

**BRIDGEPORT**  
**REAL CHOICE COMMUNITY INCLUSION TASK FORCE**  
Meeting Minutes  
May 13, 2005

**Place:** City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Wheeler Room A & B, Bridgeport, CT

**Present:** Jimmy Smith, Valerie Sorrentino, Judy Marella, April Griffin, Fred Frank, Jeri Boyd, Loretta Williams, Mary Ellen Tatten, Ethel Miller-Reith, Mary Bruce, Marta Bisciglia, Richard Hudson, Mike Boyer, Dorothy Grant, Jennifer Edwards, Eileen Lopez-Cordone.

**Guests:** Christine Gaynor, Carrie Kramer, and Gigi Yanez-Hamberger

Valerie Sorrentino called the Real Choice Community Inclusion Task Force Meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. She gave a motion to accept the minutes from February 11, 2005 and March 11, 2005 meeting. The motion was seconded by Chris Gaynor and accepted unanimously.

**UCONN-Report-** Chris Gaynor reported that there were various forum meetings around the state and the last one was held in Westport. A meeting is planned with Easter Seals in Bridgeport for July 2005. The focus of the meeting is to see what's working with transportation services and what isn't. The feedback will be coming from consumers who actually use the services.

**Team Reports**

**Public Attitude Team-** Valerie Sorrentino reported that the team met a few times and was unsuccessful in getting the Second Step Players out of New London. They are off for the summer and they don't start again until the Fall. There is some discussion on having training awareness for city employees to be more sensitive to persons with disabilities. Training is a mandate under A.D.A.

The coloring books are complete and a distribution of 1500 books is expected.

**Housing Team-** Loretta Williams reported that the Landlord Training Workshop was held on April 27, 2005. All panelists were present. Peter Stratton from Winter Associates, did the PowerPoint presentation on accessible housing. Mr. Stratton is on reserve for upcoming events. The majority in attendance were homeowners. The workshop was informative.

**The other panelist were:** Jonas DeGuzman, BHA, Joe Wincze, Bpt. Fair Housing, and Attorney Richard Tenenbaum, Connecticut Legal Services.

**Resource and Information Gap Team** –Eileen Lopez-Cordone reported that the resource book was finished. (“A Road to Services”) Certificates will be given on Monday, May 16, 2005 to the thirteen students with disabilities who worked on the book. All from Central High School. Mayor Fabrizi, the Benefits office, and the Office for Persons with Disabilities are invited to share in the event. A press release did go out by Mayor Fabrizi assistant Caryn Kaufman.

**Advocacy Infrastructure-** Loretta Williams reported that the team went to Hartford, Connecticut (LOB) on May 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> to address the Legislators to close the gap. It was made known to them that DMR is closing as of June 6, 2005 and that it is necessary to expand the services for the Office for Persons with Disabilities.

A PowerPoint presentation was done by Mary Ellen-Tatten and Jennifer Edwards to outline what services the Office for Persons with Disabilities would need.

Most of the population falls through the crack due to the lack of knowing how to correctly fill out an application. There is needed access to existing services as well as new services. The amount of funding requested is a small amount. We are only asking for 1/10 of the 700 Million Dollar surplus. This money would help us track and trend all data.

**New Business:** Marie Jones graduated from Project BluePrint on May 12, 2005 and Loretta Williams is expected to complete the program by December 2005.

Meeting adjourned by Valerie Sorrentino at 11:30 am.

**The next Meeting of Bridgeport Real Choice Task Force will be on July 8, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. in Wheeler Room B.**

Respectfully Submitted,

April S. Griffin  
Community Inclusion Specialist