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## **Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Minutes June 20, 2023**

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**CALL TO ORDER** – DART Co-Chair, John Fiore called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sharmese Anderson (FwD)

Tina Bravata (Consultant)

James Cannon (Arc Calhoun) <sup>∨</sup>

Jamie Case <sup>∨</sup>

Gary Clark (LEO) <sup>∨</sup>

John Fiore (MRS)

Anne Gaertner (Arc Comm Adv) <sup>∨</sup>

Toni Kennedy (SWMBH)

Kathy Lentz (ISKazoo) <sup>∨</sup>

Ramona Lumpkin (Recovery Institute) <sup>∨</sup>

Paul Mayfield (FwD)

Karrie Messenger (YOU/KRESA)

Kathy Olsen (MWSW)

Shelby Springett (MWSW)

Lisa Stanley (MRS) <sup>∨</sup>

<sup>∨</sup> Attended virtually

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The DART meeting agenda for June 20, 2023 was approved by consensus of members present.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The DART meeting minutes of April 18, 2023 were approved by consensus of members present.

### **PROGRAM – Member Update: Friends with Disabilities (FwD)**

Sharmese Anderson and Paul Mayfield reported on activities sponsored by Friends with Disabilities (FwD), a local non-profit that reaches out to individuals with disabilities to provide inclusive activities and to assist in preventing isolation. Due to generous donations and grants, the organization can offer these activities to individuals with disabilities in the Kalamazoo area, ages 18 and older, including veterans, at no cost to the participants. Currently the population served is individuals with physical disabilities because staff and volunteers are not equipped to work with individuals with mental disabilities. For the activities, participants can be picked up and dropped off at their homes. If a person needs a helper to participate, the helper can also attend. The charter buses used for transporting individuals to the events are wheelchair accessible and the volunteers who accompany the individuals have expertise in working with individuals with disabilities. Field trips are planned twice a month and next month, approximately 50 individuals will take a field trip to the Chicago Navy Pier for a lunch cruise. Recently, a new Friends with Disabilities group has been organized in the Grand Rapids area for individuals ages 18 and over with physical disabilities. Current funding is to support residents with disabilities in Kalamazoo and Kent Counties.

The organization also holds a Zoom meeting once a month for individuals with disabilities to discuss issues. The Zoom meetings also give the participants an opportunity to meet others in a virtual setting. The organization strives to help these individuals support each other and build connections. Members were referred to the Friends with Disabilities website to learn more information: <https://friendswithdisabilities.org/>.

### **PROGRAM/PRESENTATION – Member Update: Michigan Works! Southwest**

Kathy Olsen presented an overview of the Michigan Works! Southwest network that included background information; a brief history of employment and training; the state and local organizational structure; governance and accountability; as well as a synopsis of programs and services. She reported several changes will take effect on July 1, 2023 when MW! Southwest staff will begin providing additional direct services. Once this change is completed, the slides will be updated and the ones displaying the multiple programs and services will be shared with DART members. Shelby Springett reported on the MW! employer and job seeker eNewsletters. The newsletters are undergoing a facelift during the transition of services and there will be opportunities later this year to sign-up for the distribution lists.

### **AGENCY UPDATES**

*Veterans Navigator Services* – Tony Kennedy reported veterans in need of services can be referred to her for navigating assistance.

*Veterans Employment Services* – Carrie Headworth reported veterans needing employment assistance can be referred to her for assistance. She also shared information regarding a recent newsletter focused on services for veterans.

*Kalamazoo RESA / Youth Opportunities Unlimited (KRESA/YOU)* – Karrie Messenger reported on multiple programs and services for youth that included the Young Professionals, MyCITY, and WIOA Youth. The MyCITY program currently has approximately 150 participants, ages 14-24 enrolled. Staff for the program started last week and the students started this week. The program teaches employability skills, soft skills and has internship opportunities. Youth work with career coaches and the youth also have opportunities to visit industries while enrolled in the program.

*The Arc of Calhoun County* – James Cannon reported the Arch of Calhoun serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They provide supportive programming and advocacy and seek to help build a disability friendly community.

*Recovery Institute* – Ramona Lumpkin reported recovery coaches can go into the jails to work with individuals. The new location for their office that was reported on at the last meeting is working out great.

*Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)* – John Fiore reported the MRS summer program has started, and he noted that the referrals for the MRS summer youth program were lower than in the past. He requested that members refer individuals to MRS if they have any type of health condition that is creating a barrier to employment. The MRS office in Battle Creek serves Barry, Branch and Calhoun Counties; the Kalamazoo office serves

Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties.; and the office in Berrien County serves Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. MRS is also hiring, they are seeking individuals with a master's in social work, Special Education, and other related fields. Job postings can be found on the State of Michigan website <https://www.michigan.gov/som/job-seekers/state-of-michigan-employment>. MRS is partnering with other organizations to offer another Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) training program and the class is scheduled to begin on July 10, 2023. Some of the requirements to enroll include: the participants must be at least 18 years old, be willing to take all vaccines, pass a drug test, and pass a background check. The training program is designed to provide support and assistance to individuals who might not succeed in the more fast-paced regular CNA program. Plans are to schedule two classes a year with the next one being in January of 2024.

## **WORK GROUP UPDATES**

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

No emerging issues were brought to the committee for discussion.

**Collaboration – Partner Matrix** – Kathy Olsen reported an update was made to the Disability Network's listing on the Partner Matrix. She requested that members continue to send additional updates to her so that the document can remain current.

**Curriculum** – John Fiore directed members to the professional development opportunities listed under Section VI of the Agenda. Kathy Olsen noted that the Michigan Works! Southwest website was recently updated, and the DART Desktop Trainings are now listed under the Resources tab on the website:

<https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/resources/at-your-desktop-training>.

## **UNIQUE CUSTOMER NEEDS**

There were no cases of unique customer needs brought up for discussion at the meeting.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- Disability Network Southwest Michigan <http://www.dnswm.org/> (attached)
- KPL ONEplace <https://www.kpl.gov/oneplace/>
- The Synergy Health Center <https://synergykzoo.org/>
- Incompass Michigan –<https://incompassmi.org/> - see the Education & Training tab
- DART Desktop Training Modules  
<https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/resources/at-your-desktop-training>

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The annual ADA Celebration, Access for All, is scheduled for Friday, July 28, 2023 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Kalamazoo Farmers Market. A flyer was included with the agenda packet with more information. Individuals wishing to attend should RSVP to Disability Network Southwest.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next DART meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 19, 2023, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. [Note: the September 19, 2023 meeting was cancelled and the next meeting is

November 14, 2023.]

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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