**Grant Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

**September 15, 2017: 9:00 am -12:18 pm**

**4900 Water’s Edge Drive**

Attendees: Keith Greenarch (Chairman) Tammy Koger

Mose Dorsey Renee Cummins

Sandy McMillan Matthew Herr

Karen Fraller Lynne Deese

Beatriz “Betty” Rodriguez Sonya Clark

Frank Harden Patricia Sikes

Stacy Hurley Philip Woodward

Felipe Cabrera

Also attending: Lissette Saca, Adeline Riley and Kathy Beetham (interpreters), Connie Gillespie (minute taker)

**Call to Order:** **Keith Greenarch**

Keith called the meeting to order. He welcomed the group and introductions were made. A list with GAC Voting Members’ information was passed around and members were asked to verify their information and update if needed.

* Next GAC Meeting Date: December 1, 2017 was selected. Location: Waters Edge. Note: due to conflicts in schedules, this meeting was postponed to January 26, 2018.

**NCATP Update/Announcements:** **Tammy Koger**

* Federal Report: The report was submitted on time. In December, Tammy and Sonya will work on the “end of year” report for submission. Since the database crashed and staff can only use an Access database created (Thanks Frank!) for them to collect data, our numbers will be skewed. NCATP is working with Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Special Projects Coordinator to see if NCATP can obtain access to the database that Division is building.
* State Plan: NCATP is now working on the State Plan which will be due in 2018. At the next meeting, Tammy hopes to discuss the Plan in more detail and get feedback from GAC members. There has not been a lot of direction from the Office of Administration regarding changes and what needs to be included in the State Plan. Tammy will attend an ATAP meeting in October and hopes to get more information then.
* Projects: In addition to projects with AgrAbility and Self-Help Credit Union,
  + NCATP has been selected to serve as the pilot program for DocuSign. This will allow our staff to obtain signatures electronically.
  + NCATP has a team working on a “Quality of Life Survey” to develop a better way to collect data, measure customer satisfaction and how AT impacts the customer’s life.

**GREAT Conference (Bridge to Success):** **Sonya Clark/Tammy Koger**

Handouts were distributed to the attendees. Some information Sonya shared:

* Location: Hilton Wilmington Riverside in Wilmington, NC
* Dates: October 18 – 20, 2017
* This year there are 4 tracks: “Living”, “Working”, Innovating” and “Growing”

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* The Keynote Speaker for Wednesday is Kim Lan Grout, and the Keynote Speaker for Friday’s closing ceremony will be Kristen Monaco.
* The Vendor Hall will be set up for Thursday, October 19th. The vendor participation is lower this year. We expect about 21 vendors to participate this year.
* DSB, DSDHH and DPI are sponsors.
* More NCATP staff are presenting this year than ever before! On Friday, October 20th, Celeste Helling and Lauren Zubow, SLPs from our Charlotte Center, will be presenting on “Creating Successful Employment Opportunities for Persons Who Use Augmentative Communication”. This session has also been selected for presentation at national conferences for ASHA and ATIA.

Again, Tammy acknowledged the concerns of and feedback from the GAC regarding the conference. She shared that NCATP hopes to provide consultants for the Conference rather than be directly involved in 2018. She thanked the members for feedback.

**AT Awards: Tammy/Frank Harden**

A handout is included in today’s meeting packet. The handout includes the purpose of the awards, a brief bio of Stephen E. Sallee and names of past award winners. There are only 2 nominees this year, a very low participation rate. It was suggested that a new method of promoting the awards should be considered to generate more interest. Today is the deadline because the awards need to be ordered. Keith, Joy and Karen were thanked again for volunteering for the Awards Committee. The awards will be presented at the conference on Thursday, October 19th from 8 am – 10 am.

Sandy shared that New Voices has an Awards Program and she typically receives 16 nominations. She offered to share some tactics that their program uses. Sandy also expressed that having the AT conference/expo with NCRA impacted the nominations. She felt strongly that consumers and family members see the GREAT conference as a professional rehabilitation meeting and not very inviting to others.

