

**Redwood Coast Developmental Services Corporation  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Ukiah- September 21, 2019**

**Executive Directors Report**

Summer passes and we welcome the Fall. The summer was an active time at RCRC, and the Fall is looking to be even more eventful. In my written report, I will try to feature some of the more exciting and important things that occurred since our last meeting and the major events and activities we are planning and anticipating.

**The 2019-20 Budget**

On July 30<sup>th</sup>, Mary Block, Amy Medina and I met with DDS Director, Nancy Bargmann, and her leadership team, to advocate for enhanced Operations funding, and reimbursement for certain operations expenses. It was a productive meeting and there have since been follow up communications with DDS. On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, Mary Block and I met with the Executive Director of ARCA, who traveled to our Ukiah office, to discuss strategies for effective advocacy for adequate funding levels for RCRC.

Our rationale in these meetings is that the funding formulas that make sense for larger Regional Centers do not capture the unique needs and challenges of the Redwood Coast Regional Center community. We simply do not have the personnel and resources that are needed. Over the past year, I have been making this argument at every opportunity.

We have received our first allocation (A1) and it does not address our OPS problem. We are expecting an amendment to our OPS budget in September that will likely provide some funding for needed positions, but is unlikely to adequately address the growth we've experienced. We will continue our advocacy on all levels, but to sustain quality services, we must innovate.

**Associate Service Coordinators**

At the Director's Team, we have been involved in a process of analyzing our operations budget and considering various strategies for ensuring that quality person centered services are sustainable going forward. It's no secret that we are not adequately funded to meet caseload ratios, and while this is unacceptable, it is a longstanding statewide problem. Our intent is to identify strategies consistent with our vision, and reflecting the realities of our communities.

We are proposing to establish a new position within Service Coordination, an Associate Service Coordinator. This position would require an individual possess an Associates Degree from an accredited college in human services, social welfare, psychology, public health, special education, or other related field, or an equivalent number of semester credit hours from a four year institution in these disciplines, and two years of paid relevant experience.

The Associate Service Coordinator (ASC) would be assigned to a Senior Service Coordinator/Team Leader and/or Early Start Coordinator, who will act as a Mentor in teaching and modeling the essential duties and responsibilities of Service Coordination. The ASC under supervision will be responsible for caseload based on the needs of the Agency.

There are some things that make this position an attractive, good fit for our communities. Nationwide, enrollment in undergraduate and graduate programs have been declining for over a decade. There is a competition for college educated employees that is only going to get tougher. County governments have been adopting this type of position in their human services programs for some time. For decades, Education has offered emergency credentials to non-degreed teachers with a certain level of educational experience.

People in our area have difficulty affording a four year college experience. This strategy may enable RCRC to provide a pathway for talented, experienced individuals with sufficient entry level educational credentials, to obtain professional careers. I believe that we need to “build our own”, create opportunities for members of our community to work where they live, and develop the educational/professional credentials that will serve them, and our community.

### **The Redwood Coast Community Plan**

Since our July meeting, I have been holding discussions with consultant, Anh Nyugen, Laura Larson of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), and members of our Directors Team about strategies for the development of our Redwood Community Plan. I would like to increase community participation in the creation of a collaborative plan that will provide meaningful goals and measurable outcomes for RCRC, the Board of Directors and the State Council. This is an exciting opportunity to re-energize our vision, build on the power of our collaborations, clearly state the priority goals we value most, and the specific actions we will take to achieve them. At our September meeting, I will present a draft proposal for the development of the Community Plan, activities, timelines and costs associated with the activities.

### **Community Safety**

In August, we collaborated with our North Coast office of the SCDD to provide Safety Training and Risk Reduction workshops for self advocates, family members and service providers. A training was held for law enforcement at the College of the Redwoods. Generally, attendance at the community workshops was disappointing. I attended the training for self advocates in Ukiah, found it be very engaging, with a high degree of participation. One of the participants exclaimed “this is the best training I’ve ever been to”.

Laura Larson has reached out to the “We Care a Lot Foundation” to provide safety trainings in our communities. Laura worked with this organization to provide a variety of trainings in the

FNRC area. I have asked her to make a brief presentation about the group at our September meeting. In the meantime, you can learn about them at: [www.wecarealot.org](http://www.wecarealot.org)  
We have to do a better job of marketing our many meetings and training events. Which brings me to...

### **Communication**

I have shared the frustration of community members who express that they “don’t know who we are or what we do” or didn’t know we were holding a meeting or educational event. We have to improve our ability to communicate through multi-media. I have been discussing media strategies with Anh Nyugen to include redesign of the RCRC website, and improving our use of traditional media (radio, newspapers) and social media. In August, I met with Allison Hillix, who has generously volunteered to help RCRC to produce a newsletter. We are making use of community radio for public service announcements and will increase our use of print media. The problem with these activities is that they take time and resources. I believe we must find and commit people and funds to solve our “communication problem”.

### **Customized Employment**

One of the exciting features of our current employment initiative is an approach called “Customized Employment”. This is an approach to competitive, integrated employment that is based on a person’s strengths, needs and interests, and the negotiation with an employer of a customized job description that meets the needs of both parties. I have asked Kim Nash to provide an overview of this approach, our other employment activities and collaborations.

There are many other exciting things happening at RCRC including our Self Determination Program, Diversity Outreach Activities, clinical/community education and our affordable housing initiative. My plan is to highlight these at upcoming meetings (and in our coming newsletter).

I look forward to seeing you all on September 21<sup>st</sup> in Ukiah.

Rick