

Northwestern Local Human Rights Committee

The next scheduled meeting of the Northwestern Local Human Rights Committee will be on September 8, 2009 at Northwestern Community Services at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE July 14, 2009 LHRC MEETING

The July 14, 2009 meeting of the Northwestern Local Human Rights Committee was held at Timber Ridge School in Winchester.

Members Present: Mr. Fred Sabia, Ms. Jeanne Decker, Ms. Jean Snider, and Ms. Darlene Gotterup.

Others Present: Mark Seymour (Advocate); Cathy Wolfe-Heberle (Blue Ridge Opportunities); Maureen Cholewka (Blue Ridge Residential Services); Eileen Martelli (Children's Services of VA); Brian Kesner (Community Alternatives); Rachel Heberle (Family Preservation Services); Amy Smith, Dana Papke, Kim Sanders (Grafton); Chris Rousseau (Intensive Supervision); Eddie Cassidy (Lord Fairfax House); Cassie Phipps (Lutheran Family Services); Paul Scardino (National Counseling Group, Inc.); Mark Stavrou and Michele Kasen (NOVA Family Services); Glenda Anderson (NW Works); Tammie Wittmann (Rose Memorial); Mickie Duncan, Barbie Sharp, Sheila Hice (Shen-Paco); Residential Service Coordinator for SVCR; John Lamanna (Timber Ridge); Lana Hurt (Wall Residences); and Mandy Caracofe and Rhonda Leith (Where The Heart Is). Maria Zirkle and Kirsten Almaraz from Winchester CMHC, Inc.

Call To Order: Mr. Sabia called the meeting to order at 6:03. Mr. Sabia introduced himself as the new Chair for the Northwestern Local Human Rights Committee. He asked that everyone introduce themselves and share any new information about their programs.

Meeting Minutes: Ms. Decker made a motion to accept the minutes of May 12, 2009 and Ms. Snider seconded, the motion carried.

Public comments: None

Comments by LHRC Affiliates or Members:

- ❖ Shen-Paco is in the process of writing policies and procedures for a new group home they intend to operate in Page County.
- ❖ Timber Ridge had a regulatory education review, and was granted another three year license. They had 26 graduates last month, highest to date.
- ❖ Lord Fairfax House reported their first client death, believed to be a result of natural causes.
- ❖ Community Alternatives is preparing to break ground on a new group home in Woodstock.

- ❖ Blue Ridge Residential Services has moved into new offices.
- ❖ Lutheran Family Services, which manages the Minick Educational Program, began operating their first therapeutic day treatment program at that location as of July 1, 2009.
- ❖ Blue Ridge Opportunities is happy to report that most clients are out in the community and not inside working.
- ❖ Rose Memorial opened its new Sensory Room.
- ❖ Cross Roads is taking the summer to look at general staff development.

Advocate Update:

Mr. Seymour welcomed and introduced Ms. Darlene Gotterup, the newest member of the LHRC.

Mr. Seymour “unveiled” the new name “*Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services*” (www.dbhds.virginia.gov) This name change was, in part, a way of being more inclusive of the full range of developmental disabilities. The change was effective July 1, 2009.

E-mail addresses have also changed: Chuck Collins: chuck.collins@dbhds.virginia.gov
 Mark Seymour: mark.seymour@dbhds.virginia.gov
 However the old addresses are still good to use.

There was much discussion regarding state-wide budget cuts to state agencies and community services boards. Each was asked to prepare plans that would incorporate cuts this year, and the two following budget years. This most recent request comes on top of last years cuts to DMHMSAS (15%) and CSB’s (5% + a series of local funding cuts). More information will be forthcoming on the amount of the budget reductions and the impacts in the short and long term. The Commonwealth Center which was slated to close remains open at this time. The ground breaking for the new Western State was scheduled for next year but with the economic condition, this may not happen.

Program Reports:

Lutheran Family Services
 National Counseling Group
 NOVA Family Services, Inc.
 NW Works

There was discussion regarding preferences and uses of various restraint techniques.

Program Updates: Grafton updated the committee on restriction number and lengths of time as requested from the May meeting. No names were use so Executive Session was not necessary.

Wall Residences: Ms. Hurt brought 2 issues before the committee. The first concerned the use of a double lock to keep a client from leaving the home without supervision. Several issues were discussed in relation to the suggested restriction. Mr. Seymour felt that the locks described were common to most households for general safety purposes, and that they were therefore not restrictive. Mr. Gleason asked whether or not the double

locks would pose a danger in a licensed facility, and felt that the program should consult with the department licensing agent and/or fire marshall. The committee took no official action on this matter.

The second matter involved a restriction on a resident's email due to inappropriate use. Mr. Gleason noted that the human rights do not specifically address the restriction of email but, rather, letters and telephone calls. Mr. Seymour noted that the student is not being restricted from communicating with others, as he or she still retains the right to send letters and make phone calls. The committee felt that as long as the client could communicate through letter and phone, her rights as enumerated in the human rights plan were not being infringed upon.

Old Business: Mr. Gleason reported that dues for 2010 MAY be waived. Due to the budget situation, conferences and trainings are not being scheduled therefore the funds are not being spent. More information at the next meeting.

New Business: Discussions between Mr. Collins and Mr. Gleason have occurred regarding "Codes of Silence". They feel that after the "settling of the dust" in September from the budget issues, we may consider a training on this subject.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:28

Respectfully Submitted by: _____

Gail R. Partlowe, NWCSB Administrative Assistant

Fred Sabia, Chair

Mark Gleason, LHRC Liaison