
Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Minutes

April 16, 2024

CALL TO ORDER – DART Co-Chair, Hank Bostic called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hank Bostic (DNSM)

Jenifer Garver (ISKazoo)[∨]

Rebecca Hill (MRS)

Sarah Hutchison-Chee (Goodwill SWM)

Katie McCuen (KRESA)[∨]

Kathy Olsen (MWSW)

Rhasheda Shepherd

(Arc Comm Advocates)

Shelby Springett (MWSW)

Lisa Stanley (MRS)[∨]

Sen Toda (MCTI)

[∨] Attended virtually

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The DART meeting agenda for April 16, 2024 was approved by consensus of members present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The DART meeting minutes of February 27, 2024 were approved by consensus of members present with the following corrections: Under members present, Comm Advocates was changed to Arc Comm. Advocates; under Program, Goodwill Industries Southwest Michigan was changed to Goodwill Industries Southwestern Michigan; and under Agency Updates, Community Advocates was changed to The Arc Community Advocates.

INTRODUCTIONS

Members present in-person and online introduced themselves.

DART HISTORY, PURPOSE, and WORK PLAN

Kathy Olsen reported on the DART history, purpose, and work plan and a two-page summary was included in the agenda packet.

Members discussed potential topics for future DART meetings. This was followed by a more in-depth discussion of transportation barriers which included the high cost of Driver's Training and a Driver's License, as well as the need for a Driver's Training course with accommodations. Information pertaining to the Bus Line program in Kalamazoo County where bus rides can be purchased for \$1.50 per ride for Door-to-Door and Door to a Fixed Route was shared with members.

AGENCY UPDATES

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) – Rebecca Hill reported the MRS summer program for Work-Based Learning is ramping up. There are several participating partners and vendors and there will be lots of opportunities. She also reported that Kalamazoo Northside Association is partnering with MRS and MCTI to offer another Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA)

ten-week training program. Interested individuals should contact MRS in Kalamazoo at 269-337-3700 for more information and to make referrals. She further noted that MCTI also has a ten-week CNA training program that is offered at MCTI. MRS is experiencing staff shortages, and they have multiple job openings to be filled.

Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) - Sen Toda reported the MCTI [training calendar](#) now runs year-round. There are twelve training programs and the wait list for each is reasonable, with the exception of IT. MCTI has transitioned to a hybrid format using a combination of in-person and online. MCTI also hosts an open house for individuals to tour the facility every month except in July. Additionally, they are open to providing private tours. Individuals interested should call the MCTI main number 269-664-4461 to schedule.

The Arc Community Advocates - Rhasheda Shepherd reported on multiple community events that included the [Journey of Hope](#) which will be held on July 27, 2024 at Milham Park and cyclists who are traveling cross county to raise awareness of disabilities will be making a stop in Kalamazoo. Additional events are planned, including a new summer festival and the Arctoberfest on October 24, 2024. She also provided an update on the Technology Assistance Program available through the Michigan Disability Council. Amazon Prime and Arc National are offering free Echo Dots and Tablet devices to individuals with disabilities. The goal is to place these devices into the hands of individuals with disabilities who are low income or income limited, to help improve their day-to-day living. The devices will be distributed throughout a six county area that includes Barry, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. When the devices are delivered, instructions for using the them will be provided. There is no age limit and on the application, the applicant must state who the device is for, what is their age, and if they have a disability. The [form to apply](#) is available on the Arc website. Following the meeting, this information was also emailed to members.

Kalamazoo RESA – Katie McCuen reported YOU/KRESA has wrapped up the application period for the summer MyCITY program. Youth may still apply for the fall session and the application period for that session will roll out later this summer. These programs are for in school and out-of-school, ages 14-21. However, older youth between the ages of 21-24 who qualify may be dual enrolled in WIOA Adult services.

Integrated Services Kalamazoo (IS Kazoo) – Jennifer Garver reported she was filling in at today's meeting for Heather Barsy.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services – Business Services (MRS) - Lisa Stanley reported MCTI will be hosting an event geared for Michigan Works! partners later this year. Rebecca Hill complemented Lisa Stanley on services provided to a business customer that she referred to MRS. She reported the customer was very pleased with the services provided by MRS business services.

