly and that the newsletter will go to the printer over the next couple of days. She has obtained bids from printers to include printed photos within the newsletter. Michelle solicited ideas for the next newsletter, to be explored in our spring edition.

Iris Thompson suggested the addition of city-sponsored events, such as the movies and concerts on the Green, to the newsletter. Michelle replied that many of those events are not sponsored by the city. The City has provided to organizations sponsoring many cultural events around the City information on how to hold an outdoor accessible event, and that this information has also been shared with Parks and Recreation and the International Festival of Arts and Ideas. She also mentioned that the Department of Services for Persons with Disabilities had sponsored a booth on the green during the International Arts and Ideas festival, which promoted public awareness of inclusion and disability issues. Susan Zimmerman commented on a national program performed by "Kids on the Block," which explains and describes various disabilities through the use of puppets. She suggested that such a performance would be great in New Haven.

Judy Puglisi explained the problems with getting the newsletter out through the student mail system and asked that we approach Marilyn Chalmers about getting the mailing list to Connecticut Presort to cut down on delays. Kris Barber said she would speak with Marilyn Chalmers about this issue.

### ***Public Awareness Video***

Although the Real Choices Grant only had monies allocated for legal fees for copyright consultation attached to the disability awareness video, Kris explained that a grant application for the video was going to be submitted to ITVS for production funding. She briefly explained the content of the video and said she would keep the group informed of the outcome of the application, which is to be submitted on February 12, 2004.

### ***Non-profit Incorporation***

Part of the grant funds have been allocated to costs associated with starting a non-profit 501c(3) organization. Michelle reported on the progress of this project. The non-profit will be able to apply for grant monies only awarded to non-profits. Once the grant is over, funds can be sought to continue the newsletter as well as Disability Mentoring Day. She has met with an attorney and now has the forms

for completing the state tax ID and the federal ID number. The next step will be to look for board members. Marc Gallucci inquired about whether a mission statement has been developed, and offered to contact a non-profit that he knows of in Chicago that has a broad mission statement. Ron Manning asked if the board would be separate and distinct from the City. Michelle said that someone from the Department of Services for Persons with Disabilities would probably be on the Board but it would not be part of the City government structure.

### ***Other Business***

Susan Zimmerman said there would be a series of Legislative hearings on February 19 at the Capitol building regarding housing. There is a move to disallow persons who are elderly and those who have disabilities to house together. Iris Thompson asked if anyone knew about housing for a family whose members have disabilities. Marc suggested Co-Op Initiatives, who are supposed to be starting another project. He also commented that Mutual Housing, Inc. has some housing plans in the future. There was some discussion clarifying the distinction between visitability and adaptability. Susan talked about the Section 8 Mainstream vouchers. Marc Gallucci said that the success of the nursing home transitions is dependent upon accessible housing. He mentioned that the Hamden Housing Authority had received 50 Section 8 vouchers and had set aside 25 vouchers for persons leaving nursing homes. The New Haven Housing Authority is not in a position to apply for these Section 8 vouchers because of their utilization rating.

Susan Zimmerman shared with the group that this would be her last meeting as she is leaving the project and is going to another job. Chris Gaynor will be taking over her responsibilities until another person is hired.

Michelle announced that on April 12-13, Yale is having a two-day program on disability in our communities. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, "The Station Agent", a movie, will be showing. The next day is a series of panel discussions on what it is like to live with a disability. Michelle will send out notices to everyone. It will take place at Sterling Memorial Library in the History Room.

Michelle stated that April will be the time to begin organizing Disability Mentoring Day for next October. It will be easier to approach employers and students in April than in early October, when school is just getting underway. She wants to involve employers more deeply this year and change the format of events in order to address employer feedback from 2003 and improve the program. In 2004, she also wants to involve the Chamber of Commerce.

Iris Thompson made an inquiry to the group regarding an intergenerational roundtable.

The next Task Force meeting will be held on Tuesday May 4, 2004.