

**DUBOIS CAC MINUTES**  
**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2016**  
**10:00 AM**  
**LIFT, ST MARYS PA**

**Welcome & Introductions:** Bob Mecca, LIFT, ran the CAC meeting today. Those in attendance were as follows: Brett Lasko, IU9; Mark Flacinski, IU9, retired, parent advocate; Mark Morelli, PA Link; Bob Mecca, LIFT; Chris Palmer, OVR, Bryan Linton, Dickinson MHC; (Margaret McKenna, CAP; Jess Dineen, OVR and Kelly King, Peal Center, phone in's).

**Client Assistance Program** – presentation from Margaret McKenna - Margaret started off the meeting with her CAP presentation. She feels what CAC does is so important and need to keep doing this. She stated that CAP has a great partnership with OVR, (21) years she has been at CAP. We all need to continue doing the right thing. Margaret gave some examples of how we all work as a team with these individuals. Margaret reviewed the intake process of CAP and how it all works throughout the life of the case. CAP is not looking to make things harder for VRC's, simply advocate. Margaret also went on to inform that CAP does a lot with the Veterans Administration. Invited the group to check out their website, they are updating it frequently. Chris Palmer, OVR, wanted to clarify with Margaret that Steve Pennington is person doing the VA legal and Margaret confirmed. Bob Mecca, LIFT, thanked Margaret for the CAP presentation and Chris Palmer, OVR handed out CAP information/bookmarks.

**Review of Minutes:** Minutes were accepted and approved.

**Assistive Technology Discussion:** Bob Mecca, LIFT stated that LIFT, as of October 1, 2016, are an AT Resource Center under PIAT. They can provide help with acquiring or loaning AT devices. They will also be doing presentations of the AT equipment as they have hired Sheila Mazzefarro as their AT person. Margaret McKenna from CAP asked if they will be doing evaluations or just the lending of equipment. Bob Mecca from LIFT is hopeful they will get to the point of doing evaluations. Chris Palmer, OVR, stated that WIOA has an AT component; AT and employer engagement. Chris stated that there will be an Awareness Day, November 9, 2016 at Penn State DuBois. Chris, has in the past, done presentations to the PTA and OTA students at Penn State DuBois regarding the different AT equipment available. This year we will be collaborating with PSU/DuBois and having it at the campus. Chris feels this is the most underutilized thing we do; AT. The unlimited barriers that can be knocked down by all the AT available, need more exposure. Chris also wanted the group to know

that October is National Disability Awareness Month and that we are doing a Mentoring Day at the DuBois Middle School on October 25, 2016. Have invited a number of schools to attend.

Bob Mecca, LIFT stated that on November 22, 2016 LIFT is going to have an Open House at LIFT to introduce them as ATRC through PIAT. They are inviting different agencies to this open house to so what AT they have. No times determined yet. PIAT suggested that they do this to introduce as ATRC. Margaret McKenna, CAP, asked to participate. Brent Lasko, IU9, asked if Bob was looking for folks to run vendor sales. Chris Palmer, OVR stated OVR would be there as well.

Brett Lasko, IU9, asked about a "Lending Library" to know what AT is available. Bob Mecca stated that they can call or check website. Chris Palmer, OVR, explained to Brett that there is a Lending Library through the Hiram G. Andrews Center in Johnstown. Chris stated that the DuBois DO has used the library over the years to show what AT is available. She also stated there is a significant responsibility to borrowing this equipment. Bob Mecca handed out brochures regarding the AT lending library stating equipment would be shipped directly to home and if needed, Sheila can go out and help set up and show how to use. Brett Lasko, IU9, asked if Sheila would come into the schools if needed. Bob stated that she can.

**Member Updates:** Mark Morelli, LINK updated the group on some of the upcoming events through LINK. He stated that they had just had a Sharing Seminar and that (150) agencies had attended. The McKean Youth Transition Seminar is scheduled for October 26, 2016 at Pitt/Bradford. Missy Franklin of OVR is part of this planning group. There will be a panel discussion along with vendors. First taskforce meeting was held. There will be a Housing Seminar in March of 2017. No dates and sites for this yet.

Mark Flaciniski, parent, informed the group that his daughter who is now (20) years old is going through the transition process. She is currently involved with OVR and everything seems to be going well and on track. He will keep group informed as to how it all works out for his daughter. Mark also informed that he is the manager for Special Olympics/Elk County. Their computer system is not user friendly and that has been difficult for him. They are trying to get it worked out and other than that, moving along.

