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Mayor

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Real Choice Systems Task Force Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2005

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

Michelle Duprey opened the meeting and introductions were made.

Minutes

The minutes of the January 2005 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 was a discussion about restaurants that had been approached for accessibility evaluations and the status of the requests. The Task Force members were asked for additional suggestions for restaurants to approach. Suggestions included Caffe Adulis, Nikkita, Amalfi Grill, Carmen Anthony's, and Central Steakhouse. Sarah Rizzuto was asked if she knew of any restaurants around Southern Connecticut State College and she said she would forward some suggestions. Reed Smith said he knew of a Japanese restaurant and would forward the name, once obtained.

There was a question about how restaurants were chosen for evaluation. Michelle Duprey said we were looking for positive outcomes and as such were looking for restaurants that were for the most part, currently accessible. There was a question regarding Sage Restaurant and whether they had been approached for an evaluation. There was also mention of Gourmet Heaven and Fararro's on Grand Avenue. Michelle said that Fararro's just put in some post in front of the door to ensure that shopping carts did not leave the premises, however this now prevented wheelchairs from entering. Stan Kosloski said that he agreed that it was best to ask restaurants that might be marginally accessible.

Stan Kosloski also inquired as to the feasibility of access survey's continuing after the grant is over. He wondered whether there was a group or organization such as the Center for Disability Rights who may continue the work. He thought that it would be good to identify a group of people who want to be trained and perhaps develop a checklist for evaluation purposes. He said he was available through September and he may do the training.

Real Choices in New Haven Newsletter

There was a discussion of what to feature in the next upcoming newsletter. After mentioning what was intended to be published, members were asked if they had information they wanted to share in the newsletter. Iris Thompson said she would forward information regarding accessible summer camps for children with disabilities. The newsletter is also to contain articles with some accessibility evaluations, list of church services in the area which have sign interpreters, an article about the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Airline Transit help line, and information about Disability Mentoring Day.

Status of the formation of a Non-Profit organization

The status of the Non-profit application is that it is now waiting for approval by the Secretary of the State.

Disability Mentoring Day

Disability Mentoring Day will be held on October 19th this year. Application materials were mailed out to 15 contacts this year. Michelle Duprey talked about the speaker she wanted to book this year, Thomas Foran. He is the Vice President of Claims Management for Integrated Disability Resources.

There was further discussion regarding selection of employers for mentoring. Michelle Duprey explained the matching process and that employers are sought based on the interest of the mentee. She said she was interested in expanding the number of mentors and is hoping that Easter Seals and BRS might be able to help. Iris Thompson mentioned that the New Haven "Cutters" baseball team is a place where there may be some mentoring opportunities.

Other Business

- At our last meeting it was agreed that grant funds would be sought in order to publish a directory of accessible restaurants and cultural facilities in New Haven. This would be generated out of the information that has thus far come through the accessibility evaluations. Kristin Barber is looking for opportunities for funding.

One of the Task Force members suggested asking the restaurants to fund the Directory. Michelle Duprey described a directory of accessibility features of cultural facilities that Massachusetts published.

- Iris Thompson said that a group called PRIME recently circulated some information to service providers regarding children who are at risk for schizophrenia, informing the groups on some of the signs and symptoms of this psychiatric disability. She suggested that we contact Dolly Thomas and consider doing an article in the newsletter on the topic.
- Stan Kosloski announced that grant efforts in Bridgeport were struggling since Karen Roseman's position as the head of the disability office had been eliminated by the City of Bridgeport.
- Stan Kosloski announced a housing workshop, which is aimed at increasing affordable accessible housing, will be held on April 27, 2005 between 6-8pm.
- Stan Kosloski announced there would be a year-end meeting to include the three towns that received the Real Choices Grants. The meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2005. More details will follow.

The next meeting of the Task Force will be held on June 28th at 9:30 a.m. at the same location as this meeting (4th Floor, 165 Church Street) (Toni Page mentioned that she will not be able to attend the next meeting).

The meeting was adjourned.