



# Florida Center for INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

## FCIC Community Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes Conference Call - March 20, 2020 - 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

**CAC Members Present:** Chatequa Pinkston, Danielle McGill, E. Keith Berry, Eddie Hall, Kelli Mondello, Kimberly Spire-Oh, Krystal Sims, Mildretta Williams, John Howell, Margaret Hooper (alternate for Valerie Breen), Rebecca Best, Selina O'Shannon, Shelly Baer, Wendy Metty

**FCIC Staff Members:** Brenda Clark, Chris Vatland, Elizabeth Perkins, Laura Rodriguez-Lopez, Lise Fox

**1. Welcome: Keli Mondello, Chair,** Keli acknowledged the COVID-19 pandemic and encouraged everyone to be safe and practice the CDC prevention recommendations.

**2. Roll Call: Brenda Clark**

**3. November Meeting Minutes Approval: Keli Mondello** Brenda noted the following revision submitted from John Howell, SunCoast Region Director of Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: *DVR currently has over 6,000 participants in Area 4; 48,000 statewide. In October, DVR held a Disability Employment Awareness Celebration in St. Pete where employers were recognized for hiring persons with disabilities. Some of the employers recognized were Johns Hopkins, Stream Recycling, and others. Through Work Readiness Training, a Pre-Employment Transition Service, VR can help pay employers for OJT. DVR has had lots of progress with it, including getting private and charter schools to become registered as vendors. Additionally, Zachary Gottsagen, an actor with Down syndrome starring in the movie, Peanut Butter Falcon, was a VR consumer!*

Krystal Sims Motion to accept the minutes with the revision, seconded by John Howell, motion passed unanimously.

**4. FCIC CAC New Members Introductions: Keli Mondello**

- **E. Keith Berry** – Leon County

Keith Berry is married with two children, one of which is his son with Autism. He is an information technology professional in Tallahassee. His passion is to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to citizen services as well as ensuring members of the public are aware of how to address various disabilities in light of FL SB7026 to tighten gun control, school security and school safety. He serves on several state and local advisory boards related to education supports and services. He is Co-chair of the Florida DOE BEESS State Advisory Committee (SAC that provides policy guidance with respect to the provision of exceptional education and related services for Florida's children with disabilities), Mentor and Coach at Rickards High School, and Committee member of the William J Montford III Middle School's School Advisory Committee.

- **Chatequa Pinkston** – Hillsborough County

Chatequa Pinkston lives in Tampa, and is Founder of Hidden Treasures Ministries. This is a non-profit organization with the vision of ministry that people will find the purpose and plan of God for their lives that may have been hidden. Her organization reaches out to those with physical, cognitive, and

behavioral health challenges through ministry. She is an alumna of USF with a degree in Computer Science and teaches computer skills to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities at HOPE Academy. She serves on the Board of YES! of America United, Inc. an organization that promotes the full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities and is the point person for managing their website. Chatequa shared that she has Cerebral Palsy and advocated for herself by writing letters and meeting with APD to get off the waitlist. She authored several books focused on spirituality support of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in spiritual communities.

#### **5. FCIC CAC Members Highlights:**

- **Kimberley Spire-Oh, Esq.** - Palm Beach County
  - Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) National Conference
  - State Advisory Committee for ESE

Kimberley serves on several committees and boards. She reported on the recent State Advisory Committee meetings and LDA Conference. The SAC meeting raised issues about discipline/Baker Acts/school removal/arrests due to the MSD High School Safety Act, and the anticipation of a document that the group will make decisions on at the next meeting in July.

The focus from the Learning Disabilities Association Conference held in Orlando was on transition from high school and testing accommodations. She also shared public policy concerns and implications affecting key areas, including standardization of documentation requirements for higher education accommodations (RISE ACT) and elimination of graduation requirement tests. Part B of the IDEA does not cover evaluations for accommodations needs for college entrance exams. Kimberley also shared statewide concerns related to compliance and dispute resolution for students with disabilities at the advisory committee meeting.

- **Danielle McGill** - Broward County  
Disabilities & Transportation Awareness Day -Tallahassee.

