

**DDS South Region  
Regional Advisory and Planning Council  
Meeting Minutes  
May 18, 2016**

**Members Present:** Vice Chair Carol Cooney, David Cassano, Jeffrey DePina, Heidi Earle, Susan Gardner, Britney Gudeahn, Lauralyn Lewis, Kathleen Stauffer, and Thomas Dailey, DDS South Regional Director

**Guests Present:** Jacob Earle, Rich Harkawik, Colleen McGill, Lindsay Mathews, Leslie Bridges and Denise Tift

**Scribe:** Jolie Crescimano-Goss, Executive Secretary, DDS South Region

**Call to Order:** Vice Chair Cooney called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

**New Member Welcome:** Ms. Heidi Earle was welcomed as the Council's newest member.

**Citizen Comment:**

- Mr. Harkawik asked about the role of the RAC. He is a parent of an individual who resides in a DDS publicly operated residential setting that is closing and he is concerned about his family member's future. Member Lewis discussed the role of the RAC.
- Ms. Matthews spoke out against the privatization of the DDS publicly operated group home that her family member lives in.
- Ms. Bridges expressed concern about funding for this year's high school graduates.

**Introductions:** All made introductions.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the March 2016 meeting were reviewed. *Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the March 2016 meeting as presented.*

**Chairperson's Report**

- **Creative Housing Workgroup Update:** Member Gardner gave the report. Planning is underway for another roommate match event sometime in June at Camp Harkness. Member Gardner reviewed the history of the Workgroup and spoke about the residential arrangement she and another parent developed for their sons after meeting one another at the Workgroup's first roommate match event.
- **Field Activity Report:**
  - Member Lewis gave the report. CT DDS Families First pushed for the passing of Senate Bill 294 AN ACT CONCERNING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY during the 2016 legislative session. Among other things, this bill will result in DDS increasing communications with families and legislators. The passing of this bill was a solid first step toward safeguarding families and informing legislators on the needs of families. After three years of advocating for bills with fiscal notes attached, the group's decision to refocus their agenda on more realistic goals found success. All families are

encouraged to get involved in advocating for the DDS population at the legislative level both in Hartford and in their hometown. CT DDS Families First also works to educate families on the issues facing the DDS community and raise families' awareness of opportunities to get involved and stay informed on the issues, i.e. this Council.

- Member DePina will light the ceremonial torch during the opening ceremonies of the 2016 Special Olympics Summer Games on June 10 at Southern CT State University.

### **DDS Administrative Updates**

- Regional Director Dailey discussed and responded to questions about the following:
  - Education and outreach initiatives
  - Closure of 8 publicly operated residential settings on the Meriden Campus and the redeployment of staff to existing vacancies
  - Conversion of DDS publicly operated homes to the Private Sector
  - Plan to close all public settings due to the legislature December 2016
  - Age-outs vs. grads
  - Out of home placement for children
  - PRAT Stats
  - Case management in ICF settings
  - Transfer of residential accounts to DSS
  - DDS Wait List
  - Lay-offs
  - Cost of services in the Public vs. Private Sector
  - CRSs vs. CLAs
  - Anticipated relocation of the Meriden Respite Center to Middletown
  - Increase in utilization of behavioral health services through Beacon
  - Community First Choice program through DSS

**Next Meeting:** June 15, 2016, 6:00 p.m., Acton Library, Old Saybrook, CT

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

*Jolie Crescimano-Goss*

Jolie Crescimano-Goss, DDS South Region Executive Secretary