

Redwood Coast Developmental Services Corporation
Board of Directors Meeting
Ukiah, January 12, 2019

Executive Directors Report

I am going to depart from my usual report format, to provide an overview of the challenges and achievements of Redwood Coast Regional Center in the past year. As I write this at the end of 2018, I am impressed by what we have accomplished and overcome. At the years end, RCRC is a strong, effective and stable organization committed to our inclusive, person centered vision.

Once again, our communities have been challenged by natural disaster. The Redwood Complex Fires, the largest in our states history, tested us as a community. Although many were displaced, some lost homes, many experienced trauma, no lives were lost, and no serious injuries reported. As a Regional Center, our staff collaborated with our community partners, to ensure the health and safety of the individuals and families we serve. Our Service Providers “stepped up”, showing impressive commitment, selflessness and bravery to relocate clients at risk, assist them to remain calm in spite of real threats, and to return home once it was safe to do so. I am convinced that their actions prevented disastrous outcomes, and reduced the trauma clients experienced.

Our response to the fires was far from perfect, and we learned a lot about what is necessary moving forward. We are committed to continually evaluate, revise and improve our disaster response protocols and procedures. We will conduct ongoing training for our staff and community members. We are meeting with our community partners, first responders, Office of Emergency Services, the Red Cross, to name a few, to assess what is needed and build relationships that will improve our response next time.

At the time of this writing, we experience a historically low staff vacancy factor, approximately 2%. We have two vacancies in Service Coordination, agency-wide. We are recruiting for two management positions, Director of Administration, and Client Services Manager for Lake County. We will be interviewing for the management positions in January. We continue to have unacceptably high caseload ratios, and have informed the Department of Developmental Services that we require at least four Service Coordinator positions.

Our Agency is doing pretty well financially this year. Our operations budget will allow us to provide all employees with a 2.5% COLA beginning on January 1, 2019. This is important as we want to recognize the efforts of our workforce, and retain the talented and committed members of our staff. We feel comfortable doing this due to significant savings we were able to realize in the cost of health care benefits for the coming year. We are able to offer a generous set of benefits at reduced cost to

employees and RCRC. This helps with both recruitment and retention, which in turn supports the stability and responsiveness of our staff.

We continue to enjoy a positive and collaborative relationship with the Department of Developmental Services. I believe this is due to the quality of our work, as evidenced by the timely reporting of required data, the quality of our internal and DDS audits, and the efforts we make to nurture warm, professional and collegial relationships with Departmental staff. The members of our Directors Team are active contributing members of ARCA.

Looking ahead to 2019, there are many opportunities to be excited about. The expansion of the Self Determination Program provides opportunities for more of our clients and their families to direct their own services. Our Employment initiatives are making progress toward competitive, integrated employment and career development experiences for more of the individuals we serve. Through our diversity initiative we are increasing our community presence and reaching out to underserved communities. We seek to empower parents and support families through education, support groups and peer supports.

We confront some familiar challenges in the coming year. The high incidence of abuse in our communities reflects what is a statewide and national problem. It will be a priority in the coming year to establish a zero tolerance approach to abuse through training and technical assistance to service providers and law enforcement; advocacy through the legal system, and proactive training to clients, families and community members.

We will continue our efforts to improve access to healthcare, dental services and behavioral health supports. We will work to improve access to existing affordable housing and work with DDS and our community partners to develop more affordable housing units. We will redouble our efforts to ensure that youth are educated in the least restrictive environment through advocacy and parent education.

I will address these issues in my presentation to the Board of Directors at our January meeting. Until then, I wish you all a very Happy New Year.

Rick