Brett Lasko, IU9, gave an overview of what was happening in the Elk/Cameron school districts. He is involved with a lot of initiatives one being a training satellite for out patient programs to use in addition to school districts. Brett also stated there is a push to implement best practice; geared for competitive employment. He is

working with Indicator 13. Margaret McKenna, CAP, asked if anything coming up for youth/students. Brett replied yes, McKean County Youth Transition Seminar at Pitt/Bradford, October 26<sup>th</sup> as mentioned above. Brett stated that IU9 has offered to help at the Youth Conference in July of 2017. Bob Mecca, LIFT stated it would be good moving the conference, hoping for more participation. Margaret, CAP, offered to attend. Brett stated that they would have vendor tables along with breakout sessions. Margaret asked to have information sent regarding this event. Brett stated it will be held in May sometime 2017.

Bryan Linton, Dickinson MHC was there filling in for Marsha Dippold. Bryan indicated that they had an awareness event yesterday and it went very well. Bryan also stated they have (30) consumers right now; 10-12 employed; 6 CBWA open; 6-7 ready for employment.

Chris Palmer, OVR, gave the OVR update. Currently have few vacancies in the office. We have a new BSR, Rhonda Dressler, interviewing for new ERC, couple of VRC vacancies along with our RCD transferring to the Pittsburgh DO. Other VRC's are very busy with overtime. We finished up our fiscal year at 86% of goal, which was good with how many vacancies we have. Jean Cilladi, CT3 retiring in month or two and Mary Defranco, VRC retiring October 28<sup>th</sup>. Chris stated that the OJT policies went into effect as of now but supported employment still need training, 9 to 12 months before that will be implemented, but both have passed. Chris also wanted to let the group know that Jessica Dineen, VRC took Meg Dippold's spot on the CAC. Jess stated she is looking forward to being on the committee and contributing.

Bob Mecca stated LIFT has some staffing issues going on, being short staffed. Hired Sheila, new AT Coordinator, Amy Rhoades, new Independent Living Coordinator. Both these folks are doing a great job. They are almost at full staff; still need to fill Nursing Home Transition vacancy. Disability in the Arts Program moved to March 25, 2017 because of being short staffed. Will be held at the Red Fern with 10-12 artists signed up, with and without disabilities. Will be having separate event in the evening; a Dinner in the Arts. They are asking each artist to donate piece and LIFT will auction off as fundraiser.

Margaret McKenna, CAP stated that all that is going on is good and looking forward to participating in some of the activities mentioned.

Bob Mecca, LIFT, opened floor for further comment.

Mark Flacinski, parent, stated that at the last LIFT board meeting, President Eric Wolf talked about how there are a lot of manufacturing positions in the Elk County area that can't be filled. Mark asked about those folks with disabilities who would have the ability to do these jobs. Mark stated he was planting a seed that we may be able to do something like this but we need money in order to do this obviously; looking for money sources. Chris Palmer, OVR, stated that we get a WIOA message every Wednesday and shared about a situation elsewhere in the state where they are doing that. Will share the link with Mark. She went on to say that this is completely feasible; how we all work together to make this happen. Mark said he is not sure manufacturing folks know how to start the process.

Bryan Linton, Dickinson MHC, stated how they go door to door to see if openings to hire folks. A lot came through and it is opening a lot of doors to them in the local area.

Mark Morelli gave some examples of some of the issues why employers can't or won't hire folks with disabilities; no drivers license, can't pass drug test, not wanting to lose their benefits if go to work. Margaret from CAP stated that they should be working with a benefits planner to understand how much they could work and make.

Mark Flacinski, parent, stated that this daughter will be graduating next year and she will need something to do, have a purpose. Chris Palmer, OVR stated that disability is such a diverse thing. A lot of folks just want something part time to get out. Many folks do work full time with a disability. There are employers out there looking for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift, part time, full time, etc. All of our jobs are there to help them make a good fit. Bob Mecca, LIFT, shared that when he came back to the area, he started at CRI part time and worked his way into full time and became director. Chris Palmer, OVR stated that was a good story to share, and our challenge is getting the youth to understand and motivate to get them to work.

Brett Lasko, IU9, shared that Connect – list of business that are more than willing to work with folks with disabilities, list needs updated. Brett is working with schools in Elk county-worked out a job shadowing experience to do before graduating. He works with hundreds of students who want to go to work full time after graduating. Mark Morelli, LINK, stated that you can find updated lists of these employers on the Dept of L&I website. Chris Palmer, OVR stated that CWIA also has good information, she will send link out on that as well. She also indicated there is a lot of good information at the local chambers. Chris is on the Workforce Development board and good information there as well. Trying to get youth back to the area after graduation.

In summary, Chris stated we need to really focus on each unique individual, figure out what they need and get them there; all of us.

Bob Mecca opened the floor for further comments - there were none.

Next CAC meeting scheduled for January 13, 2017, 10:00 AM at the DuBois District Office.