

Rhodes to Independence

Summary Minutes

April 19, 2005

In Attendance: Annette Bourbonnierre, Steve Brunero, Kathleen Burnell, Joan D'Agostino, Aleatha Dickerson, Tim Flynn, Elaina Goldstein, Dianne Kayala , Steve Kitchin, Anne LeClerc, Kathleen Partington, Arthur Plitt, Christine Rancourt, Susan Shapiro Lauren Slocum, Michael Spoerri

Staff: Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Valerie Shore, Natanya Nzendro, Nancy Wooten

- **The minutes from the 3/15/05 meeting were approved with the following amendments: Dianne Kayala was not in attendance and Frank Spinelli's name should be moved from "Guest" to "In Attendance" as he is a Steering Committee member.**

Youth in Transition Workgroup

- **The Workgroup met once since the last Steering Committee meeting.**
- **A survey is being developed to determine the impact of the training**

manual sessions.

- **Michael Spoerri and Kate McCarthy-Barnet will be attending a conference in June entitled “The National Leadership Summit on Improving Results: Policy and Practice Implications for Secondary and Postsecondary Education, Transition, and Workforce Development for Youth With Disabilities.”**
- **It has been decided that the Training Manual will not be on the Rhodes to Independence Website; appropriate information and background will be posted on it. There will be sufficient information on the web to be helpful and a notation to contact the office for additional information.**
- **There might be a link off the Resource section for some components of the manual.**

Transportation Workgroup

- **Letters of invitation to participate in the Workgroup are being sent. Any Steering Committee member interested in joining the Workgroup should contact Anne.**
- **The next meeting is scheduled for May 19th.**

Housing Workgroup

- **The Housing Workgroup has met once since the last Steering Committee meeting. The Workgroup is currently finalizing the Consumer Focus Group which will take place in May.**

Diversity Workgroup

- **The Workgroup met on March 17th. It was a very productive meeting. The decision was made to expand the focus to all traditionally underserved populations. The Workgroup reviewed and will be revising the mission statement to reflect this and to include education and access. Research on successful practices and programs promoting cultural competence and building relationships with diverse communities has begun.**
- **The Workgroup will be identifying the barriers to employment that exist for Rhode Islanders with disabilities from traditionally underserved populations. The next two meetings will feature speakers educating the Workgroup concerning different communities. At the May meeting, presentations will focus on the Hispanic and Southeast Asian communities.**

Resource Directory Subcommittee (Data Workgroup)

- **Since the last meeting, the process is ongoing toward developing a memorandum of understanding between Rhodes to Independence and DHS regarding work on the Resource Directory.**
- **While this process continues, staff and Art Schnure are focusing on updating the Rhodes to Independence website and making it more dynamic and more user-friendly. Art is implementing a “tool” to track the number of hits to the website. Securing an 800 number in the future is a possibility.**
- **The Rhodes’ website will continue to evolve / be updated.**

- There is a concern the links webpage is too word intense; a good suggestion made by Valerie Shore to is to use logos as part of the link section to other organizations (on the full graphics website only, not the Bobby compliant site).

Business Leadership Network: Update

- Since the last Rhode's Steering Committee meeting, the BLN Steering Committee held a half-day meeting and discussed strategy about how to get up and running. Subcommittees were created.
- The MIG grant has money budgeted for BLN outreach and programs.
- BLN Steering Committee members have agreed to send a representative to each meeting. Someone should be attending in June and July.
- Vicki Ferrara and Elaina are providing facilitation support for the BLN.

Rhodes to Independence Speakers Bureau: Overview

- Valerie is in the process of putting together an initial "basic speech" with a PowerPoint presentation "Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives." Additional presentations will be forthcoming on specific topics.
- The goal is that the first audiences will be providers and advocacy

organizations. In terms of providers, the focus will be on the fact that there are options besides going on disability for individuals who are newly disabled or with disabling conditions. Different speakers (including, it is hoped, Steering Committee members) will be giving presentations.

Medicaid Buy-In Legislation Update

- It appears that the final decision regarding CMS acceptance of the State Plan Amendment (SPA) is now made in the Central Office (formerly it was made by the regional office). Regional office is part of the collaboration.**
- The SPA has not been submitted to date.**

Other Business / Next Steps

- Paul Choquette is the new Cash and Counseling Coordinator.**
- Shake-a-Leg is recruiting campers and counselors an upcoming camp (June 27-July 1; July 11-15; and July 25-29.**
- Staff member Natanya Nzendro will be leaving the staff as her husband has a new job in New York.**
- The next Rhodes to Independence meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 17th, 2:30 – 4:00 pm at the Dept of Labor and Training, 1st Floor meeting room.**