



**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary – September 11th, 2017**

Sue Hartung, Co-Chair • Larry Bram, Co-Chair

Present

Parents: Susan Hartung (Co-Chair); Larry Bram (Co-Chair), Easter Seals; Kathy Perlman; Claire Funkhouser; Katie Larkin; Betty Bahadori; Annette Jolles; Mary Keyser; Susan Goodman; Cami Fawzy; Ricki Sabia

Organizations: Karen Morgret – Treatment & Learning Center; Judith Pattik - DDA; Eldora Taylor – CSN; Kim Mayo, CSN; David Cross – retired MCPS; Rosemary DiPietro – CSN; Shawn Lattanzio, Local Behavioral Health Authority; John Kenney, DHHS; Susan Ingram, Community Support Services; Susan Smith, HOC; Daniel Hammond, MCPS; Lu Merrick - IvyMount; Kryss Lacovaro, Department of Recreation; Sharon Norcio, Department of Recreation

Staff: Betsy Luecking

Welcome and Introductions

Susan Hartung, Co-Chair, convened the meeting and introductions were made.

Minutes from past meetings can be found online at:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/ADS/CPWD/CPWDIndex.html>, under the tab Developmental Disability Advisory Committee.

Therapeutic Recreation Programs and the Rebranding of Them – Sharon Norcio, Recreation Supervisor, and Kryss Lacovaro, Recreation Specialist, Montgomery County Recreation

Therapeutic Recreation: <http://montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/thingstodo/therapeutic/index.html>

Montgomery County Recreation (MCR) will be hosting a free Therapeutic Recreation Programs Expo on Saturday, September 16 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm at Holiday Park Senior Center in Silver Spring. The expo will feature mini demonstrations of programs including karate, functional fitness, zumba, brain benders, kaleidoscope art and more.

MCR is seeking to improve and change programming to meet the needs of the community. There are more providers today than there were 15 years ago that offer recreation opportunities. MCR is working with an instructor to offer boxing classes for people who have Parkinson's disease or similar symptoms. They have also partnered with the MS society for the Moving With Mike class, which is designed for individuals with mobility issues who want to maintain joint flexibility and muscle strength in a small supportive group setting.

MCR has tried to start new programs that have been suggested by the community, but often those classes do not get enough registrants and the class cannot be held. The program will be offered several times, but if class size is never obtained then the program is dropped. The social clubs have been the most successful programs and at one point there were waitlists, but attendance has been diminishing and they have cut back. MCR will be testing out a social club that does not meet in the community. Also popular are the movement programs such as fitness, cardio and core, stretch and tone, yoga, zumba and karate. MCR is also testing a youth social swim class for 18 and older that will meet Saturday mornings at the Martin Luther King indoor pool. Only one person has registered so far and the start date will be pushed back a week to try and get more registrants.

It was suggested that an inclusive program for 5K beginners training group for individuals 18 and older be created. This could create an opportunity for persons with and without disabilities to interact and form friendships. It was noted that anyone with or without a disability can enroll in any recreation program. MCR offers companions free or charge. Companions provide additional assistance to facilitate the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in general Recreation

Department programs. Most companions are trained volunteers who will assist with participation and integration into the program.

MCR works with transition teachers at Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to keep them informed of classes and programs, but there is limited commitment from them. Project Search and their staff have been the most involved. It was noted that too often once students exit the school system they have little to no social life.

There typically is large participant turn-out for one-time events, but it is hard to get them to commit to a program. MCR offers free food and admission for the staff when their clients register.

A canoeing and kayaking program was recently added for people with and without disabilities. All equipment is provided. While the program has met the minimum required registrants, the program has not filled to capacity.

MCR holds a roundtable with provider agencies twice a year to discuss programs and classes and to receive comments and suggestions. At one of these meetings a provider suggested that MCR change a program to start half an hour earlier to allow for provider shift changes. A parent said that it has been hard for her older adult child to attend Saturday classes at Holiday Park as the group home she is with does not have the staff support. It was suggested that MCR reach out to group homes as well as to CSAAC about their older residents to try and recruit more participants.

It was suggested that the verbiage used on the one-time events, such as the dances, include that siblings are welcome. Autism Ambassadors allows siblings to attend their events and the attendance is good. MCR Special events are always open to friends and families. It was also suggested that the timing for programs be extended or to wrap several programs together as this may make it easier for parents' schedules. MCR can be very flexible and has scheduled programs during days and times that work for providers and for individuals who do not have full-time placements. It was suggested that the Saturday swim class be offered between 11:00am and 3:00pm so that providers have time to get their clients to class. Weekday evening classes are tricky due to traffic and the geography of where the class is in relation to the provider agency. It was also suggested that classes be extended from 6 to 8 weeks to 12 to 16 weeks. MCR has tried to create 12-week classes, but parents said it was too expensive. MCR then tried to divide it into two 6-week classes, but individuals would only sign up for the first 6-week class and not the second 6-week class. One agency said they have a regular weekly gymnastics class all year long. It is a private arrangement with the general instructor and they are paid by the hour for a set number of people. Some providers have their own facilities and perhaps MCR could partner with them for programming.

It was suggested that MCR start a walking group that meets every weekend at a different part or allowing private groups to have access to MCR facilities. The fitness and swimming programs have good attendance because the kids need exercise.

