

CHOOSE WORK – A Supported Employment E-Newsletter from

WI APSE: The Network on Employment

Dear Readers,

Spring has sprung, the flowers are blooming – and Supported Employment is alive and well in Wisconsin! The very popular and informative Integrated Employment Training series is underway in the three locations of Eau Claire, Appleton and Milwaukee. Tammy Hofmeister of DHFS is currently seeking additional funding to provide the training series again next year. With the practical design and experienced trainers, this is a series that job developers can truly benefit from. Tammy has also gotten the Job Developer Website up and running. Anyone can join, so please see the information at the bottom of page five of this newsletter for further information about how to join.

The Self-Employment Training series also started earlier this month. That series is being provided by Shannon Munn in two locations: Rice Lake and Fond du Lac. This is an excellent opportunity to begin to help someone turn an idea about a microenterprise into a reality. Shannon has a comprehensive set of materials and practical tips on how to help a consumer get started with research, business planning, funding and business set-up.

Myrt Sieger and Holly Fentress are in the process of setting up three Brain Injury Trainings this year. These will take place in the Fall in Madison, Eau Claire, and Appleton. The training in Madison will also be webcast so that the information will be accessible to people from a distance and also for viewing after the training. Look for more information about the Brain Injury Trainings in our summer issue.

WI APSE is involved in several exciting projects this year. One of those is the development of a booklet about Innovative Practices in Supported Employment from around Wisconsin. If your organization is currently using new and innovative strategies for work skill development, job development or job coaching, then we want to hear from you! Please contact Nancy Molfenter at nancym_wiapse@earthlink.net (underscore between nancym and wiapse) to set up a time to meet with us about this project.

In addition, we would love to have stories and digital photos from supported employees for this newsletter and other publications. Please send those to us or contact Nancy to see about getting the information you have to share included in WI APSE publications.

The WI APSE Board is currently accepting nominations for new board members. Consumers of supported employment services and also those who are employers of persons with disabilities are especially encouraged to apply. Check our website at www.wiapse.org for more information about the mission of WI APSE and board membership.

Nancy Molfenter, WI ASPE project director

Wisconsin APSE Current Board Members

Beth Lohmann, President

Mike Kleinschmidt, conference committee and web designer

Elaine Leon, Treasurer

Nancy Molfenter, Secretary

Nancy Smith, conference committee

Gary Ormsbee, conference committee and co-president elect

Alyce Knowlton-Jablonski, new board member

Janet Estervig, new board member

Gary Noosbond, consumer

Tammy Hofmeister, DHFS liaison

Rick Hall, DVR liaison

Tammy Forseth, co-president elect

Kathryn Quesnell

PROJECT SEARCH Comes to Wisconsin

Some of you may have heard about Project Search. It is a project that started in Cincinnati, Ohio several years ago as a means of collaborating with hospitals to carve jobs for people with disabilities. Project Search has been quite successful in an Ohio hospital and has been expanding to other states and even to other types of industry. Its focus, however, remains in the hospital sector.

Janet Estervig of WORC heard about Project Search and thought it would be a great idea to work with hospitals in Wisconsin to develop a partnership around employment for people with disabilities. Through collaboration with DHFS and The Waisman Center, Janet is working to create employment opportunities for people with disabilities at hospitals in Wisconsin.

Mission

In 1995 the American College of Healthcare Executives [adopted a policy statement](#) that reads, in part, "...healthcare executives must take the lead in their organizations to increase employment opportunities for qualified persons with disabilities and to advocate on behalf of their employment to other organizations in their communities."

With this statement as a guiding principle, Project SEARCH serves people with disabilities through innovative workforce and career development. Through this process we educate employers about the potential of this underutilized workforce while meeting their human resource needs.

Project SEARCH provides employment and education opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities. The program is dedicated to workforce development that benefits the individual, community and workplace.

Winner of the 2004 Secretary of Labor's New Freedom Initiative Award



Project SEARCH was awarded the [2004 New Freedom Initiative award from the Department of Labor](#). This award recognizes businesses and people that have demonstrated exemplary and innovative efforts in furthering the employment and workplace environment for people with disabilities.





The Cutting Edge:

Getting People with Disabilities Involved in College Life

Dedra Hafner has been on the cutting edge of vocational supports for people with disabilities for many years in the Madison area. For the past few years, she has been working on a doctorate degree at Edgewood College in Madison. During this time, she came up with an idea to help young adults with disabilities to take classes at Edgewood . and to live in the dorms and be part of the college scene. The people involved with the pilot program which is called The Cutting Edge have had opportunities to learn, make friends and hang out with peers.

Through participation in The Cutting Edge, students with disabilities have an opportunity to live in the dorms at Edgewood College in Madison. There are a limited number of accessible dorms there for students who are in need of physically accessible space. Students have been able to enjoy all of the experiences of campus life including dining with fellow students, attending sporting events and clubs and just hanging out to watch television.

Having a mentor to help with the adjustment has also been part of the program. This has given students without disabilities a chance to help someone get to know the ropes around campus. This part of the program helped to grow relationships that might not have materialized otherwise. It clearly has mutual benefits for everyone involved.

As part of this program, students with disabilities also have an opportunity to take coursework in areas that interest them, which can give them an advantage in the job market. Not only does the college coursework give students increased experience and knowledge, but it also teaches time management and how to complete a project from beginning to end. In addition, it can help people figure out what kind of work they want to do.

