
Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Minutes

February 27, 2024 – corrected -

CALL TO ORDER – DART Co-Chair, Hank Bostic called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hank Bostic (DNSM)

Jenifer Garver (ISK) [∨]

Carrie Headworth (VES) [∨]

Ben Hoger (Upjohn/MWSW)

Sarah Hutchison-Chee (Goodwill SWM)

Ramona Lumpkin (Recovery Institute) [∨]

Katie McCuen (KRESA) [∨]

Shannon McVoy (BSBP) [∨]

Karrie Messenger (KRESA)

Kathy Olsen (MWSW)

Nicho Sanchez (HRI)

Rhasheda Shepherd (Comm Advocates)

Shelby Springett (MWSW)

Clare Tanner (Arc Calhoun)

[∨] Attended virtually

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The DART meeting agenda for February 27, 2024 was approved by consensus of members present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The DART meeting minutes of November 14, 2023 were approved by consensus of members present.

PROGRAM – Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan

Sarah Hutchison-Chee, Vice President for Mission Services at Goodwill Industries Southwestern Michigan gave a PowerPoint presentation that included information about Goodwill's vision, mission, values, history, community impact, and a variety of programs offered through its mission services department. She highlighted the Mission Services Team that is dedicated to improving the community by providing employment, education, training, and support services tailored to individual needs. Programs provided under the umbrella of Mission Services include adult education, financial coaching, life guides, navigation services, the opportunity accelerator, Family Stabilization for Education Success (aka Siemer Program), and vocational rehabilitation.

AGENCY UPDATES

Recovery Institute – Ramona Lumpkin reported the Recovery Institute continues their work by holding support meetings and conducting outreach to the courts.

Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) – Shannon McVoy reported she is temporarily filling a vacancy in the BSBP West Region and she also she works with the BSBP statewide transition office. Approximately ten years ago, she participated on the DART committee and is familiar with the work of the committee. In responding to a question about touring the BSBP Training Center on Oakland Drive, she provided a few contacts and reported the Center also hosts Community Partner Days a couple times a year where members of the community can

learn more about the BSBP Center and the services available. A [virtual tour](#) is also available on their website.

Veterans Employment Services – Carrie Headworth reported a Veterans Resource Fair will be held on March 12, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the VFW Post 7956 located at 13540 M-96, Augusta, Michigan.

Housing Resources, Inc. – Nicho Sanchez reported HRI's Annual Walk for the Homeless will be held in Kalamazoo on April 13, 2024. He also shared that the HRI Access Team is available to assist with intakes, voucher applications, general information, and to answer questions. He distributed flyers with more information about the Annual Walk and the HRI Access Team. Services can be accessed via the Access Team through the HRI website at <https://www.housingresourcesinc.org/> or by calling 269-382-0287, the team can also be reached at other community locations during the week. The schedule is as follows: at Ministry with Community on Tuesdays from 1-2 pm; at the YWCA on Wednesdays from 10:30-11:30 am every other week; at Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries on Thursdays from 9-10 am; and at the Kalamazoo Defenders on Thursdays from 10:30-11:30 am

Michigan Works! Southwest - Ben Hoger reported he conducts outreach for Michigan Works! Southwest at community access points which include on Mondays at the Kalamazoo Defender office and on Thursdays at Voces in Battle Creek. Kathy Olsen reported that Michigan Works! Southwest networks with many community partners to assist individuals with finding and keeping employment.

The Arc Community Advocates - Rhasheda Shepherd reported registrations for the annual Inclusion Conference are filling up fast. There will be a discussion at the conference regarding assistive devices and Arc National and Amazon Prime are offering free devices (Echo Dots and Tablets) to individuals with disabilities. These items will be distributed throughout a six county area that includes Barry, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Grant funding is also available through the Cekola Memorial Fund to assist families caring for permanently disabled children in their homes. Information about the grant and how to apply is available on the Arc Community Advocates website <https://communityadvocates.org/cekola-memorial-fund>

The Arc of Calhoun County – Clare Tanner reported the Arc of Calhoun County offers many services which include skill building, supported employment, advocacy, and self- advocacy. Other highlights included expanding the number of funders, access to a national technical assistance program, and they offer cross-training for staff.

Disability Network Southwest Michigan – Hank Bostic reported Disability Network has offices in the cities of Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph. Services include information and referral regarding disability related issues as well as a variety of services to support independent living skills. He also reported that 80% of staff and volunteers have a disability and thus they can walk alongside as peers when assisting customers.

Kalamazoo RESA – Karrie Messenger reported YOU/KRESA has a paid internship program for youth ages 14-24. Classes to prepare for the internships begin in March and there will also be a class to prepare for summer internships. The preparation class is four weeks in length, and it is followed by seven weeks of placement in an internship. She encouraged

partners to refer youth to YOU/KRESA for these opportunities. She also reported that YOU/KRESA can assist youth throughout the entire year, not just during the summer months.

ISSUES RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT & ADVOCACY

It was noted that Arc at the national, state, and local levels conduct ongoing advocacy to ensure people with disabilities have a voice.

Clare Tanner reported she has been attending Michigan's Disability caucus meetings.

COLLABORATION – Partner Matrix – Kathy Olsen requested that members review the partner matrix and to please send any updates they may have regarding their agency's listing to her. She will make any necessary updates to the document and then send the updated version to members.

UNIQUE CUSTOMER NEEDS

Nicho Sanchez reported that Housing Resources, Inc. receives 10-15 phone calls per week from individuals in other states who want to move to the Kalamazoo area and bring with them their section 8 voucher; however, they have no employment and no housing. It has also been discovered that many individuals from other cities are being dropped off at the Kalamazoo bus station.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Arc Community Advocates 17th Annual Inclusion Conference – Fri, Mar 15, 2024 from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at WMU Fetzer Center – [Conference website](#)
- Disability Network Southwest Michigan <http://www.dnswm.org/>
- 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

No additional announcements.

NEXT MEETING

The next DART meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 16, 2024, from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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