

Parent/Guardian Group

Tuesday, September 25 2018

Present: Lisa Merchen, Carmen Dolen, Bob, Dolen, Teena Anderson, Russell Albertson, William Foote, MaryAnn Simon, Stephanie Karlinski, Dixie Walker, Kathy Syers, Lorie Steinhauer, Laura Fossen

Guests: Andrea Serna, Kelly Hotovec

NHTC Staff: Rich Mulholland, CEO; Chris Davis, Community Relations Coordinator

Rich opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. He thanked everyone for attending and explained the purpose of the meeting.

Agency Updates

Shared Living

The Division of Developmental Disabilities has started a program which offers alternatives to living in a group home. The two options available are:

1. Host Home...an arrangement of services provided to an individual in the private home of a community member, friend, or family member. Host home providers are considered independent contractors
2. Companion Home...An employee of the Community Support Provider (CSP, like NHTC) lives in the home of the individual and provides the needed supports.

Training for CSPs will be available in the spring of 2019. More information is available at:

<http://dhs.sd.gov/developmentaldisabilities/sharedliving.aspx>

Wi-Fi policy

Parents and guardians were mailed a letter in August explaining a change in policy regarding agency internet access to people supported. Effective October 1, for security and privacy issues, the NHTC internet service will not be available to people supported, unless it is required for educational purposes. If internet service is required, the family or guardian will need to purchase the right option for their individual. NHTC staff will not be responsible for supervising what an individual is watching or surfing on the internet.

Disability Rights of South Dakota (DRSD)

This organization formerly known as South Dakota Advocates, is mandated to protect and advocate for people supported by visiting and monitoring CSPs, to make sure individual rights are not being violated. NHTC had such a visit in July. The DRSD representatives were pleased with their visit and did not find any violations.

Center for Disabilities Symposium

This annual symposium will be held in Sioux Falls on October 21-23. It brings together people who are active in the field of disabilities, and fosters energy and creativity among service providers, educators, employers, persons with disabilities, families and government agencies. It promotes leadership and workforce development for individuals with disabilities and the people who serve them

For more information....<https://www.usd.edu/medicine/center-for-disabilities/symposium>

Calendar of events

1. October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Visit our Facebook page to learn more.
2. October 8... NHTC will be closed in honor of Christopher Columbus/Native American Day.
3. October 16...NHTC Chili Feed at the Spearfish City Park from 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Special Olympics

1. The state bocce ball and softball tournaments were held in Mitchell on September 22-23.
2. Bowling is now in session. Practices are held Wednesdays/Thursdays from 4:30-6:00 p.m.
3. Area bowling tournaments will be held in Rapid City on October 19 for traditional and October 20 for unified.
4. State bowling tournament will be held in Aberdeen on November 2-4 for traditional and in Sioux Falls on November 17-18 for unified

A-Team (Awareness, Advisement, Advocacy)

This is a grass-roots advocacy program which currently exists in nine states and the South Dakota chapter, based in Rapid City, will be the 10th program. We welcomed Andrea Serna and Kelly Hotovec from Black Hills Works and members of the A-Team.

Andrea and Kelly encouraged and stressed the importance of parents and guardians to become involved with the A-Team and be advocates for individuals with disabilities. Advocacy can take many forms, such as letter writing, phone call, and emails to legislators. Advocates need to share their stories of how services, supports, and choices in employment and residences, have affected their family member.

Calendar of events

October 1...Voting event at Main Street Square in Rapid City from 6:00-7:30 p.m., to focus on:

1. Importance of voting/registering
2. Early voting/absentee ballot request
3. Identifying polling locations
4. Addressing barriers in the voter process

October 17...Reverse Cracker Barrel at Black Hills Works from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., to allow advocates to answer questions of legislators.

Lisa Merchen, a NHTC parent, has been attending meetings and will keep us informed of the progress. NHTC will serve as the facilitator and send information to parents and guardians. If you would like more information on the A-Team, contact Lisa at merchenlisamax@gmail.com, or Kelly Hotovec at khotovec@bhws.com.

Question/Answers

Most of this discussion centered on the Choices Waiver Change, regarding employment and sub-minimum wage, and how to contact legislators.

Next meeting date: January 2019

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