Goodwill Industries Southwestern Michigan – Sarah Hutchinson-Chee reported Goodwill Industries is wrapping up an in-school program in Allegan. They will also have a work-based learning program this summer that will operate four days each week throughout the summer. She also reported that Goodwill is in the preliminary stages of developing financial opportunity classes where they will be shifting to a class-based format. They are also working with a local college to have social work interns work one-on-one with customers and the hope is to offer

this through pop-up sites in the community. The Goodwill Golf Classic to raise funds for meeting room upgrades at Goodwill's main location will be held on July 29, 2024. Goodwill is also opening a GED Training Center in their workforce development wing at the Kalamazoo location.

Michigan Works! Southwest – Kathy Olsen reported DART members are invited to attend Michigan Works! Partner meetings to share information about their agency and programs. The meetings are usually held using a hybrid model to accommodate both in-person and virtual attendance. She reported that she will email additional information to members regarding the meeting dates, locations and virtual links.

Disability Network Southwest Michigan – Hank Bostic reported Disability Network offers a variety of workshops to help inform and educate the public on many topics related to disabilities. A link to their website to register for these workshops and events was provided on the agenda. He also asked members to save the date on their calendars for Disability Network Southwest's annual ADA Celebration scheduled for July 29, 2024 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Farmer's Market and noted that lunch is included. He added that Arc National helped to advocate for and create the Americans with Disabilities Act which is known as ADA. Disability Network is also seeking individuals ages 16-29 with a disability to participate in an [Advocacy Academy](#). The academy is an opportunity to get involved in the disability rights movement and learn the skills of advocacy. Participants will learn advanced leadership in this paid eight-week summer job, which will meet from 1:00-5:00 p.m. three days each week from June 17 through August 14, 2024. Participants in the academy will choose a disability advocacy issue to learn about and then create an advocacy campaign around that issue. Individuals wishing to learn more can [download a brochure](#) on the Disability Network website or contact Holly Baker at bakerh@dnswm.org. Mr. Bostic also reported that the MSHDA Investing in Community Housing (MICH) Program can assist eligible households with accessibility and energy efficiency repairs and upgrades. He distributed postcards with additional information that included a link to the application which was [ARP.Michigan.gov](#) and a phone number to call to learn more which was 517-335-2524. The postcard also included a phone number to call for application assistance which was 844-477-0340. Lastly, Mr. Bostic reported Disability Network has grant funds to aid with building accessibility ramps as well as ramp repairs and upgrades for accessibility.

EMERGENCING ISSUES RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT & ADVOCACY

No report.

COLLABORATION – Partner Matrix – Kathy Olsen requested that members review the partner matrix and to let her know if they have any updates to their agency's listing. Rhasheda Shepherd reported that the service area for The Arc Community Advocates should be updated to reflect the six Michigan counties of Barry, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Kathy Olsen reported that the Parter Matrix will be updated to reflect this change.

UNIQUE CUSTOMER NEEDS

Rebecca Hill asked members if they were aware of resources for small businesses. Resources shared included the following:

- [SCORE](#) – serving Kalamazoo, Van Buren, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, Calhoun, and Branch Counties

- [Can-Do Kalamazoo](#) – shared kitchen space and food incubator since 2008.
- [Room 35 Business Consulting](#) - focuses on two main industries, Construction and Mainstreet businesses with diverse ownership. Room 35 also offers 1-on-1 consulting. Read about Room 35 on the MW! Southwest website [Room 35](#)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Hank Bostick referred members to the list of professional development opportunities that were listed on the agenda. They were as follows:

- Disability Network Southwest Michigan <http://www.dnswm.org/>
- KPL ONEplace <https://www.kpl.gov/oneplace/>
- The Synergy Health Center <https://synergykzoo.org/>
- Incompass Michigan –<https://incompassmi.org/> - see the Education & Training tab
- DART Desktop Training Modules
<https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/resources/at-your-desktop-training>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No additional announcements.

NEXT MEETING

The next DART meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 11, 2024, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. [This meeting was cancelled.]

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kathy Olsen, Quality Assurance/Project Coordinator and WDB Liaison
Michigan Works! Southwest