ADVOCACY JAM

On September 16th and 17th, ten People First members from New Horizons and three staff members travelled to the Cedar Shore Resort in Chamberlain to participate in the Advocacy Jam. There were approximately 150 people in attendance. People from other community support providers as well as the South Dakota Developmental Center participated with staff members and/or family members.

The Advocacy Jam was put on by South Dakota Advocates for Change. Mike Grengs and Rick Rust as well as their support staff, Cyndi Spieker, drove down on Sunday to help with the final touches for the event.

People heard presentations on Healthy Relationships, given by a counselor who works with victims of domestic abuse, and how to be safe on the internet presented by the local county sheriff.

The central SDAC group spoke on bullying and the western group presented information on Respect. Mike participated in a talk about Person Planning Together Training with other PPT certified trainers and a support person. Dan Cleberg from the Fallout Community, an arts group for people with developmental disabilities and the musical group, Better Ride, from Aberdeen, talked about bringing inclusive art to your community.

In addition to learning a lot, Monday evening was filled with a picnic supper, a concert by Better Ride, karaoke and dancing. Early Tuesday afternoon, after a lunch and presentation from Division of Developmental Disabilities staff, everyone headed home. Old friendships were rekindled and new friendships were formed. People are already asking about the next self advocacy convention which will be part of Dare to Dream next June in Aberdeen.
FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

Chuck Sherman, PhD

We currently have an individual waiting to come out of the South Dakota Developmental Center in Redfield and return to Watertown and a life of independence and freedom. However, this person is in need of one-on-one support from our staff, 24 hours a day. He remains in Redfield, and has been for several weeks, not due to not being ready for discharge; but rather, due to our inability to recruit and hire employees at the wages we can afford.

Every year that non-profit agencies, who do the work for the state, continue to not receive inflationary increases to their reimbursement rates, diminishes the quality in the services we provide. This is not rocket science. We can't give salary increases due to not receiving an increase in our rates. One-time money given to us from the legislature, while appreciated and given to employees as a one-time bonus, does not result in salary increases. Lack of salary increases means our starting salaries don't increase. With stagnant starting salaries, we become less attractive to prospective employees; especially when school districts and nursing homes continue to increase their salary ranges.

We have not had a salary increase in five years. We have not made a contribution to our employees’ 401(k) plans in five years. We have seen health insurance deductibles rise from $500 to $2,000 in order to afford health insurance for our employees.

If during the next legislative session we receive another one-time bonus instead of an inflation increase, I am convinced that a time will come, in the not too distant future, when community support providers will be unable to take any referrals from Redfield or even the schools as we will begin to see a decline in the number of employees we are able to retain. Loss of employees and an inability to recruit and retain new ones begets the initiation of a death spiral for any business.

It really begs the question - What value does this state place on services to the most vulnerable?

**********BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**********

MENTAL HEALTH 1ST

Steve Rehorst and Scott Jongbloed, from the Watertown Police Department and Fire Department respectively, are the instructors for Mental Health 1st and are preparing to teach another class sometime this fall or early winter. The curriculum has recently been modified to reduce the course from 12 hours of classroom instruction to 8 hours. The course is designed to teach non-professionals how to recognize an emotional crisis and how to respond to the person experiencing it. Graduates receive a certificate recognizing their completion of the course. If interested in participating, please call Chuck Sherman at 884-3539.

In August HSA hosted a one-day refresher training course on Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). This training was made possible by funding received from the Watertown Community Foundation and Prairie Lakes Healthcare.

Dan Casey, a nationally recognized instructor out of Minnesota brought 17 trained responders up-to-date with the latest changes in how to provide support to first responders who experience traumatic events. The Watertown Area CISM team has been in existence since 1995.

We have provided debriefings to local and area first responders throughout the northeast region of South Dakota. CISM has been shown to significantly reduce the incidence of post traumatic stress disorders after responders have had to experience the very worst of trauma scenes. Made up of all volunteers, the Watertown Area CISM team members are dedicated to helping first responders. We thank Prairie Lakes Healthcare and the Watertown Community Foundation for their support.
HEALTH HOMES

As part of the Affordable Health Act, HSA has been working in collaboration with other community medical providers to meet the complex needs of our clients. Those who have received services in the past, and are agreeable to receive intense case management, are designated to a Health Home. Clients work closely with our staff to meet their mental health and medical needs. We host team meetings with medical providers, form a plan to help clients’ medical needs be met prior to seeking care in an emergency room and assist them in developing a healthier lifestyle through diet, exercise and other preventive programs.

Clients with complex medical and behavioral health needs, who are funded by Medicaid, can be served by Health Homes. HSA has worked closely with the Dept. of Social Services to identify clients who meet these criteria; and have made contact with individuals to explain the new program. Clients do have the option of opting out or changing their Health Home provider. Other states that have provided services using the Health Home model have shown improved outcomes in client health and reduced Medicaid spending.

There are six core components of a Health Home:
* Comprehensive Care Management
* Care Coordination
* Health Promotion
* Comprehensive Transitional Care
* Patient and Family Support
* Referral to community and support services

The goal is to help our clients achieve a healthy lifestyle and to maintain wellness.

**********NEW HORIZONS**********

STATE EMPLOYMENT LEADERSHIP NETWORK (SELN)

Navigating from “traditional day services” to meaningful employment in the general workforce can be daunting for many organizations. The State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) is exploring why employment is a priority in supporting adults with developmental disabilities and how the current day support system can increase employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.

The South Dakota Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and Community Service Providers are members of the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) and are in the process of assessing many facets of the employment system for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. SELN brings states together to improve employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. State agencies who participate in the SELN commit resources to increase employment outcomes in their states.

Member states first participate in a self-assessment process designed by the SELN Project Team to identify the strengths and challenges of their existing employment support infrastructure. The SELN Project Team facilitates onsite visits with state staff and stakeholders to discuss the assessment findings and identify priorities and goals.

Following completion of the assessment process, a report will be prepared for the Division of Developmental Disabilities outlining the team’s principal findings, observations and recommended action strategies. The DDD will then develop a set of employment-related strategies, either as an employment work plan or in the context of a larger strategic planning initiative across all service systems.

SELN members are also involved in an Employment Provider Training series, which is being done over DDN.

FAMILY APPRECIATION PICNIC

The 28th Annual New Horizon’s Family Appreciation Picnic included entertainment from the Watertown Park and Recreation Department. Jazzy Josh and Jerry Jer wanted to volunteer their time as D.J.’s to energize the crowd for the dance following the meal. The menu included meat loaf, cheesy hash browns, scalloped corn and apple crisp. Approximately, 200 people attended this year’s event held at Codington County Extension Building.
The Human Service Agency is a private, non-profit organization served by a Board of Directors representing the communities served by the Agency. The Board of Directors meets at 5:30 p.m. on the last Monday of each month.

THE DIVISIONS OF THE HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY ARE:
New Horizons and
HSA Behavioral Health

Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Help for mental health or chemical dependency emergencies is available at all times by calling 886-5841 or 800-444-3989

The Human Service Agency Foundation – An Investment In The Future

The Human Service Agency Foundation was established to promote the long-term financial strength of the Human Service Agency. Charitable contributions and bequests to the Foundation are administered by recognized financial experts for the benefit of the Agency’s programs. The Foundation provides, at no cost to the individual, confidential assistance for those considering charitable giving as a part of their long range financial planning.

For More Information, Call or Write:

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