

State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

Public Forum – Joplin, MO

February 21st, 2019

SRC Members in Attendance: Clay Berry, Shelia Wright, Geoff Barney, Brady Clevenger

Public Attendees: Clay Fisher, Barb Fisher, Gail Von, Stephanie Man, Shane Smith, Kevin Heights, Marianne Loveless, Shiloh Cooper, Matthew Holloway, Adrian Marcos, Carlos Marcos, Jeff Jones, Cindy Smart, Chip Hailey, Daryl McLaughlin, CJ Cambell, Linda Naufnabe.

Phone: No Callers

RSB Attendees: Michael St. Julien, Kayla Cole, Ian Shadrack, Jim Brinkmann, Mark Runyan, Randy Custer

Open Meeting: Clay opens meeting, lays out plans for the evenings public forum. Introduces Chip Hailey as the host of the location, the Independent Living Center. Chip gives an overview of what the Independent Living Center does.

Speakers: Adrian Marcos, RSB client and Matthew Holloway, Employment Service Manager at Preferred Employment Services.

Matthew Holloway – In January in 2018 Matthew met with McDonald County high school to discuss transportation services for their clients in the Summer Work Program. During this meeting Matthew met Adrian Marcos and reached out to him from there to set up a work plan for him. Matthew worked with RSB to come up with a plan as to what jobs would be safe and rewarding for Adrian to do. After some struggle with employers pulling out, Matthew finally found a place of employment for Adrian. Matthew created a job description for Adrian and he began working at an office taking food stamp applications and answering phone calls. Adrian's high school paid their paraprofessional to go to work with Adrian for the first month to help him become acquainted with the office and the job duties. Matthew was a part of this process all along the way even after Adrian began working. Matthew would check in on how things were going and make sure Adrian had all the resources available to be successful. One thing Adrian needed for this job was a headset and Matthew, with Preferred, help get those needs met for him and feel very proud of Adrian's work and success that he received through their youth work program.

Adrian Marcos – Adrian is a client of RSB's as well as Preferred Employment Services. Adrian shares his story working with Economic Security over the summer. Adrian came into this workplace with no prior work experience in this type of work. The first day he went around the building to become familiar with his surroundings. From there he learned what his job duties

would be and how to perform them efficiently. He had to work with his school Para to learn each form/application so that he could explain to others how to fill these applications out properly. As work began Adrian discovered he needed to accommodate a few things around the office so he could identify clients coming in to the office for help versus who were his fellow coworkers. One way this was achieved was placing a bell at his desk that people could ring for help as well as asking coworkers to identify themselves when coming into the office, in simple ways like saying hello and letting Adrian know who they were. Adrian used the headset he requested so that he could multitask when taking phone calls. To take down notes from the call in braille he needed to have his hands free to do so, the headset made this not only possible but much easier to complete this job duty. Adrian explained that this job taught him how to advocate for himself and speak up for things when he is in need. He learned that people are more than willing to work with him to not only help him but encourage him and set him up for success not only in work but in other aspects of his life as well. Adrian said he is very thankful to RSB and Preferred for giving him these opportunities so that he is prepared for college and the job world and is confident in his ability to navigate through these life changes.

Q & A – Comments from the SRC:

Brady – Adrian, what are your plans for the future, what do you plan on doing next?

Adrian – I have been expected to MSU in Springfield. I plan to pursue a degree in Business and would like to eventually receive a Master's in Business Administration. My Dad owns a concrete business and I hope to someday run that company.

Clay – What grade are you in now and what class would you say is the hardest?

Adrian – I am a senior this year and I would have to say that college algebra is the hardest class. There are a lot of graphs and visual stuff that make it difficult. I am very thankful to my Para because she finds the best way to explain it to me so that I can understand it and work those problems out.

Q & A – Comments from the Public:

Jeff Jones – Shares with the forum about Ozark Technical College's work with RSB, Student accommodations and how much he has learned through working with the Agency to better benefit their students.

Stephanie Man – Shares the upcoming events that Joplin Association of the Blind is holding. Stephanie also shares about what the Joplin Association does and how they refer their clients to agencies like RSB for anything that they are unable to provide. Their goals are similar to RSB's in that they would like their clients to stay independent and in their own homes if at all possible.

Closing

Adjourn

State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind Business Meeting – Joplin, MO February 22nd, 2019

SRC Members in Attendance: Brady Clevenger, Shelia Wright, Clay Berry, Geoff Barney, Chip Hailey in place of Chris Gray.

