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**Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Minutes**  
**February 8, 2022**

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**CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was held virtually via the GoToMeeting platform. DART Co-Chair, Hank Bostic called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sharmese Anderson (Friends w/Disabilities)

Mary Kay Balaguer (MWSW/ES)

Hank Bostic (Disability Network)

Gary Clark (LEO-WD)

John Fiore (MRS)

Leatrice Fullerton (Disability Network)

Carrie Headworth (Veterans ES)

Ben Hoger (Upjohn/MW!SW)

Sarah Hutchinson-Chee (Goodwill)

Jonathan Kraker (MRC)

Kathy Lentz (ISK)

Kathy Olsen (MWSW)

Sheldon Schwitek (Arc Community Advocates)

Jordan Blanchard Stripling (KRESA)

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion made by Kathy Lentz and supported by Mary Kay Balaguer to approve the DART meeting agenda for February 8, 2022. The agenda was approved by consensus of members present.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Under the section “Agency Updates / Introductions – Disability Network Southwest Michigan, Hank Bostic was corrected to read Han Bostic.

**Motion made by Jordan Stripling and supported by Mary Kay Balaguer to approve the DART meeting minutes of November 16, 2021 as corrected. The minutes were approved by consensus of members present.**

**AGENCY UPDATES/INTRODUCTIONS**

**Michigan Works! Southwest – Employment Services / Youth Services** - Mary Kay Balaguer reported the Michigan Works! Service Centers are now open normal business hours. An exception was when the service centers recently closed due to inclement weather and staff worked remotely on those days. Services available at the Service Centers include, but are not limited to, registering for Unemployment Insurance, employment preparation workshops, and one-on-one career coaching.

She also reported that youth staff are planning on offering an in-person [MyCITY](#) summer program. In Kalamazoo County, the application period opens on February 28, 2022. More information will be released in the next couple of weeks for MyCITY Battle Creek and MyCITY Albion summer programs.

**Goodwill Industries** – Sarah Hutchinson-Chee reported all programs at Goodwill are operating and staff are working a combination of in-office and remote work. Goodwill is also in the process of developing a new program and details will be shared once it is finalized.

**MI Dept of Labor and Economic Opportunity – Workforce Development** - Gary Clark reported the Clean Slate pilot program to assist individuals with expungement of some past non-violent criminal offenses has been extended from June 30, 2022 to March 31 2023. He also announced the second year of Barrier Removal Employment Success (BRES) funding where \$7 million dollars is being made available to Michigan Works! Agencies to assist with barrier removal to gain or maintain employment.

**MRC Industries** – Jonathan Kraker reported Chris Ziegler, CEO of MRC is retiring at the end of May 2022 and MRC is currently accepting applications to fill the position.

**MI Veterans Employment Services** – Carrie Headworth reported there will be a military-friendly virtual job fair on Friday, February 18, 2022 from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. The flyer was emailed to DART members following the meeting.

**Michigan Works! Southwest – PATH Services** - Ben Hoyer reported he has the ability to place a 30-day hold to avoid a shutoff with Consumers Energy in order to assist individuals who are struggling to pay their household utility bill. He noted that it is important to send him a request prior to anything being shut off and to also include information as to what efforts the consumer is making to pay the amount due.

**Integrated Services Kalamazoo (ISK)** – Kathy Lentz reported the transition of InterAct services to Integrated Services Kalamazoo is complete. She also provided an update on the Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC). The services provided by CCBHCs focus on wellness, recovery, trauma-informed care, and physical-behavioral health integration. Employment is also a service included under the CCBHC.

**KRESA Young Adults Program and Project SEARCH** – Jordan Stripling reported applications are currently being accepted for Project SEARCH, interviews will occur during the month of March, and the next cohort will be selected in the spring.

**Arc Community Advocates** – Sheldon Schwitek reported the office is open and the annual Inclusion Conference will be held virtually on March 9, 2022. Speakers include experts from throughout the U.S. Additional information is available on their website.

**Friends of People with Disabilities** – Sharmese Anderson reported Friends with Disabilities applied for several grants and was awarded all that they applied for. She also reported Friends with Disabilities has an open position for a personal office assistant and they are seeking one additional board member. Additional information is available by contacting her directly at [Sharmese@friendswithdisabilities.org](mailto:Sharmese@friendswithdisabilities.org).

**Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)** – John Fiore reported many of the MRS staff have been working in the office, however the lobby is not open for walk-in customers. Staff are accepting referrals and scheduling appointments as needed as well as meeting virtually. MRS is hoping to open the lobbies by February 28, 2022. He further reported there has been a lot of movement in regard to MRS policy implementation. MRS desires to continue to serve customers effectively and any feedback as to how changes impact customers is most welcome. Additional information is available on the [MRS website](#) under the business and vendors categories. MRS is also getting ready for a summer program to serve youth with disabilities.

