

January 20, 2009

## OMRDD Subcommittee Minutes

### Present:

Dave Rider – Taconic DDSO

Tracy Powell- Parent Rep

Florence Ohle CAGC

Bridget Allen – Parent Rep

Davia Montie, owner of a therapeutic horse ranch in Jewett was scheduled to present to group, but did not attend meeting. I will follow up and reschedule, hopefully for February's meeting.

Tracy informed the group that she and her husband attended the NYS Assembly's Autism Hearing, and that she presented testimony. She will email her testimony, and I will forward to rest of the group. Tracy stated that one of her focuses, and that of the larger group, was the need for changes in health insurance so that services would be covered. Too many families experience financial hardship and need to make tough choices when so many of the required therapies are paid out of pocket. Another great need expressed was that for family supports. Aside from the help that families need in caring for a loved one with autism, keeping a loved one home is less expensive than providing residential placement, and this is the State's opinion as well. There was much interest and many questions asked by the assemblyman present.

Discussion once again on the need for an information fair, or transition informational event- that the need in Greene County was great. Ideas for outreach included through Early Intervention, schools, press releases and cable TV. Discussion on when this would take place, how transportation and daycare were both deterrents for many parents to come out to such an event, and how time consuming such an event would be to be put together.

Bridgett suggested a "webinar", and I will do research on how this could be done. Perhaps if a panel was brought together at the Community College, we could then "web cast" so that parents could listen and ask questions from their homes, libraries, etc.

There was discussion on the goals of the committee, the main one was to bring information to the local government, and then state, on what services were available and what was needed yet in our community. Although the need exists for more direct service to parents, in the way of providing information, the committee members have neither the time nor funding to be that person. Again, the need for a paid position for Greene County residents, the point person, who would advise on local services, was discussed.

Bridgette questioned "211", which exists in other counties.

Bridgette shared that while at an Autism Society Meeting, she learned of a high school group called LEADD, where students would actively seek to befriend a student with a developmental disability that attended school. It was suggested she contact local Interact Clubs to see if such programs could be implemented in Greene County.

Also discussion of the Hudson Valley Autism Society, which serves Columbia, Greene, Dutchess, Ulster, Orange and Putnam counties, and is having their Autism Walk and Expo<sup>9</sup> on Sunday April 26 at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds. Funds raised will provide families of ASD children with scholarships to programs, conferences, and emergency needs

CARD (Center for Autism and Related Disabilities) holding a parent seminar at Columbia Greene on 2/2/09, 6-8. Event is free, but registration required.

Next meeting will be Tuesday February 17<sup>th</sup>, 10 am. We will try to reschedule Davia Montie, and Davie will invite Toni Fisher from DDSO as well.

Respectfully submitted:

Florence Ohle