

## Community Alliance of Sarasota County

[www.sarasotaalliance.net](http://www.sarasotaalliance.net)

### Developmental Disabilities Strategic Planning Work Group

December 14, 2007

### Meeting Summary

#### Members present:

Ellen Hepner	Children's Medical Services
Sarah Hickey	Sarasota County School Board
Peter Howard	The Florida Center
Teresa Johnson	Sarasota County Parent Liaison
Edwina Jones	Whole Child Project at Community Haven
Susan Magers	Sarasota County Parent Liaison
Renee McQueen	Vocational Interagency Council
Mary Smith	Family Network on Disabilities
Benny Weaver	Loveland Center
Darleen Zimmerman	Goodwill Academy

#### Staff:

Kathleen Marie Hall	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Charles 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.

#### Discussion on Work Group Priorities Chart

Peter Howard addressed the revised chart. Pauline Tracy stated that additional information was received from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ADP), the Loveland Center, and Vocational Rehabilitation. Pauline noted that the information from ADP was in a separate handout in the members' packets. This data provides detailed information on Sarasota County and the Suncoast Region (Pinellas, Pasco, Hillsborough, Manatee, Sarasota, Desoto, Charlotte, Lee, Collier, Hendry and Glades). Peter mentioned that during his meeting with Joanne Gepfert, she mentioned that there were four "doable" areas that the work group should consider:

- Transition – create a Transition position to provide information and assistance when a developmentally disabled person reaches the age of 22

- Before/After-school program – Implement a specialized program for developmentally disabled persons (birth to 22) with lower ratios and in a protective environment.
- Transportation – Implement a funding pool through a foundation to assist with public transportation fares for developmentally disabled persons (\$1.50 each way for bus trips becomes a burden to families).
- Diapers – Provide diapers to families for developmentally disabled adults.

A discussion ensued on the ADP proposals. Members felt that all of the above ideas were doable but there may be funding issues and roadblocks, especially with the recent budget reductions within the community. It was mentioned that the before/after-school program was a much-needed service in the community, especially if the Sarasota County School System goes to half days for Pre-Kindergarten in the near future.

Benny Weaver stated that the work group's purpose is to educate the community about the tremendous needs that developmentally disabled persons struggle with every day. The Board of County Commissioners and community foundations are in a position to assist but must understand the tremendous need. Mary Smith mentioned that the numbers from ADP are accurate but not for Sarasota County and felt that the work group should use the School Board figures to have solid numbers. Members agreed and stated that in addition there should be a "sound bite" or case statement under each of the five areas to create an impact.

Peter suggested assigning two or three work group members to each of the five areas to develop a brief case statement with bullet points on each priority. It was noted that each statement should have supporting documentation and solid numbers. Susan Magers pointed out that the group may want to change the "Respite" priority to "Family Support Services" in order to include child care programs. Chip Taylor suggested assigning a leader for each group. Members agreed and assignments were given for the following areas:

**Housing:** *Leader – Benny Weaver* (with assistance from Peggy Connell and Jennifer Fehr)

- 18 year olds
- Foster Care

**Transportation:** *Leader – Ellen Hepner*

- Costs – Joanne Gepfert
- Hours – Joanne Gepfert
- Access – Sarah Hickey
- Resources in other counties – Sarah Hickey
- Transportation for young children – Ellen Hepner/Renee McQueen

**Family Support Services:** *Leader – Susan Magers*

- Respite – Mary Smith
- Before/After-School programs – Teresa Johnson
- Summer Camp programs – Teresa Johnson

- Resource Center – Susan Magers

**Supportive Employment:** *Leaders – Darleen Zimmerman/Renee McQueen*

- Benny Weaver, Laurel White, and Joanne Gepfert will assist with this area and decide on the appropriate bullets.

**Early Intervention:** *Leader – Peter Howard*

- Edwina Jones, a representative from Easter Seals, Barbara Schimmel, and Gary Spencer will assist with this area and decide on the appropriate bullets.

Chip recommended that each group meet separately during the first week of January and then send their completed information to staff by the close of business on Friday, January 11. Peter stated that once this assignment is finalized, the work group will decide on the position of each area. Darleen Zimmerman requested staff to provide a sample of a case statement to the group. Mary Smith stated that she would contact the Community Foundation and request an electronic copy of a sample to forward to staff.

### **Work Group Presentations**

Chip Taylor reminded the participants that their presentation was scheduled for the January 28 Community Alliance Steering Committee meeting.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 15, 1:00 p.m. at the Health Department in Room 226.