

Redwood Coast Regional Center
Executive Directors Report
RCDSC Meeting
July 20, 2018

Once again we confront fire season and as I write, a large fire once again has created a natural disaster in Lake County. All clients in the affected area are accounted for, and our staff and service providers are monitoring the situation. I am very proud of the way we work together to keep our clients, their families, our staff, and service providers informed and safe. Disasters like these remind us of how precious life is, and how much we cherish each other and the beautiful places we call home.

Here is a brief description of some of the issues and activities I will be reporting to you at the upcoming meeting.

Board Development

I have invited Dr. Lucy Esralew to conduct the Board Development activity connected to our annual meeting. I have asked Dr. Lucy to present an overview of developmental disabilities followed by a discussion of mental health in persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. What we know about developmental disabilities is continually evolving, and our understanding of how developmental disabilities influence development across the lifespan is essential to the work we do. Dr. Lucy is a dynamic presenter and she is a nationally recognized expert on issues of dual diagnosis. There will be time for questions and discussion. Her presentation will be followed by lunch and I'm sure, more discussion.

Community Safety and Work with Law Enforcement

Once again we are in fire season. At the time I am writing this, the Pawnee fire in Lake County has burned 13,700 acres, and is 56% contained. Once the evacuation order had been lifted, I visited the Spring Valley Community Service Center in Clearlake Oaks. The scene was truly devastating. This is the earliest large fire in our area in the past several years, a cause for concern. Our staff responded to the fire effectively, and our service providers in Lake County assisted us to ensure the health and safety of our clients and their families.

In anticipation of fire season, I and my Directors Team have been focused on disaster preparedness. We have reviewed our disaster response procedures, and participated in training with the Office of Emergency Services (OES). We received training in disaster response from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and are working with the Department to implement a disaster response system, Everbridge. The Everbridge system has the ability to help us locate RCRC clients, staff and service providers in seconds. It has a notification system that enables us to notify our community of emerging threats by text, phone and email, to inquire if individuals are located in disaster areas, and to inquire if they need assistance.

On June 18, I met with Chief Lizarraga of the Ft Bragg Police Department, along with Sheli Wright (SCDD) and Rick Moon, Executive Director of Parents and Friends. Mr. Joe Ayres was also in attendance. It was a very productive meeting, resulting in plans for RCRC and SCDD to provide training and consultation to the Ft Bragg PD, and other law enforcement agencies across our 4 counties.

Affordable Housing

Since our last meeting, we have continued to collaborate with Rural Communities Housing Development Corporation (RCHDC) to improve access to affordable housing for RCRC clients and to participate in the development of affordable housing projects. We are working with RCHDC to submit an application for development funds for the Orr Creek project in Ukiah. It is a 2 phase project that will potentially create 10 units of affordable housing for RCRC clients in phase 1, and an additional 10 units in phase two.

I collaborated with the Mendocino County Housing Authority to submit an application for HUD housing vouchers that, if awarded, will provide up to 25 portable vouchers that could be used by our clients to obtain affordable housing in our 4 counties.

I attended a Multi-family housing development meeting sponsored by DDS and presented an overview of housing needs in our area. I learned that over the next several months there will be a number of opportunities to apply for housing development funds, and received assurances from an official from the State Housing and Community Development Department that an application from our Regional Center area, would receive favorable consideration.

Human Resources and the 2018 Employee Satisfaction Survey

As of July 1, 2018, our hiring freeze will be lifted. In anticipation of the start of a new fiscal year, we have begun recruiting for open positions, with good results. It looks as if it's going to be another tight year for our operations budget and it's unclear whether we are adequately funded to add any positions in response to growth in the number of clients served. We will have more reliable projections concerning our Operations budget and staffing in September.

In May, our Human Resources Manager conducted a survey of Employee Satisfaction. 74% of staff responded to the survey, which is an impressive result. The survey helps us to evaluate employee satisfaction and concerns as well as evaluating our progress in areas where need for improvement was previously identified. The survey collected statistical data as well as narrative (qualitative) data. The survey data indicates that we are an organization that is doing well in many areas, but also that there are important areas where we need to improve. This data is important because we cannot grow as an agency if we are not aware of our collective challenges and concerns.

As evident from the attached Employee Satisfaction Survey Comparison sheet, we continue to see an increase of positive responses in most areas such as employee recognition, an empowerment to take initiative, and being provided learning opportunities.

I look forward to seeing you all in Ukiah on July 20 & 21st.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Blumberg, PhD
Executive Director