Danielle provided an update on advocacy efforts during D & T Awareness Day in Tallahassee. She noted that many organizations participated. The DD Council rally was successful and well attended. She noted that during the rally, advocacy for iBudget waiver and other APD needs were emphasized. She highlighted the Legislative Bill – Transportation 551 pass through House, Transportation Disadvantage did not pass due to funding through Senate (to cross county lines for employment, entertainment and health care needs).

Brenda announced that Danielle received the Idelio Valdez Leadership and Advocacy Award during the DD day at the state capital, a statewide recognition and honor! She explained that the award is Florida's top honor recognizing an individual with a developmental disability. The award acknowledges the self-advocate who has helped develop partnerships for the facilitation of community integration, employment and inclusion for Floridians with developmental disabilities. Danielle received the award from the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) and Representative Evan Jenne of District 99 (Dania Beach – Broward).

#### **6. FCIC Highlights**

- **Lise Fox** – FCIC Co-Director
  - FCIC Retreat – Prep for Next Five Years
  - Personnel Updates

Lise congratulated Danielle on the Idelio Valdez award. She provided an update on the development of the new UCEDD 5-year grant submission. The FCIC management team participated in a day-long retreat

with program leaders to address work implemented by the over 130 staff of the Center. Thoughtful discussions about how to work together across programs and with community; improve systems of implementation, practices, research, technical assistance, and training; and enhance the quality of life of people with disabilities and their family. The recommendations and suggestions from the FCIC CAC, the statewide survey, and information gathered through the community conversations and webinar were incorporated into the development of the plan goals and activities. The final proposal will be complete and submitted within the next couple of weeks.

Two major staff changes occurred since the in-person meeting held November. The retirement of Dr. Karen Berkman, the Executive Director of Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) for the past 16 years. Under Dr. Berkman's leadership many initiatives were implemented such as Fiesta by the Bay, Autism Friendly City, Autism Friendly Businesses, Learning Academy employment support, Learning Academy post-secondary education program and many others. After a national search, Dr. Beth Boone to serve as the next CARD Executive Director. She comes with excellent experience and knowledge having served as Director of the Mississippi UCEDD, the Institute for Disability Studies (IDS), led the Interdisciplinary Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) fellowship program, and is a licensed clinical psychologist.

The Florida Training and Technical Assistance Center of the Home Instruction for Parents and Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) Assistance Program Director, Dabaram Rampersad, is also retiring. Lise stated that he has been a key member of the leadership for HIPPY for over twenty years at both the state and national levels. She noted that Dabaram is a quiet and strong force in the ongoing work of HIPPY. She recognized that he was very instrumental in the transition of HIPPY's pivotal continuation a couple of years ago when we unexpectedly lost our director of HIPPY. Lise listed Dabaram's great contributions to the success of the HIPPY programs and that she stated that he would be sorely missed. Lise advised that FCIC have begun the recruitment process to hire for that position.

- **Liz Perkins** – FCIC Associate Director
  - COVID-19

Liz provided an update on COVID-19 and its impact on people with disabilities and referenced a resource list that was sent to FCIC CAC. She noted that many of the websites/resources listed on the document are updated regularly, and include some from FCIC programs. FCIC will post updated COVID resources on a dedicated webpage, accessible on the rotating banner of the FCIC home page. Liz further encouraged everyone to share the information found on the FCIC Website community page and CARD Resources where social stories and great videos are available. She also referenced a webinar she recommends for Direct Support Professionals by Dr. Rick Rader. Liz further advised that as so much information was being rapidly disseminated, that it is very important to utilize trusted resources such as the CDC.

## **7. DD Network Representative Updates**

- **Margaret Hooper** – *Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC)*

Margaret shared recent legislative advocacy accomplishments – Save the iBudget waiver campaign, APD and ACHA redesign advocacy. The budget included \$241 million for funding APD deficit spending from the past two years, \$58 million for resources for unique abilities, \$27 million for personal supports provider rate increases, and \$30 million to serve additional clients on the Home and Community Based

Services Waiver Waitlist. Unfortunately, there is concern that as the state gets most revenue from tourism – sales tax, that the COVID-19 pandemic may greatly affect this budget. It is possible that the budget may need to be revisited in June for adjustments, cuts, and vetoes. Margaret also noted an easy read COVID-19 description and 5-year plan for FDDC is on the FDDC website.

