
Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Minutes

April 12, 2022

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was held virtually via the GoToMeeting platform. DART Co-Chair, John Fiore called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pat Angerman (Goodwill)

Hank Bostic (Disability Network)

Gary Clark (LEO-WD)

Dan Dunn (Comerica)

John Fiore (MRS)

Mary Fortney (Disability Network)

Leatrice Fullerton (Disability Network)

Carrie Headworth (Veterans ES)

Ben Hoger (Upjohn/MW!SW)

Jonathan Kraker (MRC)

Kathy Lentz (ISK)

Ramona Lumpkin (Recovery Institute)

Kathy Olsen (MWSW)

Sheldon Schwitek (Arc Community Advocates)

Jordan Blanchard Stripling (KRESA)

Amanda Sutherland (KRESA)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Kathy Olsen reported item IV. on the agenda should be corrected to read “Presentation - DD Council Grant.”

The corrected agenda for the April 12, 2022 was approved by consensus of members present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The DART meeting minutes of February 8, 2022 was approved by consensus of members present.

AGENCY UPDATES/INTRODUCTIONS

State of Michigan Virtual Career Fair - John Fiore reported there will be a Career Exploration event for State of Michigan Jobs / Pre-employment Transition Services. The event scheduled for May 3, 2022 is open to students and educators from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Individuals can join at any time during these hours. Students will have the opportunity to research Michigan’s twenty (20) state departments and learn about available jobs. It will take 45-60 minutes to learn about all the opportunities. Individuals may register for this event through this link: [Career Exploration Session Registration Link](#). Following the meeting, the flyer with more detailed information was sent to DART members.

Veterans Employment Services - Carrie Headworth reported *April is the Month of the Military Child*. The flyer, in both English and Spanish, regarding a social media guide for parents was sent to DART members following the meeting.

Ms. Headworth also reported that *Invest in Vets*, a virtual networking event for manufacturing is scheduled for Thursday, April 21, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. EST. To register, participants should visit www.tinyurl.com/investvets0421. The flyer with further information was emailed to DART members following the meeting.

Disability Network SW Michigan - Leatrice Fullerton reported the application period for the *2022 Advocacy Academy* is now open. The Advocacy Academy is an opportunity to get involved in the disability rights movement and learn advanced leadership. It is an eight-week paid summer job where participants will choose a disability advocacy issue to learn about and then create an advocacy campaign around that issue. Disability Network will be selecting six individuals between 16-29 years of age for this opportunity. The deadline to apply is Monday, May 12, 2022. The flyer with further details regarding the academy,

eligibility, how to apply, and who to contact for more information was emailed to DART members following the meeting.

Leatrice Fullerton also reported on the *DARE to Impact Change* e-publication. DARE stands for Disability Advocacy, Rights & Education. To sign up for the DARE to Impact Change e-publication, visit <https://www.dnswm.org/resources/publications/dare/>.

Hank Bostic reported the *Battle Creek office of Disability Network Southwest Michigan* is moving to the Michigan Works! Southwest Service Center located at 200 W. Van Buren St, Battle Creek, Michigan. Staff are in the process of selecting the day and time that they will have someone there for information and referral services, which will most likely be on Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Other staff will be using the location as their home office for independent living services. Disability Network will be able to provide all services out of this location. The *Kalamazoo office* has someone staffing the main entrance to greet walk-ins and direct them to services (e.g., social security benefits counseling, independent living, benefits planning, etc.).

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) - John Fiore reported that *MRS offices* are scheduled to reopen on May 2, 2022. They are also trying out a pilot work arrangement where staff may work up to two days/week remotely.

The *Summer program* is gearing up and MRS is partnering with Kalamazoo County Parks & Recreation.

MRS is implementing a *rate restructuring*. Implementation of rate changes began in February and MRS will be phasing in the changes over the next couple of years. Additional information regarding the rate restructuring is available at <https://www.michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/mrs> under the Vendors tab.

MRC Industries - Jonathan Kraker reported MRC just announced that Dan Pontius will begin as CEO of MRC on May 15, 2022, replacing Chris Ziegler who is retiring. He also asked attendees to please cheer for Jennifer Garver's daughter who is competing in the American Song Contest representing Michigan. Jennifer is the program director for MRC BridgeWays Program.

Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity – Gary Clark reported the automatic expungement of records under Clean Act programs will not begin until April 2023, therefore the Clean Slate Pilot Program operated under Michigan Works! has been extended through March 2023.

Michigan Works! Southwest and KRESA - Amanda Sutherland reported KRESA is working on a pilot program with the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) to develop a twelve-week workshop series to provide financial literacy. There is a focus to serve underserved and underrepresented individuals as well as individuals with disabilities. A more robust announcement will be coming soon.