**SAVE THE DATE SAVE THE DATE
SAVE THE DATE SAVE THE DATE
SAVE THE DATE SAVE THE DATE!**

**THE ANNUAL WI APSE
CONFERENCE WILL BE BACK AT
THE FABULOUS OSTHOFF HOTEL
AND RESORT IN ELKHART LAKE**

OCTOBER 6th, 7th and 8th

With DENISE BISSONNETTE!

SAVE ANOTHER DATE!

**Traumatic Brain Injury
Trainings - Repeat
Performance to Honor those
who were unable to get into
the trainings provided in
2007 due to an
overwhelming response.**

Sept. 5th - Madison

Oct. 31st - Eau Claire

November 7th - Appleton

An Update from Pathways and MIG

Wisconsin's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Is Key to Increased Employment Outcomes

John Reiser, Director-Wisconsin Office of Independence and Employment

"Medicaid buy-in" programs are key elements of many states' efforts to encourage and support persons with disabilities in returning to work, by assuring access to health and long-term care benefits at higher levels of earnings and assets than other Medicaid programs. By the end of 2007, 41 states had implemented a buy-in program.

A Medicaid buy-in can serve as the centerpiece in a state's effort to return people with disabilities to the workforce. Federal grant assistance has been available since 2000 to states wishing to develop a buy-in, and a broad-based, lasting infrastructure of employment services, supports and policies to compliment the buy-in and add value to the existing workforce and vocational rehabilitation systems. "Medicaid Infrastructure Grants" (MIG) have been awarded to 40 states, with awards ranging from several states with \$500,000 annually to just under \$7 million (to Wisconsin in 2008). The size of the annual award relates to several factors, but the two most important are the availability of Personal Assistance Services (PAS) in the workplace and the annual expenditures on services for the state's buy-in participants. Wisconsin's buy-in, the Medical Assistance Purchase Plan or MAPP, is among the nations largest with over 12,000 participants and 2007 expenditures of \$115 million.

The Wisconsin MIG is guided by six strategic priorities, developed through a year long, statewide process of listening sessions, analyses of existing state disability related plans, questionnaires, an environmental scan and a survey of employers needs. The resulting "Pathways Plan" was designed to ensure that Wisconsin will, by the end of the MIG in 2012, have a fully inclusive workforce system that:

- Maximizes employment of people with disabilities;
- Increases the state's labor force by including people with disabilities; and
- Protects and enhances workers' healthcare, other benefits and needed supports.

Wisconsin has held a MIG since 2000. By 2008 the grant has expanded to fund over 30 distinct and interrelated projects ranging from work incentive benefits counseling for transition age youth to a technical assistance center for employers.

The national MIG program, administered by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, seeks to achieve lasting systems change at the state level, resulting in improved employment outcomes for people who are, or are likely to be, Medicaid reliant due to disability. Wisconsin is on the path toward dramatic systems change in the way long-term care services are provided and the MIG is playing a key role.

Wisconsin's Governor has instructed the state's Medicaid agency to expand the "Family Care" model to bring all long-term care services to Medicaid eligible people under management. The MIG project has been charged with developing a "blueprint" for the vocational services and supports to be integrated into Family Care. The desired outcome of this effort is increased community, integrated employment

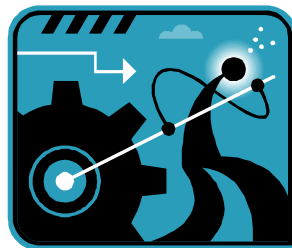
for Family Care members. The blueprint is being developed by the “Managed Care and Employment Task Force” or MCETF.

Nearly 30 stakeholders were selected to serve on the MCETF and represent state VR , community providers, Care Management Organizations, Wisconsin’s array of Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Public Instruction, advocacy organizations, Community Rehabilitation Providers and consumers. The Task Force is supported by MIG staff and a cadre of “content experts” ranging from job development experts to rehabilitation counselors to Medicaid policy analysts.

The initial meeting of the Task Force was held in May 2007. Seven “Issue Committees” were formed to undertake an in depth review and analyses of current and best vocational service practices, Family Care and Medicaid policies, and other elements of a comprehensive and effective vocational program that will ensure any Family Care member wishing to work in an integrated setting will have a chance to do so and at a wage commensurate with other workers not having a disability. Over 120 recommendations have been forwarded by these committees to the full Task Force for approval and inclusion in a final report due at the end of June 2008, describing current status and a proposed model for the future of Family Care.

Implementation of the recommendations approved for Family Care will be the primary responsibility of the MIG project for the remaining years of the grant. If done well they promise to result in the type of fundamental systems change the Medicaid Infrastructure Grants and Medicaid Buy in programs were designed to create.

For more information about Wisconsin’s Medicaid Infrastructure Grant contact the author at reisejr@dhfs.state.wi.us.



Job Developer Network Website

If you haven’t had chance to check out the Job Developer Website yet, take a look when you have a chance. There is lots of great information – even more if you decide to join and become a member! This is also a great way to network with other job developers – without having to leave the office. It’s as easy as www.jobdevelopers.net/wisconsin (be sure to add the Wisconsin at the end!)

- **WI APSE has taken on a project to collect and compile information about INNOVATIVE PRACTICES in Supported Employment from around Wisconsin. If your organization has been implementing a practice that you think is innovative – and working well – please contact Nancy Molfenter at the e-mail below to see about getting your information included.**



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please send submissions, including articles, information, resources, to:

Nancy Molfenter

WI APSE

nancym_wiapse@earthlink.net

Don't forget to check out the links on the WI and National APSE: The Network on Employment websites.....lots of great learning opportunities that you can enjoy without ever leaving your office.
www.wiapse.org and www.apse.org.

AND REMEMBERWHEN EVERYBODY WORKS, EVERYBODY WINS!

