

**HCRS JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
Springfield, Vermont
September 1, 2015**

Present: HCRS Staff: George Karabakakis (Facilitator), Lori Lintner, Will Shakespeare, Karon Eagles, Susan Hennessey, Wendy Smith, Malaika Puffer, and Crystal Morey
Client/Community Representation: Yvonne McNeil, Chrissy Cheney, Diana McLardy, Louise Machado, Linda Tyler, Sherry Haines, Katie Beach,
Board Representation: Sarah Carter and Diana Slade

Present by Video Conferencing: Hartford Office: Brad Sewall, Matt Stahley, Mike Thibideau, Kathy Hook, Phil Charpentier, and four clients

Welcome: At 12:15 PM, George Karabakakis welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made including those participating via video conferencing.

Joint Standing Committee Minutes: The March 3, 2015 Joint Standing Committee Meeting were reviewed and approved as written. These minutes will be posted to the HCRS Internet Site. The Internet website is: www.hcrs.org.

CEO Update: George Karabakakis, CEO provided an update on the status of the agency. George and the Senior Leadership team, along with the HCRS Board of Directors have been actively working on updating the Strategic Plan for HCRS. They have identified goals and objectives to work towards and are working with staff members to meet those goals. He noted that HCRS has recently received some positive praise in the news about the summer program run by staff at HCRS. HCRS provides three and six week summer therapeutic camps for children who may not thrive well in a traditional summer camp program. They combine outdoor recreational activities, with behavioral and therapeutic programming to teach and reinforce positive social skills and behaviors. Staff were recognized because of their high level of commitment and integrity to the clients they serve.

Kindle Farm, an alternative school for boys and young men who do not succeed in the traditional classroom has also received some positive praise for its continued successes.

Limited housing options and availability continue to be a significant challenge for HCRS and the region. There are limited housing options and it remains a high priority for the Agency. HCRS is working towards developing a supported apartment program which will allow qualified clients to live independently with in-home supports. Phil commented that housing provided by HCRS is less expensive than hospitalization and he fully supports this model.

George continues to meet with staff across the Agency to hold “Lunches with George” as a way to open up a dialog between leadership and staff and as a way to open up more discussion about supported housing options.

Hal Cohn, AHS Secretary of Human Services recently met with HCRS and expressed how impressed he was with HCRS staff and the programs that are provided.

The annual summer picnic and Golf Tournament were held over the summer and George noted that both events were a big success. The golf tournament was held at the Woodstock Country Club and approximately \$20,000 was raised for this event. All proceeds went towards supporting the Kindle Farm School.

The Springfield Chamber of Commerce will be holding its next mixer at HCRS on Wednesday, September 9, 2015 at 5:30. The goal of the mixer is to promote events and daily progress happening in Springfield and in the business community.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Children's Standing Committee: Will Shakespeare, Director of Children's Programming provided an update on what's happening in the Children's Program. Over 240 kids attended the Summer Therapeutic Program this summer with kids ranging in age from 6-14. It was a fantastic experience for all those that attended and it gave each child an opportunity to get socially connected to other kids in the program with added support.

The Children's Training Week was held during the third week of August. Staff spent three days at Allyson's Apple Orchard and received multiple trainings throughout the week. Approximately 80 people were in attendance. School based staff have started back at the schools. HCRS has 23 school contracts with the public schools that include clinicians and behavioral interventionists.

HCRS' respite program is changing. HCRS' current children's coordinators will be integrating this function into their job duties and will be taking over finding placement for overnight respite providers instead of going through the Developmental Services Program. The hope is that they can gain additional overnight respite providers by offering overnight respite to day providers with the children they are already working with. Brochures were shared with the group, "Sometimes we just need a break", a brochure on the Children's Respite program.

Sarah Carter, HCRS Board member noted that the Children's Standing Committee has provided great information to the Board of Directors.

DS Standing Committee and Program Update: Lori Lintner, DS Adult Services Manager provided an update on the Developmental Services Standing Committee. The group last met on August 12th and continued to meet through the summer months, except for July. The meetings were spent catching up with one another and talking about upcoming events.

Lori noted that the VTDDC helps fund projects and support Vermonters with developmental disabilities and their families to plan and participate in advocacy events that educate and inform policy makers and communities about priorities. They are going to provide funding for admission to upcoming conferences to some of our clients and their parents.

On September 23rd, a spaghetti dinner and Bingo night is going to be held at the Bellows Falls Moose club from 12:00 – 12:30.

The bottle drive for the Developmental Services Program continues.

September 14 -18 is Direct Support Professional's week and in honor of recognizing support staff, each office will be hosting a picnic luncheon to celebrate the work they do. On September 18th, the commissioner of DAIL, Monica Hutt and Governor Peter Shumlin will be speaking at a Direct Support Staff Professional event at the State House. Clients and staff have been making flags that will be displayed during this event.

The Inclusion Center will be hosting its annual Buddy Walk on Saturday, October 3rd at the Brattleboro common. It is a one mile walk around Brattleboro that helps raise awareness and promote inclusion for

people of all abilities. All proceeds will go to the Inclusion Center in Brattleboro, VT. Mike asked if there are events like the Buddy Walk held in the Hartford area, but it was unknown at this time. It was suggested that he contact Lynn Burdette with any questions.

Adult: The Life Enrichment Center (LEC) opened up earlier this year at the Springfield office. It's now open three days a week on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday from 9-2. It is open to any adult who is part of the HCRS community. Malaika noted there are several support groups that are being offered as well as spontaneous activities happening all the time. Members of the group noted how great it would be if something like this was offered in the Brattleboro and Hartford offices.

Transportation continues to be an issue for some clients. Much of the free transportation is only available for medical necessity and not activities related.

Carlotta Gladding, HCRS Board member noted she would like to see the garden group resurrected at HCRS again.

HCRS is hiring another Peer Support Specialist so that peer support services will be available across all sites. In addition, the Vermont Psychiatric Support group runs every Thursday from 2:00-3:30 at the Springfield Congregational Church.

The Brattleboro Retreat and Turning Point of Windham County have partnered with NAMI Vermont to offer a group at the Brattleboro Retreat for people living with mental illness. It is a free 90-minute support group offered every first and third Tuesday of the month.

Diana Slade, Board member also noted the Adult Standing Committee continues to work on creating a brochure for this group.

Members of Adult Standing Committee would like to work with the Edgar May Health and Recreation Center and the Aquatic Center to incorporate health, wellness, and physical activity into their daily lives. Plans are being worked out to try and find ways to support ongoing wellness activities.

Next meeting: The next Joint Standing Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 1, 2015 at 12:00 PM. Lunch will be provided.

Minutes by Crystal Morey, Recorder