- **Selina O’Shannon – *Disability Rights Florida (DRF)***

DRF is shifting to virtual technology, and all staff are working from home. Staff are extremely busy converting to an online process – not sure how to impact children with IEP. Qualified ASL, emergency management teams, superintendents, do not delay services to students with IEP, distance learning of students and parents on website. Technical Assistance provided to families and caregivers to access Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Social Security Administration, and transportation. Selina shared that many people want to know how to move forward with funding delay of IDEA and health care and other licensed entities. She reminded all to keep an eye on the Economic stimulus bill – moving back to Congress and policy updates to not compromise rights for persons with disabilities.

- **Shelly Baer – *Mailman Center for Child Development (MCCD)***

Shelley provided an overview of Mailman LEND and the renewal of their 5 year training grant cycle of health care professionals. She shared that the Mailman LEND is one of the longest LENDS in U.S. for about 30 years. She explained that her role focuses on the leadership pipeline programs. The Emerging Transformational Leadership Program (ETLP) focuses on early to mid-level career professionals who want to create systems change in the disability community. ETLF is in its 9th Year. Self-Advocate Leadership Program (SALT) will resume in January. She noted that after one completes the SALT program they may become a LEND Trainee. Student Emerging Leaders Program (SELF) is for high school students with and without disabilities. At this time, the program is being postpone due to social distancing and may reconvene in September. Clinical, training and evaluation services are providing utilizing telehealth through Zoom.

## **8. Agency Representative Updates**

- **John Howell – *Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)***

John Howell, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) – John congratulated Danielle on the Idelio Valdes award. He shared that all offices are close to public to minimize exposure to COVID-19. All are able to conduct business as usual working from home. Changes with school systems and ensure things are going as smoothly as possible for consumer. As a whole – exciting year 100 anniversary of DVR. In 1920 the Woodrow Wilson Smith acts was signed which is the basis of DVR. The intent of the ACT focused on many of the soldiers coming out of WWI rehab act then opened to civilians. Anticipate large celebrations without the social distancing as much as possible than what we have now. He also announced their new DVR Bureau Chief of Field Services – Antoinette Williams, PhD; many may know her from Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) as well as Division of Blind Services (DBS).

- **Wendy Metty – *Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES)***

Wendy shared that DOE BEES is updating daily with all the changes taking place with COVID-19, extended Spring break, online instruction, implementation of IEP, and latest resources and information related to COVID-19 for everyone. She stated that at this time hospital and homebound schooling will be done remotely. Statewide educators are in discussion to consider video conferencing as a solution for all students. The virtual platforms will now benefit students who have historically been isolated. Districts are sending home My Fi apps, laptops, and other virtual program support. Selina shared additional supports and Keith noted free internet service to families to support student ongoing access

to their education. Kimberly shared that special education attorneys are offering problem-solving supports to families and are brainstorming to bring groups together to problem solve.

**Rebecca Best - Agency for Health Care Administration.**

AHCA is primarily focused on the making the iBudget waiver being the most effective and efficient. AHCA is coordinating with their counterpart at Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to get certain waiver requirements waived so that recipients may continue services. Some examples are: use of video conferencing for people who want to exercise social distancing for services and supports required by waiver; consumable supplies throughout the crisis regardless of the limitations normally; waiving requirements to receive services in certain locations so they may receive services while in their home; provider qualifications so that parents and guardians in the home may provide services as oppose to providers coming into their spaces and receive supervision by providers for more skilled type of services. Rebecca shared that a FAQ will be posted on their website and encouraged the submission of questions pertaining to how social distancing will affect services and supports.

**9. Announcements: Keli Mondello**

*Next Meeting* – Online Meeting

*Date:* June 19, 2020

*Time:* 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

**Final Roll Call: Brenda Clark**

**Adjournment: Keli Mondello at 12.35pm**