While the sports programs may be inclusive, the participants tend to be sports athletes who would not be willing to work with a person with a disability.

The MCR guides and announcements are posted on social media and sent to Extended School Year and to the MCPS transition group. It was suggested that MCR send a targeted survey to provider agencies and their clients.

One of the biggest barriers to participation is transportation. There is staff time built into dance events to allow for MetroAccess pick-up. Also, if a group home attends, if one person wants to leave then the whole group leaves. The MCR soccer program that started yesterday had 30 people registered, but 60 people attended because the whole group home comes.

Susan noted that although MCR programs may be inclusive, the language in the guide does not suggest so and could be phrased differently. MCR has struggled to serve students ages 13 to 17. Parents are also welcome to attend classes with their children.

The SOAR (Senior Outdoor Adventures in Recreation) trips program and Turn The Beat Around dance program will be expanding this upcoming year due to increased funding. As those two programs had a waitlist, the County added funding to the operating budget. If there is a waitlist for a program it shows the community need and has a chance of being

supported in terms of financing and space. A cooking class will be added Ross Boddy in the winter and the pottery class was expanded to North Potomac as White Oak had a waitlist.

Comments and suggestions can be sent to Sharon or Kryss. MCR is always looking for new and different ideas.

Update - Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) – Judy Pattik, Regional Director, Southern Maryland Regional Office (SMRO)

Governor Hogan signed a proclamation declaring September 13 to 19th Direct Support Professional (DSP) Week in Maryland: <http://mdod.maryland.gov/news/Pages/Direct-Support-Professional-Week.aspx>.

The Coordinator for Self-Directed Services in the SMRO is leaving the position and they hope to refill soon.

Each region will be hosting an information session on the Community Pathways Waiver. SMRO will be hosting their session on September 19th at the Metro Points Hotel in New Carrollton from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

TY17s – 103 students exited last spring. 64 have been approved to be in services, 28 are actively involved with applications or under consideration with different providers, and 11 are not connected to any provider.

Service Coordination, Inc. and Optimal Health will be joining the SMRO as an entity.

As of August 14, 2017: Developmental Disabilities Administration Waiting List for Montgomery County

There are 1058 Montgomery County individuals on the waiting list.

9 Identified as Crisis Resolution (6 identified as DD and 3 identified as Supports only)

93 identified as Crisis Prevention (59 identified as DD and 34 as Supports Only)

956 identified as Current Request (749 identified as DD and 207 as Supports Only)

Update – Autism Waiver (TY) – Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS): None.

Total Care: Not present.

MMARS: Not present.

Montgomery County DHHS Update - Coordination of Community Services (CCS):

For the first time in 5 months, CCS is fully staffed. During the next two weeks, clients will be transitioning to their permanent coordinator. An e-mail will be sent to all provider agencies informing them of the individuals they are serving and the contact information for their coordinator. Case loads have been reduced to between 41 and 45 per staff person. There is one coordinator who handles all the comprehensive assessments and is responsible for the majority of the waiting list individuals.

TY17s – There are 17 TYs – 15 have started services, 1 is over scale and not eligible for the waiver; and 1 is not approved for the waiver yet. The County is currently serving 2 TY18s.

The national standard is 1 to 35 case load. MMARS was at 1 to 50 case load. There is concern for the Coordinators to understand all the impending changes from DDA. Judy noted that they have reached out to the Executive Director of all the agencies to inquire as to where they need additional help. SMRO provides technical assistance on site to all CCSs and provide additional support where needed.

Susan discussed an issue she had with her Coordinator who did not know if Medicaid would pay for certain durable medical equipment. She was told to call Medicaid to find out. She is concerned that Coordinators are not assisting families navigate the system. Navigational practices are a fundamental role of service coordination. She also suggested that DDA develop easy to understand fact sheets and flow charts about Medicare, Social Security, and benefits for parents. Judy said there will be a new staff person at headquarters who will be working on communications and the website, and she will discuss these concerns with them. Independence Now is a good resource for benefits counseling.

Daniel Hammond, MCPS, said that the size of the caseload is not the only consideration but more importantly the amount of experience and expertise impacts the worker's ability to serve the family. He can have a case load of up to 70 people if he helping to cover when other staff are out. The issue is how long the staff have been there and their knowledge-base. In the Autism Waiver there are staff that have been with the program 15 years, who have relationships with departments, know how the system works, and Daniel can ask them questions. CCS was experiencing staff turnover every six weeks. Rosemary added that the Autism Waiver has a smaller scope and ratio to deal with - 250 people with 1 provider agency. CCS clients all have their own individual plan with a lot of details.

Annette Jolles said DDA used to have a center for information and referral that was staffed by individuals who had expertise in various areas and could assist families with their questions.

Chair and Vice-Chair Update: None.

New Business: None.

Announcements: Inter ACC/DD will be hosting a recognition event on September 25th at the Executive Office Building cafeteria.

Next Meeting: ****PLEASE NOTE – MEETING WILL BE HELD THE 3RD MONDAY**** Monday, October 16th, 2017 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The Committee will be meeting at the Health & Human Services Building, 401 Hungerford Drive, 1st Floor 1A Conference Room, Rockville, MD 20850

Respectfully Submitted,

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist

Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

Commission on People with Disabilities