RSB Attendees: Michael St. Julien, Kayla Cole, Mark Runyan, Ian Shadrack, Jim Brinkmann, Randy Custer

Open Meeting: Clay Berry

Minutes: Minutes were reviewed and accepted

District Report: [Randy Custer](#)- Reports Southwest office is still fully staffed with the addition of a Children's Specialist. Southwest office is working closely with State Office to prepare for and test the new case management system, Aware. They will be participating in a pilot project with state office where staff will be working in both the old and new case management system simultaneously. Randy discusses job placements with some of their clients that they have achieved this year. One being a client that started working at a company called Duck Creek in Bolivar Missouri. This company provides major software work for insurance companies. Another successful closure was for a client that works at Ozark Christian College as an Administrative assistant. Another client Brady, helped transition into college. This client completed two bachelor degrees in 3 years. One of her majors was Spanish which allowed her to accept an offer to go to Toledo Spain and be an English instructor there. Also placed clients in other places such as Sam's club and Bolivar Court House. There are also options if clients desire to seek employment in call center settings. Springfield office has a good relationship with chase bank as well as AT&T. Some issues with call centers is that the technology in those environments has to have the ability to be accessible with assistive technology. This can at times be challenging to figure out or work around and IT departments in those companies have to come into play to help navigate those issues where possible. There are individuals such as Denny Huff and Greg Mark who have helped in this area before but some employers are leery of this service. Springfield is also hoping to establish a relationship with Jack Henry to send more clients there for potential employment.

Field Report: [Michael St. Julien](#)- Vacancies in RSB, a lot of positions are caught up. Kansas City is full on counselors but hiring for a Rehab Assistant as well as a Rehab Teacher. Mid Mo interviewed for a vacant rehab assistant position and is hoping to fill that soon. The Mobility Specialist position in Mid Mo is still open and we are struggling to get that position filled. The position has been posted at least 4 times but has yet to be filled. St. Louis North is full, as well as our Southeast and Southwest offices as well. St. Louis South is interviewing for a Rehab

Teacher position and hoping to fill that very soon. State office is currently hiring for a Senior Office support Assistant and will be scheduling interviews for that soon as well. Children Specialist remain just the three and continue to split the areas of the state accordingly. –Clay Berry shares that filling O&M positions seems to be a struggle for Agencies and Companies nationwide. RSB recently held a counselor academy at the beginning of February, this was held by our Training and Quality Assurance Manager, Paula Stefanizzi. RSB has not held a counselor academy since 2013 so this training was very well accepted and educational to all of our Counseling staff.

Director's Report: [Michael St. Julien in lieu of Keith Roderick](#) – Employment first, RSB has been chosen again to be one of the core teams for the third year in a row. Last year RSB did a series about benefits planning. This year RSB plans to stick to that same subject but are working on coming up with a tiered plan for benefits planning. Four tiers would be created, one being the bottom and four being the top. One would be where the person would have a basic knowledge on where to point clients in the right direction, a do no harm level. Four would be a certified benefits planner. RSB does not have intent for all counselors to go through the entire process but the hope would be that all RSB counselors would be at least a tier one or tier two level, enough information to pass on to clients on where the appropriate place to go would be as well as how to access those systems. A second training would be something called 'Vision Quest' which focuses on the employment of veteran's with disabilities. This would be more of a policy type focus, to not only create opportunities but to streamline that process for them.

Fact Sheet: [Michael St. Julien](#)- Fact sheet was reviewed

BEP Report: [Jim Brinkmann](#) – Things are changing among the BEP program, looking for opportunities to grow wherever they can from customer needs to new locations. One plan is to open up BEP's first micro market which is a customer self-served convenient store and food supplier. This is just one of the few exciting opportunities the BEP program is looking into. BEP has also been working with students to introduce them to the program and its opportunities for those who are blind or visually impaired and inspire to be a manager of their own stores someday. Expanding, growing and improving the program as well as its facilities are the main focuses of this year for the program.

Fiscal Report: [Mark Runyan](#) – RSB is progressing well, received our new allotment for the new Fiscal year. Will continue to make sure we stay on track with budget, goals, new case management system projects, etc.

Pre- Emp & Youth Report: [Ian Shadrick](#) – Transition program has been working closely with VR program on several project such as customized employment. Looking to model this with transition age students to work well with RSB and transition client needs. The new case management system seems to be a way to benefit the children specialist staff in regards to their caseloads and clients. The Children Specialist participated in the Counselor Academy

amongst the VRC's and that seemed to be a benefit to all who attended. Gave counselors an opportunity to ask the Children Specialist staff questions regarding their clients and those who will eventually transition into the VR program and vice versa. Gearing up for another Blind and Socially Savvy offering that will take place at the beginning of June. This is a program geared for students who are pre employment and gives them a range of skills that help prepare them to begin the employment process. From interview skills, appropriate dress tips, when to use business cards, etc. Continue to work with workplace learning experiences to best benefit clients and prepare them for their future whether that is

Survey Report: Survey data reviewed, return rate increasing which is great to see.

Committee Reports:

Committee Appointments

Program and Policy: Brady Clevenger, Mark Bauer

Evaluation Committee: Geoff Barney, Betty Farley

Planning Committee: Brenda Whitlock, MPACT employee, Karen

Government Affairs: Shelia Wright, Chris Gray, Donna Borgmeyer

Old Business:

New Business: Review Committee appointments at next meeting in May

Meeting adjourned