**Disability Network Southwest Michigan** – Hank Bostic reported all programs at Disability Network are up and running and in-person visits are by appointment only. Customers should call the main phone number and will be directed from there. Disability Network is also providing COVID vaccination assistance. They can help by arranging for transportation, identifying vaccination clinic locations, etc. Disability Network can also provide options counseling to help individuals remain independent in their homes. He then introduced Leatrice Fullerton, the director for advocacy and community education and noted that Ms. Fullerton was highlighted in a recent United Way communication.

Leatrice Fullerton reported on trainings and other events offered at Disability Network including a Lunch ‘N Learn to discuss access and inclusion. This month’s topic is on marriage and equality that includes implications for SSI recipients. February is black history month, and some events are focused on that theme.

She highlighted a workshop on Disability Language and Etiquette and encouraged everyone to attend. The Book Club meets virtually every quarter. Peer support groups meet virtually on a weekly basis. All events are posted on the Disability Network website. Disability Network also identifies call to action items and encourages outreach to legislators.

## **WORK GROUP UPDATES**

### ***Curriculum - At Your Desktop Training and Resources***

John Fiore reported that Jill Murphy is still working on a Desktop Training on the topic of long COVID. She is currently adding new material available from the Job Accommodation Network (JAN). Members were asked to please send suggestions for future desktop training topics to Hank Bostic.

The Curriculum workgroup will begin to review the Desktop Trainings already developed to ensure the information provided is up-to-date and that the links provided within each training are still in working order.

### ***Emerging Issues Related to Employment and Advocacy***

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

- *Open Meetings Act* - The Attorney General recently issued an official statement pertaining to the Open Meetings Act that supports full participation of individuals with disabilities. Senator Sean McCann was a strong advocate for this issue.
- *Snow Removal* – Another area of advocacy is for snow removal to ensure mobility accessibility for individuals with disabilities.
- *Voting Accessibility* - Disability Network staff have reached out to county clerks to offer a webinar for election workers on the topic of voting accessibility for individuals with disabilities.
- *Privatization of Care* – It is important to focus on services, not the cost and disability advocates are speaking out against the privatization of costs.
- *DARE to Impact Change* - Disability Network has a new publication titled [DARE to Impact Change](#) that focuses on disability advocacy, rights, and education. The monthly focus for January is on housing needs and resources. The Focus for the February issue will be on accessible meeting places.
- *The Lifeline and 988* – 988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; however, not all states are prepared for the rollout. Advocates are reaching out to legislators asking them to fully fund the 988 lifeline.
- *Auto No-Fault - Provider Survey Results* – Language from the Executive Summary that was sent to DART members following the meeting: “The Brain Injury Association of Michigan (BIAMI) commissioned this independent study by the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) to document the impact of the fee structure changes in the 2019 Michigan no-fault auto insurance reform law, that took effect on July 1, 2021, on the availability of services for people with catastrophic injuries resulting from a car crash. MPHI was chosen because of its expertise and depth of understanding of public health research. This report summarizes the results from the first survey of brain injury service providers, distributed between September 29, 2021 and October 20, 2021. Two additional provider surveys are planned in 2022 to document this fluid situation.” [Link to access full Executive Summary and Report.](#)

### ***Collaboration***

Kathy Olsen reported an updated Partner Matrix was included in the agenda packet. She requested that members send any additional updates to the Partner Matrix to her at [olsen@upjohn.org](mailto:olsen@upjohn.org).

## **PRESENTATION**

Sarah Mansberger, the Executive Director for Workforce and Community Initiatives at KRESA gave a brief presentation on a pilot project available through the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). She reported the CRA requires the Federal Reserve and other federal banking regulators to encourage financial institutions to help meet the credit needs in the communities in which they do business, including low-income and moderate-income (LMI) neighborhoods. KRESA was approached by Social Policy Research Associates, a national firm, to partner with them and the National Disability Institute to develop a pilot program that will focus on increasing partnerships between workforce providers and banks to support individuals served in the workforce development system. A local advisory team was established to work with KRESA's leadership team on this project. The advisory team includes representation from MRS, the Neighborhood Hubs, the WIOA Youth Program, and KRESA's financial literacy program. She reported banks already offer financial literacy workshops, and the project is looking to tap into those resources to support career coaching, financial literacy, and the decision-making process. There is an emphasis on serving individuals with disabilities. Desired outcomes are to incorporate financial literacy into a two-generation approach; create consistency between workforce development and in-school youth; and grow relationships with bank partners. Hank Bostic reported Disability Network also has a financial literacy curriculum that could also be utilized for the project.

## **UNIQUE CUSTOMER NEEDS**

None reported.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- 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 meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12, 2022, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Kathy Olsen will send the 2022 meeting calendar to members.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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