Arc Community Advocates - Sheldon Schwitek reported the Arc Community Advocates office is open and very busy. Staff are doing a lot of educational advocacy in addition to their regular workload. The [2022 Inclusion Conference](#) was held virtually and was very successful. Many of the broadcasts will be repeated. Watch their [website](#) for more information.

Integrated Services Kalamazoo - Kathy Lentz reported the State of Michigan granted Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) status to Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties. More info is available at <https://iskzoo.org/ccbhc/> and https://stjoecmh.org/?page_id=4425.

Young Adult Program and Project SEARCH - Jordan Stripling reported the next cohort for Project SEARCH has been selected and this cohort will begin in the fall of 2022.

Goodwill Industries - Pat Angerman reported the Goodwill office is open for in-person services. Individuals should call 211 for VITA program services.

Recovery Institute - Ramona Lumpkin reported the Recovery Institute is open regular hours.

WORK GROUP UPDATES

Curriculum - At Your Desktop Training and Resources

Hank Bostic reported Jill Murphy sent the draft of the Long COVID desktop training to other committee members and requested feedback. The work group is also planning to review and update the current desktop training modules. Others interested in joining the committee to help with desktop training should contact either Hank Bostic or Kathy Olsen.

John Fiore reported MRS is working with West Michigan Works! To develop a virtual training for frontline staff on to how to approach customers to discuss MRS services. He further reported that this would be a good addition to the local library of desktop trainings.

Emerging Issues Related to Employment and Advocacy

Members discussed advocacy for issues that directly impact individuals with disabilities. This included the following:

- There is activity at the federal level regarding eliminating the sub-minimum wage. Kathy Lentz acknowledged MRC for paying as close to minimum wage as possible and steering individuals to community employment.
- The high rate of inflation is disproportionately affecting low income individuals and individuals with disabilities; especially regarding the cost of housing (rent), transportation (gas), and food.

In response to a request for a volunteer to lead the Emerging Issues Work Group, Sheldon Schwitek offered to be the point person. Others interested in assisting with this work group should contact Sheldon at sschwitek@communityadvocates.org or Kathy Olsen at olsen@upjohn.org.

Collaboration

Kathy Olsen reported she included an updated Partner Matrix in the agenda packet. She requested that members send any additional updates to the Partner Matrix to her at olsen@upjohn.org.

PRESENTATION

Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council Grant - Mary Fortney and Leatrice Fullerton reported through the DD Council grant, Disability Network will be collaborating with family serving organizations to provide educational opportunities for people with developmental disabilities and parents and families of children with developmental disabilities age birth to age 12. This will include developing training on how to ask for accommodations, decision making, parent mentors, and connections to other advocacy opportunities. Staff will be creating a library of virtual trainings and the trainings will be available on the Disability Network website later this summer. Staff are excited to be able to provide information to families so that they will have the resources early on to assist them with decision making.

UNIQUE CUSTOMER NEEDS

One member asked for ideas to assist a young man with six children who is at risk of losing his housing and housing subsidy. It was reported that MSHDA conducted an inspection and the apartment did not pass. The apartment complex is responsible for making the repairs; however, the apartment complex is understaffed and without a sufficient maintenance crew. Staff are also working with legal aid to help resolve the issue. It was noted that Goodwill Southwest Michigan has the Siemer Program that could possibly assist residents in their service area and that perhaps Goodwill Heartland has a similar program to assist

individuals in the Battle Creek area. Kathy Lentz reported the Housing department at Integrated Services Kalamazoo has resources to assist individuals facing eviction and those at risk of losing their subsidy.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Incompass Michigan <https://incompassmi.org/> provides a variety of [education and training sessions](#) addressing current trends and practices in the field of rehabilitation.
- MI Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity - Learn about the services provided by the Braille and Talking Books Library and the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons Training Center and see a demonstration of the two major forms of assistive technologies used by their customers. FREE. Register here: [April 19 Morning Session](#) (9-10 a.m.) or [April 19 Afternoon Session](#) (2-3 p.m.)
- Disability Network Southwest Michigan – See website for upcoming events <http://www.dnswm.org/>
- APSE Michigan -See website <https://apse.org/chapter/michigan/>
- DART Desktop Training Modules <https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/about/board/> (Scroll down to the heading Disability Awareness Resource Team)

NEXT MEETING

The next DART meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 14, 2022, from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kathy Olsen, Quality Assurance/Project Coordinator and WDB Liaison
Michigan Works! Southwest