

**REAL CHOICE COMMUNITY INCLUSION TASK FORCE
Meeting Minutes
July 23, 2003**

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

Present: Tammy Papa, Jill Bruno, Donna Franchini, Fred Frank, Judith Marella, Valerie Sorrentino, Eileen Lopez-Cordone, Jowanne Jackson, Michael Boyer, Kristina Gonzalez, Diane Verde, Ethel Reith-Miller, Adaline DeMarrais, Jimmy Smith, Loretta Williams, Pasqualina Delcegno, Jeri L. Boyd, Gloria Davis, Brenda Dye, Laura Micklus, Marta Bisciglia, Karen Roseman, Tony LaCava, Collin Vice, Roberta Vegidis, Kathleen Hunter and Dorothy Grant

Guests: Mayor John Frabrizi, Caryn Kaufman, Deborah Caviness, from the Mayor's Office Christine Gaynor, Susan Zimmerman, Andy Bate, Diane Verde and Kristina Gonzalez from the A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Development Disabilities Education Research, and Service

Absent: Iris Molina, Leticia Colon, Richard Hudson, Beverly Kraycar, Vera Johns, Pat Balazsi, Luz Velasquez, Debbie Sims, Emma Schulman, Bert Carter, Reverend David Miller, Pastor Carmen Marcano and Mary Bruce

The Real Choice Community Inclusion Task Force Meeting began at 10:10 a.m. Karen Roseman began the meeting. She introduced the Deputy Director of the City of Bridgeport Human Services Department, Valerie Sorrentino who made remarks of welcome and thanks to all for the collaboration efforts of the Bridgeport Task Force, UConn Center for Excellence in Development Disabilities Education Research, and Service, State Department of Social Services, etc.

Ms. Sorrentino introduced Mayor John Frabrizi who welcomed the Task Force members and pledged the full support of his office. He introduced and extended the assistance of his staff Caryn S. Kaufman and Deborah Caviness to the Task Force. The meeting continued with around the room introduction by member.

The Project Staff of Uconn spoke about the Real Choice Systems Change Grant. Project Coordinator, Christine Gaynor gave a synopsis of the Real Choice Systems Change Grant which included a

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description of their overall goal and objectives.

Community Facilitator, Susan Zimmerman conducted a slide presentation on the Real Choice Systems Change focusing on the following:

1. Our overall Goal
2. Community Inclusion
3. Inclusive Community
4. Elements of Inclusion
5. Systems Change Grants
6. Real Choice Steering Committee
7. Grant Staff
8. Model Communities Workgroup
9. Workforce Development Workgroup
10. Community Assessment Workgroup
11. The Ten Bridgeport Objectives
12. Community Mapping
13. Community Mapping Principles
14. Pre-Mapping
15. Real Choice Resources
16. Bridgeport Task Force

Workforce Coordinator, Andy Bate expressed his view on the need for medical insurance for all people and discussed the concept of “money following the person,” whereby a person leaving a nursing home or other institution would keep the same amount of funds to live in the community.

Assessment Coordinator, Kristina Gonzalez informed the group that the grant staff would be conducting a survey to learn if Connecticut citizens with disabilities are able to participate in all desired aspects of community life in the town in which they live. She let everyone know that she would email the survey to all who had email and mail it to those without email.

Karen Roseman discussed and explained how the task force intends to meet their goals and objectives, which are very challenging but workable especially with the involvement and expertise of such a committed and inclusive group of people. She explained the process of prioritizing the ten challenges that face the Bridgeport community which are:

1. Public attitudes
2. Resource and information gap
3. Affordable, accessible, safe housing and support services
4. Public parks
5. Prioritization Curb
6. Access to medical facilities

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7. **Grandparents raising grandchildren with disabilities**
8. **Trained personal assistants**
9. **Disparity of Resources for people with disabilities**

Valerie Sorrentino discussed each of the ten challenges. The Task Force combined #1 Public attitudes and #10 Disparity of Resources, then prioritize the ten challenges. The four that were selected by the Task Force members were:

1. **#1 & #10 Public Attitudes and Disparity of Resources - 15 votes**
2. **#3 Affordable, Accessible, Acceptable Housing and Support Service – 7 votes**
3. **#2 Resource and Information-3 votes**
4. **#7 Diminishing Infrastructure for Resources, Referral and Advocacy -3 votes**

Teams met and set-up meeting for the month of August.

Next Meeting of task force will be in September.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeri L. Boyd