

EASTHAM HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FINAL MINUTES

MEETING #7

19 January 2022

ATTENDEES: Kate Berg (Chair); Felice Coral; Stella Edmondson, Bev Hobbs, Hilda Merolli,

Absent: Dilys Smith

A Zoom connection was established. The meeting was called to order at 7:08 PM.

Draft minutes from the meeting of 12 January 2022 were reviewed and accepted.

Kate has issued a funding summary for reference purposes. There is \$950 available to use for level funding. Kate suggested that the committee should consider level-funding vs. making significant changes in funding as part of the assessment and discussion of the current applications.

Capabilities:-James Barnes, VP (10-year history in various roles)

Note: Capabilities has sent an essay by one of its participants to Kate via email; she will distribute it to the committee.

The new CEO, Kim McElholm, has recently served as interim CEO.

Capabilities has a 50+ year history on the Outer Cape, with its original facility still in operation in Eastham. Through its programs, it has provided better opportunities for young people on the Cape, offering preparation for jobs, support for more independent living at home, classes, and a shared living/family program. There are eight Eastham clients, each receiving multiple services, in support of jobs to housing in the community, with programs individualized for each client. Multiple services offered to each client as needed.

In the Eastham facility, programs include chair yoga and other activities, cooking classes, workshops for job applicants, socialization, reading groups, community services opportunities as volunteers (e.g., beach clean-ups, distribution of hats and scarves for homeless), and other outside activities are offered. Clients are referred by agencies and community referrals, and may be offered programs and support based upon individual needs and abilities. Capabilities provides innovative services, support and education for the disabled beyond those required by the state. Included are socialization and conversation, and community service activities (such as preparation of food boxes for distribution to the food insecure, a program supported by

grant funding). Capabilities is planning capital improvements, some of which may be donated by local businesses, such as Cape Associates. Further details are pending at this time.

Capabilities also has a volunteer program involving more than 120 people across Cape Cod. Volunteers are very engaged in Eastham, offering wisdom and mentoring to Capabilities clients. In Eastham, the enrichment program uses Eastham funds, materials & personnel. In response to a question by Stella, Mr. Barnes stated that eligibility for acceptance of a client to the Capabilities program is determined by state-determined diagnostic criteria, e.g., diagnosis (autism, Down's Syndrome, etc.), IQ, ability to be independent, history of fetal alcohol syndrome, brain injuries, etc. Capabilities also works with schools (pre-employment transition at Monomoy High School, special education personnel, offers internship opportunities, etc.). Parents of clients are also supported and reassured that their child may have new opportunities for growth and employment.

Lysetta Hurge-Putnam MSW LICSW-Independence House

Independence House has been a Cape Cod fixture since 1979, providing domestic abuse and sexual violence support services with offices in Hyannis, Orleans, Falmouth, Provincetown to serve the entire Cape community.

Domestic violence services are directed at increasing a client's physical and mental safety, utilizing legal services and court programs (e.g., restraining orders etc.). Even though courts were closed due to COVID, Independence House operated virtually to support clients, and the emergency shelter was always open. There were only a few COVID cases, and no closures were needed. The pandemic has been stressful: there were 2 homicides on Cape during this period, related to domestic violence. Independence House has continued to provide safety, community, freedom, support and validation for its clients.

Independence House also offers community-based services: counseling for women and children, sexual assault services (CCHC would not permit ED visits during COVID); an emergency hotline (operating for 42 years, 24/7 availability). The hotline provides trained staff who listen, provide information, suggestions, and staff serve as liaison to police and other service providers.

Independence House provides both counseling and advocacy, and as a social and racial justice organization, provides culturally responsive services, considering culture, race, and social needs.

Independence House provides education, not therapy: what is a good relationship? It maintains a transitional housing program, and provides emergency shelter. Transitional housing

may be provided for up to 2 years. Housing stabilization (for clients only) uses 2 properties which are always full.

Independence House also works with the community to achieve the goal of violence prevention, using data-driven community input (color, disabilities, LGBT, etc.)

A collaboration with the MA Department of Public Health also focuses on violence prevention, with measurable goals: e.g., define policies and procedures within a workplace/school/business, use of computers/office equipment/phones by employees; prevention of sexual assault (schools, workplace); services in support of children.

Can social attitudes and belief systems that allow violence against women as primary root of domestic violence be modified?

How do you react to sexist/violent comments and suggest interventions?

Independence House programs focus on empowerment rather than fear, and offer options to clients.

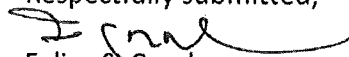
Virtual services started during the pandemic have been helpful, and will continue. However, children benefit from in-person counseling and evaluation. Clients are offered choices of services. If clients are not in an acute sexual/domestic violence situation, they are referred to other social service agencies.

Upcoming Meetings

1/26/22: Funding distribution discussion

The meeting was adjourned 8:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Felice S. Coral