
Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Minutes

April 18, 2023

CALL TO ORDER – DART Co-Chair, John Fiore called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hank Bostic (Disability Network)
Tina Bravata (Consultant)
Gary Clark (LEO) [∨]
John Fiore (MRS)
Anne Gaertner (Arc Comm Adv)
Rebecca Hill (MRS)
Ben Hoger (MWSW) [∨]

Sarah Hutchinson-Chee (Goodwill SW MI)
Ramona Lumpkin (Recovery Institute) [∨]
Karrie Messenger (YOU/KRESA) [∨]
Kathy Olsen (MWSW)
Shelby Springett (MWSW)
Lisa Stanley (MRS) [∨]
[∨] Attended virtually

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The DART meeting agenda for April 18, 2023 was approved by consensus of members present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The DART meeting minutes of November 8, 2022 were approved by consensus of members present.

PROGRAM – Supporting Customers through Motivation and Empowerment

Presenter: Tina Bravata, owner of B – Empowered Life & Career Coaching, LLC, provided a presentation on Motivation and Empowerment. The presentation included steps to follow to motivate that included setting goals to focus an individual's efforts and provide encouragement. A PowerPoint summarizing the presentation was provided along with a list of references for further information. Following the presentation, Ms. Bravata thanked members for the opportunity to speak with them to share her thoughts on motivation and empowerment.

AGENCY UPDATES

Arc Community Advocates - Anne Gaertner reported that Arc Community Advocates is seeking an Executive Director.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) – Rebecca Hill and John Fiore reported the following:

- MRS has current job openings for a couple of counselor positions.
- MRS is seeking high school age youth for summer work-based learning experiences for youth.

- MRS is recruiting for a CNA class that is scheduled to begin in July. Plans are to hold a CNA class twice a year. They are partnering with MWSW, YOU/KRESA, MCTI, Northside neighborhood and other entities to recruit participants.
- Please send students with disabilities who are interested in work experience to MRS. MRS is partnering with Youth Opportunities Unlimited for work experience opportunities.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services – Business Services – Lisa Stanley reported the following:

- The State of Michigan is hosting multiple virtual job fairs using the Brazen platform to recruit for jobs in all state departments. The first one was held yesterday (April 19, 2023).
- Staff are exploring opportunities for youth placements for summer jobs.

Disability Network Southwest MI – Hank Bostic reported the following:

- Is expanding their outreach throughout the 8-county service area, trying to reach individuals in rural locations and is looking at other sites within the communities where services can be offered.
- They added information and referral staff to Calhoun/Barry/Branch Counties.
- There are multiple training opportunities scheduled and posted on their website. These are for individuals, families, and staff.

Goodwill Industries Southwest MI – Sarah Hutchinson-Chee reported the following:

- They are also offering summer work-based learning opportunities and are doing more with the youth population.
- Goodwill is working on a new workforce development initiative that will be industry specific with a focus on individuals with disabilities.
- Goodwill offers free financial classes and coaching in Kalamazoo County, staff are certified. The Financial Coaching Coordinator is Kathleen Wine, and she can be reached at kwine@goodwillswmi.org or 269-382-0490 X249.
- Goodwill is seeking to fill a position for a Life Guide Coach.

Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU)/KRESA – Karrie Messenger reported that the application period for the summer program for youth closed on April 10 and staff are currently assigning enrollees to a coach. Younger youth (14 yr. olds) will be working with a team and a coach. The older youth will have a paid internship in the community. The summer program is scheduled to begin at the end of June.

Recovery Institute – Ramona Lumpkin reported the following:

- The Recovery Institute office has moved to 123 S. Westnedge, office hours have not changed. There will be a grand opening for the public on May 5, 2023.
- They continue to work with the drug court and focus on working with individuals to address drug abuse.

Michigan Works! Southwest – Kathy Olsen and Ben Hoger reported the following:

- Michigan Works! staff are working to transition employment services from KRESA to Upjohn.
- Barrier Removal Employment Success (BRES) funding is available to assist with addressing barriers to employment.
- Staff can also assist with other miscellaneous supports such as hygiene items and diapers.
- Staff can also assist with utilities if a participant receives a shut-off notice.

MI Dept of Labor and Economic Opportunity – Gary Clark reported that the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity expects to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) by July 1 to award \$15 million of COVID Relief funds to expand the current Barrier Removal Employment Success (BRES) funding. This will be a competitive RFP and any entity can apply. The funds are to assist with supportive services that are not normally provided under the workforce programs. The focus will be on individuals adversely affected by COVID. Funding will be awarded by October 1.

WORK GROUP UPDATES

Emerging Issues Related to Employment and Advocacy

- Medicaid is expanding coverage for dental services.
- SSI recipients – Arc Community Advocates is asking people to contact elected officials to request that the maximum limit allowed for financial assets be raised so that individuals do not lose benefits.
- At the federal level there are some legislators advocating for Medicaid work requirements.
- Additional information regarding emerging issues can be found on the Arc policy and advocacy website <https://thearc.org/policy-advocacy/>

Collaboration – Partner Matrix – Kathy Olsen reported a few updates were made to the Partner Matrix prior to emailing it with the agenda packet. Members should send her any additional updates as they occur, and she will continue to keep the document current.

Curriculum – Kathy Olsen reported the DART Desktop Training Modules are posted on the Michigan Works! Southwest website for easy access to members and the public. <https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/about/board/>. (Scroll down on web page to the DART tab.) It was also noted by members present that additional learning opportunities are available through Disability Network and through the Kalamazoo Public Library's ONEplace. (See links listed below.)

Kathy Olsen reported that the Oklahoma School for the Deaf is offering free online ASL classes. If you have always wanted to learn ASL but the cost has prevented you, this is a great opportunity. More information regarding ASL 1 and ASL 2, which are pre-recorded self-guided classes, is available on their website which is: <https://courses.osd.k12.ok.us/>. This is a great resource for anyone (staff, family members, teachers) who wants to learn ASL. These courses are currently available during their spring semester - February 13 through July 31, 2023.

UNIQUE CUSTOMER NEEDS

Hank Bostic shared a situation that a disabled customer is facing regarding recovering funds that were invested in someone else's home. It was recommended that he check with Disability Rights Michigan and/or check with colleges with legal programs.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Disability Network Southwest Michigan <http://www.dnswm.org/>;
- KPL ONEplace <https://www.kpl.gov/oneplace/>
- The Synergy Health Center <https://synergykzoo.org/>

NEXT MEETING

The next DART meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 20, 2023, from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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