



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

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A Note from Commissioner Macy
July 2011

As I write this I am hopeful that the agreement reached over the weekend will bring positive results for everyone affected, from our staffs who have received layoff notices to our thousands of families who would have essential services eliminated. While the last several weeks have been marked by many stresses related to our budget reductions, there have been many other more positive events I have been involved with. Some highlights include the following:

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting North Region Staff at a recent Meet and Greet in the East Hartford office. It was particularly great to re-connect with some staff who I knew from my past life at Hartford Regional Center and from my work as a nonprofit provider working with DDS staff on various committees. It was a great turnout and I'm most appreciative of everyone who took time out of very busy schedules to stop in.

I continued my Family Listening Tours one morning recently as I visited the African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities (AFCAMP). I had learned about this very dynamic parent group through my previous work in the nonprofit community. They are a highly energized group of parents who offer each other parent to parent support, education, advocacy and referral information. They gave us great input about issues that are important to them. Like so many of our other visits with families they want greater access to more information about Department services and supports, better communication with our staff, more help with linkage to other state departments (DCF) and local Boards of Education. Many really need help with in home staff supports and training for example with parenting skills. Also, like our other tours with families, the vast majority of parents want access to resources that will allow their children/adult children to live at home and become productive members of their communities.

One of the most positive highlights of my past few weeks was participating in the launching of our "Consumer Corner" website. I encourage everyone to visit this brand new site. It can be found through a link on the front page of our both our website and the intranet. Many thanks go out to our Self Advocate Coordinators for their significant participation in the design of the site. Joan Barnish was the guiding force in making this a reality as she researched the country for good content and worked with our Self Advocates in making sure it met their needs. Both Dianne Gill and Janice Gaskell played major roles in formatting the web pages and worked closely with their peers at DOIT to bring this great resource online. My thanks to all who made it happen!

I had the unique opportunity last week to join with Deputy Commissioner Kathryn du Pree and Birth to Three Director Linda Goodman in a daylong event sponsored by our sister agency, the Office of Protection and

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Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities. We joined a wide variety of other state agencies, self advocates, human services providers and family members to examine the challenges and opportunities in “Moving Community Services Forward in Difficult Times”. A nationally recognized leader in our field, John O’Brien, facilitated the day’s discussion. John, as some of you will know, has been part of the evolution of DDS services over the years. He in fact developed our current mission statement. Some of the information we heard, particularly the expectations of families, reinforced some of what we’re hearing in our family Listening Tours.

I also had the privilege of visiting our Meriden campus and met a very talented and professional group of DDS staff. It was great to participate with Regional Director Mary McKay and Public Programs Director Scott Wolfe, along with Residential Manager Tim Braziel and Program Supervisors Bernard McNair and Ginger Singletary, in recognizing the achievement of staff of Units A, B, C and Respite for their outstanding ICF survey in June. My thanks to all of the team that made this happen from a wide variety of support staff at all levels and to Tim Long, Rose Cannon, Audrey Silas and Kevin Fitzgerald for their onsite leadership.

Additional thanks go to all the support team and the leadership of the Transitional Unit and Cottage 9 and 12 including House Supervisors Keith Sheppard and Donald Marquis for their incredible achievement of a zero deficiency ICF survey just last week. Behind the scenes efforts and support of the maintenance crew, nursing and clinical staff, case management, and the business office were evident throughout the campus. In every case, it was clear that a very talented staff recognized the value of being a team and worked effectively to meet very high expectations. It was also clear on my tour that every staff I spoke with understand our credo “People and Families First”. In this time of great stress it was clear that the people they support do in fact come first. My sincere appreciation to the work of all!

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