

VERMONT SELF-DETERMINATION PROJECT MONTHLY (and a half) UPDATE September-October, 1998

Self-Determination Policy Guidelines: "Working Document": A subcommittee of Project staff met to revise, edit and produce a "working document" of the policy guidelines for Project staff during the month of September. Feedback from the Self-Determination Advisory Board, DDS staff, consumers, families, and providers was incorporated into the document which was disseminated at the beginning of October. The document is to be viewed as a guideline for individuals receiving technical assistance from Project staff, and its content will be changed, modified, and altered as needed throughout the duration of the Project. To receive a copy, please contact the Project office at: 1-888-268-4860 or through your regional facilitation team.

Project Brochure: Project staff completed work on developing a statewide Project brochure, which describes the mission, goals, and responsibilities of Project staff. Prior to the statewide brochure, each regional team had developed its own brochure, which was being disseminated at local meetings, trainings, and referrals with consumers and families. For a copy of the new brochure, please contact the Project office at: 1-888-268-4860.

NW Consumer Facilitator: The Northwest regional facilitation team would like to welcome its newest member, Susan Aichcroth. Sue began work on September 25. Sue lives in her own apartment in Shelburne, Vermont, and has plenty of prior work experience in the community.

"Green Mountain Choices and Voices Conference": The first annual joint conference sponsored by the Vermont Peer Support Network (VPSN) and the Self-Determination project was a HUGE success. There were 242 individuals who attended the conference at the Holiday Inn in Rutland. There were keynote addresses by nine of the new VPSN representatives to the Board of Managers. There were awards to self-advocates and support group advisors, people nominated by their local self-advocacy groups. The six breakout sessions were: Relationships and Self-Esteem by Joe Hasazi, Rights and Responsibilities by Martin Rachels, Computers by Pascal Cravedi-Cheng, Board Membership and Legislative Issues by the Vermont ARC, the Pursuit of Non-Trivial: Self-Determination by Project staff, and Getting a Job by Champlain Vocational Services consumers and staff, and other supported employees. Finally, there were door prizes, donated by businesses from around the state, topped off by the "Green Mountain Tea Party." Overall, a good time was had by all, and the general consensus was that another conference be organized for next year.

Intermediary Service Organization: A Request for Proposals (RFP) is being prepared, outlining the scope of responsibilities and capacities for an intermediary service organization to handle payroll and employment-related issues for consumers and families interested in hiring/employing/contracting with staff for support provision.

Three R's Training: On September 1, the Self-Determination Project, the University of Vermont's University Affiliated Program, and the Vermont Peer Support Network sponsored a training called: "The 3 R's: Rights, Roles and Responsibilities - A Training Workshop on Best Practices." The purpose of the training was to discuss and highlight different experiences and responsibilities of consumers, providers, and administrators' roles in directing and managing services. Lynnette Reep, an interpreter for the deaf, discussed the role, training, and ethics of being an interpreter. She highlighted the Code of Ethics developed and used by interpreters for the deaf, and some of the dilemmas and situations with which she has had experience. Dan Gillman, a consumer with the Department of Aging and Disabilities' Consumer-Directed Personal Care Attendant Services Program, and a consultant with the Vermont Assistive Technology Program, talked about his personal experience. Dan spoke of having relied on agency staff for his attendant services and the evolution to managing/directing his own attendants over the last two years. Finally, Michelle Burnham, the supported employment coordinator for United Counseling Services of Bennington County, talked about her experience of working with one of the consumer facilitators for the Self-Determination Project in providing the work-related employment supports. All three of the speakers were candid in outlining the positive experiences of their work and discussing some of the difficulties/barriers in providing/facilitating the necessary supports. There were 40 people in attendance, including Project staff, self-advocates, providers, and administrators.

Peer Support Network Activities: The regional facilitation teams have been spending a lot of time getting to know their local peer support groups, and developing relationships with self-advocates around the state. There are three new groups which have recently begun meeting in Lamoille County, St. Johnsbury, and Hardwick. In addition, Project staff have been actively involved in the Vermont Peer Support Network meetings on a monthly basis.

Consumer Facilitators Meetings: The four consumer facilitators have begun meeting with their supervisor, Nola Denslow, on a bi-weekly basis, to discuss issues related to their jobs, and to support one another through their work endeavors.

Meeting of Provider Facilitators and Developmental Service Program Directors: On September 2, the provider regional facilitators met with the DS Directors at the directors' monthly meeting. The purpose was to discuss issues around

collaboration, common themes/issues with technical assistance of Project staff, and how to facilitate better cooperation and communication between the providers and Project staff.

Conference Presentations of the "Pursuit of Non-Trivial: Self-Determination: Project staff prepared for three presentations on the "Pursuit" game, to be conducted in October. The first conference was the joint Vermont Peer Support Network/Self-Determination conference on October 5, and for the two transition school to work conferences to be held October 21 and 26. The staff tailored questions and issues to be best suited to the audiences at each conference.

DDS Funding Training: On September 15, many Project staff attended the DDS funding training for designated agencies in Waterbury. DDS staff reviewed the structure, decision-making processes, responsibilities, risk pool/equity fund, and other related issues.

Reminder: The Self-Determination Advisory Board next meets on TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3 FROM 10 AM - 12 PM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, BASEMENT FLOOR, WEEKS BUILDING IN WATERBURY. Anyone is welcome to attend. To submit agenda items, please contact the Project office at: 1-888-268-4860.