**NC AgrAbility:** **Betty Rodriguez**

NCATP has been partnering with NC AgrAbility for a couple of years. Betty passed around a sign-up sheet for those members who would like to receive emails from Betty regarding AgrAbility. Also, a handout of Betty’s PowerPoint is included in today’s meeting packet. Some information highlighted:

* Whether the farmer or rancher has been farming for years or just starting to farm, it is important to recognize that farming is a lifestyle and has its own culture. Farmers are deeply connected with their environments. The farm family and community are imbedded in the farm culture because often farmers may be operating a farm that has belonged to a family for generations. Usually, the whole family is involved in working on the farm.
* In 2008, it was estimated that there were 1.04 million to 2.23 million individuals with disabilities on U.S. farms, ranches and in agricultural labor sects.

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* Some studies show that up to 24% of the farm population have physical disabilities.
* Approximately, 19% are unable to perform certain daily essential tasks.
* Some of the prominent myths about farming are:
  + All jobs related to agriculture are dangerous
  + Farm work is seasonal
  + A person cannot make a living by farming
  + People with significant disabilities would not be able to farm
* AgrAbility was created with the Farm Bill in 1990 and funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture ‘s National Institute for Food and Agriculture. Twenty states are funded and two states are affiliated but do not receive funding.
* NC AgrAbility was funded in October 2011 and is a statewide collaborative partnership serving all 100 counties.
* The mission of AgrAbility is to educate and assist farmers, ranchers, farmworkers and their family members living with disabilities, who are engaged in production agriculture, to improve their quality of life by helping eliminate or minimize obstacles that limit independence and productivity.
* The disability can be physical, intellectual or health-related.
* AgrAbility coordinators with other agencies to find resources for clients. Some partners and collaborators with AgrAbility are:
  + Centers for Independence Living (CILs)
  + NCATP
  + NC Agromedicine Institute
  + NC A & T
  + NCSU
  + ECU
  + NC Cooperative Extension Agents

AgrAbility provides direct services, education, awareness, advocacy and networking. Visit its Facebook page or its website at [www.ncagrability.org](http://www.ncagrability.org). Betty can be reached at 336-285-4680 or [bmrodrig@ncat.edu](mailto:%20bmrodrig@ncat.edu).

Questions posed after the presentation:

1. What is AgrAbility’s definition of “farm” or “farmer”? Betty advised that any size farm is acceptable if the farm is trying to earn an income. AgrAbility also has programs that assist master gardeners, farm workers and veterans that want to farm; not just farm owners.
2. Does AgrAbility assist with developing business plans? Betty shared that AgrAbility can work with its partners and collaborators to help a farm be successful.

**Alternative Finance Program/Self- Help Credit Union:** **Steve Reardon**

Steve distributed business cards to all the attendees. About two years ago, David Beck and Steve presented to GAC on a proposal for an Alternative Finance Program. The latest proposal was

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just accepted so NC will now have an Alternative Finance Program. Steve shared that the hope is to launch this at the October G.R.E.A.T. Conference.

Some information Steve shared with the GAC:

* Self Help CU was founded in 1980 and is an umbrella non-profit for a series of non-profits. Its mission is to create and protect ownership and economic opportunity for all. Though the agency works with anyone, it especially focuses on working with women, people of color, rural residents and low wealth families and communities.
* The CU provides deposit accounts such as checking, savings as well as consumer loans.
* It has large lending programs focused on home ownership, commercial loans and non-profit lending.
* Now the Self-Help CU has branches across the state with hopes of opening more branches (Raleigh area) in the next couple of years.
* The CU has a Center for Responsible Lending: The Center members are located in Durham, NC and Washington, D.C. and its main goal is to fight policy and system change in the financial sector through research and advocacy.
* Self-Help Federal Credit Union: This was chartered in 2008 and primarily operates in California and Chicago. A large portion of the membership is predominately Latino.
* Self-Help Ventures Fund: This is a loans fund. For loans that the Self-Help CU cannot perform because its regulators would not approve, more credit can be extended through the Ventures Fund. That includes loans to charter schools, health facilitates, etc.

The CU offers a variety of financing such as vehicle, home equity, unsecure and signature. All these can be used to achieve the goal of obtaining Assistive Technology. An example: a personal unsecured loan could be used for purchasing hearing aids.

Sandy pointed out to Steve that the price of extended warranty packages should be included with loans for AT devices. Extended warranty packages can cost $3, 000.00+. Since the equipment often will have problems, it is prudent to buy the extended warranty. Insurance will not cover extended warranties. Steve thanked her for that feedback.

