

Community Alliance of Sarasota County

www.sarasotaalliance.net

Developmental Disabilities Strategic Planning Work Group

April 17, 2008

Meeting Summary

Members present:

Kathi Coiro	Children's Medical Services
Joann Gepfert	Agency for Person with Disabilities (APD)
Peter Howard	The Florida Center
Teresa Johnson	Sarasota County School Board Parent Liaison
Edwina Jones	Whole Child Project at Community Haven
Andrea King	Sarasota County Parks and Recreation
Susan Magers	Sarasota County School Board Parent Liaison
Carolyn Marchbank	Community Haven
Renee McQueen	Vocational Interagency Council
Kameron Partridge	Easter Seals
Mary Smith	Family Network on Disabilities
Benny Weaver	Loveland Center
Darleen Zimmerman	Goodwill Academy
Mary Ann Zyla-Smith	Easter Seals

Staff:

Kathleen Marie Hall	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Chip Taylor	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Pauline Tracy	Sarasota County Health and Human Services

Welcome and Introductions

Peter Howard and Benny Weaver welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Overview of the Work Group

Peter Howard gave an overview on the work group's accomplishments and their recent priority presentation to the Community Alliance Steering Committee on January 23. Benny Weaver stated that the participants should be proud of taking the initiative in identifying the five broad Developmental Disabilities priorities that were recommended to the Community Alliance.

Next Steps

Peter Howard reported that the Community Alliance has asked the work group to discuss the next steps in order to avoid priority duplication, to identify several "low-hanging fruit" recommendations with no additional cost, and one cost

associated recommendation. In addition, this work group should discuss the idea of becoming an official committee of the Community Alliance.

A discussion ensued on the possibility of the group becoming a committee of the Community Alliance. Peter noted that this committee could be the overseer for public awareness on developmentally disabilities; the voice for all developmentally disabled persons in the community. Participants agreed and stated that by combining participants from this group and the school board group it would eliminate duplication of efforts. Chip Taylor explained the procedure in requesting an endorsement from the Community Alliance to become an official committee of the Alliance. Peter mentioned that eventually there could be expansion for many sub-groups under the Developmental Disabilities Committee. Peter stated that he would request the endorsement at the April 21 Community Alliance meeting.

Questions arose on whether the committee would have staff availability due to the budget reductions and what type of support the group would need to fully function. Chip stated that there will be staff support for this committee but the hope would be that once the group becomes established in the community with enough participation, that it would call for funding of a “coordinator” position to oversee the activities of the committee and sub-groups. It was mentioned that this type of funding could potentially appeal to the foundations, since no such position currently exists.

A discussion ensued on “low-hanging fruit” and whether participants should be ranking the list. Peter stated that this assignment could be accomplished by email through staff support. Participants suggested the following as “low-hanging fruit” items:

- Centralization of service information
- Transportation – elimination of \$1.50 bus fee for certain populations
- Create a process to receive donations of diapers from local businesses to be distributed to families in need
- Aftercare program for children with disabilities through expanding existing programs at Parks & Recreation, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.
- Educational and medical advocacy
- Forwarding issues to address through the Community Alliance’s Legislative agenda
- Respite (birth to death) in order to improve quality of life
- Case management for all ages to help with transitions through different life-stages
- Guardianship for all ages
- Create a pool of lawyers (*pro bono*) to assist with guardianships, etc.
- Housing for a developmental disabilities population

Pauline Tracy mentioned that the County is in the process of pursuing a unique opportunity for collaboration through a web-based system called *Tapestry*. This system will provide information sharing (enhance 2-1-1), client case management system (HMIS), along with a disaster module. Tapestry also has the potential for expansion to provide a variety of resources and referrals for law enforcement and agencies in the community. Benny pointed out that all the work groups came up with the same idea of centralizing or coordinating services, which makes the case of implementing the Tapestry system even more inviting to Sarasota and surrounding communities. Chip pointed out that Manatee County has been asked to be a participant in this initiative since both counties share both 2-1-1 and the HMIS. Participants stated that numerous agencies around the table serve more than one county and Tapestry could be extremely beneficial to many of the surrounding organizations.

New Business

Announcements

Susan Magers announced that the *Autism Insurance Bill* (with no economic impact) has 71 co-sponsors in the House and has the Senate's approval. Susan asked the work group members to contact Representatives Ron Regan and Michael Grant as they have not signed on as co-sponsors yet.

Susan also announced that there will be a Community Agency Fair on April 17 at Oak Park School with 55 agencies participating. This is an open house event that will assist in creating a data base for the community and, hopefully, will become an annual event. Chip Taylor asked Susan to inquire if there were any families at the event that would be interested in participating in the Developmental Disabilities Work Group.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday, May 22, 2008, 1:00 p.m. at the Health and Human Services Building. It was suggested that future meetings be held on the fourth Thursday of every month. It was requested that the group have a discussion on summer meetings at the next meeting.