A question posed: What is the timeframe for the grant? Steve explained that the grant amount is @ $723,000.00 and they hope that it will be on-going. NC is the only instance is the country in which the grant has been awarded to the financial institution. With all the other grants, the grant money has gone through the AT Departments or non-profits. This is exciting because the money will be managed by an organization that knows banking!

NCATP will help the CU by assessing the client and ensuring that if AT is needed that the correct device is recommended. Also, Tammy will assist the Advisory Council.

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**NC 2-1-1 Stacy Hurley**

Handouts, a brochure and magnets with information listed on it were distributed. Stacy works with the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services’ (DAAS) No Wrong Door initiative. No Wrong Door is a partnership between DAAS and United Way of North Carolina’s NC 2-1-1.

The goal is to create a “virtual front door” for individuals, families and caregivers of aging adults and/or people with disabilities to learn about and access the help they need to remain in their homes and communities. Some information shared:

* In 2025, it is projected that 87 NC counties will have more people over the age of 60 than age 0-17. NC is 9th in the US in population age 60 and over. A lot of focus for No Wrong Door is long term services and supports.
* NC 2-1-1 is available twenty-four hours a day, every day. The service is free and confidential and offers multilingual staff to assist callers. The staff is highly trained and handled over 129,000 calls in 2016!
* NC 2-1-1 can help with:
  + food, housing and utility assistance
  + Health care services
  + Counseling, mental health and substance abuse services
  + Senior services
  + Education and employment assistance
  + Financial education and credit counseling
  + Disaster services
* Top needs of No Wrong Door callers:
  + Home repairs
  + Prescription expenses
  + Food pantries
  + Homeless shelter
* Some stats of No Wrong Door callers:
  + 75% are women and 25 % are men
  + 85% are persons with disabilities (the majority have a physical disability)
  + 12 % have no insurance, 66% of people have some form of Medicaid, Medicare or both and 11 % have private insurance or VA benefits
* There are two Call Centers; 1 in Durham, NC and 1 in Asheville, NC

How can you help?

1. Go to the website [www.211.org](http://www.211.org) and check your agency listing to ensure that agency information is accurate and up-to-date.
2. Share NC 2-1-1 information with staff and clients
3. Give feedback!! (either via the website or by contacting Stacy)

In mid-October, NC 2-1-1 will hold a webinar. Stacy will send the link to Tammy so that she can share with GAC members.

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A suggestion was made that Call Center staff complete a training on assisting callers that use augmentative communication.

A question posed: Can residents from other states call NC 2-1-1 to get information about NC? Stacy advised that if you live in NJ and call 211 that person will get NJ’s 211. A person could

call his/her state’s 211 and ask for the toll-free number for a particular state’s 211 Call Center or visit the website and get a toll-free number to contact another 211.

**Announcements/Agency Updates/Events: All**

**Update from Karen:**

1. Grant for AT, DME and Smart Technology: Karen shared that Easterseals was approved for the DHHS grant for AT, DME and Smart technology. Applications are being taken now. However, funding has not been received yet. This grant money is for people that have no insurance.
2. Phonak (Audeo): Karen was invited to attend an event for this new hearing aid. It can be used with a cellphone, TV and it is hands-free! It is Bluetooth compatible.

**Update from Sandy**:

1. Five sessions will be held at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill for grandparents with children with disabilities. The sessions are designed to educate and assist grandparents about ways they can help their children with raising children. Dr. Don Steadman, one of the Co-Founders of New Voices Foundation, will run these sessions.
2. New Voices Foundation is listed as agency # 3912 with this year’s State Employees’ Combined Campaign.

**Update from Philip:**

1. In August, Governor Cooper appointed a new Chair for the DD Council. Her name is Alexandra “Alex” McArthur. She is a former Miss Wheelchair America and she is on the Board of Directors for the National Disability Institute (which the Council works with).
2. Philip has a new role with the DD Council. He is now the System Change Manager for the Community Living initiative.
3. The Council recently sent out 3 requests for applications for new initiatives that the Council will start funding in 2018 in the areas of transportation, innovative employment and natural supports focusing on apprenticeships for people with I/DD. Philip will keep the GAC updated!

Keith and Tammy thanked the members for their support and attendance.

Meeting adjourned 12:18 pm