

CITY OF CORAL GABLES ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS
CORAL GABLES YOUTH CENTER – CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, March 4, 2020

- MEETING MINUTES -

MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	APPOINTED BY:
	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	
Blake Sando	*	P	E										Vince Lago
Vanessa Liebl	*	P	P										Mayor Raul FauliValdes
Mary Palacio-Pike	*	P	P										Patricia Keon
Philippa Milne	*	P	P										Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Marie-Ilene Whitehurst	*	E	P										Michael Mena

P – Present
E – Excused Absence
A – Absent
(-) – No Appointment
(*) – No Meeting

STAFF:

Ericka Kofkin – Parks & Recreation
Raquel Elejabarrieta – Labor Relations & Risk Management
Eglys Hernandez – Labor Relations & Risk Management

GUESTS:

Paola Villanueva – CILSF
Zach Goldberg, Program Director – Deliver the Dream
Victoria Pineda-Saladrigas – Deputy Director, Jobs South Florida - Best Buddies
Erin Martinez

CITIZEN ADVISORS:

Bonnie Blaire

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 8:03am

MEETING ABSENCE:

Blake Sando

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

February 5, 2020

Motion by: Ms. Mary Palacio-Pike / 2nd: Ms. Philippa Milne / All approved unanimously.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: None

BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Deliver the Dream – Mr. Zach Goldberg, Program Director

Mr. Goldberg made a presentation regarding services provided by Deliver the Dream, which helps strengthen families. Mr. Goldberg stated there are currently three main free programs, longest one running is the retreat program.

Mr. Goldberg advised that they host weekend retreats once a month where 15 families who are going through similar journeys and have a family member with a specific disability are invited to the weekend retreat. These families are paired with one of their volunteers called family pal, which helps guide the family through the weekend activities. Mr. Goldberg stated at the end of the retreat it is amazing to see how these families become one cohesive group. Mr. Goldberg stated currently retreat locations are in Central Florida to facilitate accessibility for families from all over the State to attend.

Mr. Goldberg advised once a month throughout the State, there is a Family Fun Day which is their 2nd program, where past family retreat participants can reunite and make new friends. Mr. Goldberg stated this not only gives families the opportunity to stay engaged with their organization, but also with families and friends they have met.

Mr. Goldberg advised regarding their final program, a one-hour workshop “A New View,” which helps those individuals without a disability understand the challenges that an individual with a disability face. Mr. Goldberg advised that participants are assigned a disability and must conduct everyday activities as if they had that disability.

Ms. Whitehurst asked regarding age of participants for the retreat. Mr. Goldberg stated that someone in the household has to be between the ages of 6 weeks to 18 years old, however it also depends on the retreat.

Mr. Liebl stated one of her short-term Board goals is to perhaps have City elected officials participate in a program such as New View in order to obtain a perspective and awareness of other’s needs. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated she is aware of a family which may benefit from this program and wanted to know how was the best way for this family to proceed. Mr. Goldberg advised for them to visit their web site.

Best Buddies - Ms. Victoria Pineda-Saladrigas – Deputy Director, Jobs South Florida

Ms. Liebl stated another of her long-term goals is to have companies within the City be interested in participating in the Best Buddies job program. Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas conducted presentation about the Best Buddies program. Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas stated she conducted research regarding Coral Gables, which indicated there are currently eight active employers within the City with approximately eleven participants employed. Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas stated she believes there is an opportunity to expand.

Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas explained that each participant is assigned a job coach, which helps the participant with the application process, job interview, transportation, accommodations needed, skill training, and general support in general until participant can continue on their own.

Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas stated they are eager to find more placements within City of Coral Gables.

Ms. Liebl stated one amazing factor is when a participant is over-qualified, same job coach will return, assist with training of new task and skills. Ms. Liebl stated she believes once businesses realize the support that participants have access to, most of the apprehension may go away.

Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas stated participants are always on time or even an hour before unless they have transportation issues, they have high retention rates and always come in with a smile which has an enormous effect on organization culture as well as other employees.

Ms. Milne asked if there are numbers available reflecting how many people are being served and if there is a wait list. Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas advised they have a waiting list of interested employers. Ms. Milne asked if someone is interested do they contact Best Buddies for screening. Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas advised that the process currently in place requires going through vocational rehabilitation, which usually takes about six to nine months. Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas stated their organization assists with lifetime of employment to both participant and employer, friendships, leadership and recently in California living (housing).

Ms. Whitehurst stated that Casa Familiar had spoken with California representatives of Best Buddies about having them come to their housing facilities perhaps in a year or so to address employment opportunities for residents of Casa Family.

Mr. Martinez asked what age population Best Buddies target. Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas stated usually participants are 18-22 years old. Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas spoke regarding transition programs called Project Search via Miami-Dade schools hosted in City of Miami, Hialeah and Zoo Miami. Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas advised each site has an employment consultant on site along with 10 participants which rotate within different departments every 13 weeks learning new skills and once 9 months are completed and evaluations are conducted, their goal is to locate them employment within the year after graduating.

Mr. Martinez asked if they had someone who provides advocacy and legislative support. Ms. Pineda-Saladrigas stated perhaps at the national team, not at the local level that she is aware of.

Ms. Blaire stated that Ms. Fernandez has participated with individuals from Best Buddies at their Social program for the last year. Ms. Kofkin also advised of their participation at Adventure Day for All.

Trolley - Mr. Erin Martinez (Exhibit 1)

Mr. Martinez presented the Board pictures of the trolley showing the difficulty of accessibility and stated he has been vocal regarding this in the past as well. Mr. Martinez advised he utilizes buses, trains as well as trolley, which he stated are not accessible for wheelchair users and its operators may not have received proper training. Mr. Martinez advised there has been an issue regarding securing wheelchairs, where he has requested not to be secured and trolley operator insist in doing so and saying he had to be “tied down”, words which he feels are not proper. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised she will forward pictures and provide Mr. Martinez contact information to Director Kevin Kinney of the Parking Department who is the one in charge of the City trolleys. Ms. Elejabarrieta suggested Director Kinney be invited to next Board meeting to discuss the City’s trolley.

Mr. Martinez suggested Board take time and conduct a simulation day where they perhaps sit in a wheelchair or blind fold to experience the difficulties face.

OLD BUSINESS:

Non-Voting Board Member

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised upon review of City ordinance it states that a request for a non-voting Board member needs to be presented to Commission, therefore if it is the will of the Board, a motion is required.

Motion: To appoint a representative from the City of Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce as an ex-officio member of the City of Coral Gables Advisory Board on Disability Affairs.

Motion by: Ms. Whitehurst / 2nd: Ms. Palacio-Pike / All approved unanimously.

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised a resolution will be drafted and presented at a commission meeting.

Resolution: Adventure Day for All Event

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised resolution regarding continuing hosting of Adventure Day for All Event was presented at February 25, 2020 commission meeting and it was approved.

Parking Fines

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised Board of funds in the amount of \$30,385.33 received from County program where City of Coral Gables is a participant, called Miami-Dade County Parking Fine Reimbursement Program. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised it is a program where ticket fines are levied upon those who park in handicap spaces and then dispersed among program participants. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised these funds are placed into an ADA account and can only be utilized for specific purposes, such as Adventure Day for All Event, purchase of matts at Holiday Park and purchase of beach wheelchair.

April Autism Month – Resolution & Proclamation

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised a Resolution & Proclamation for autism has usually been presented during April which is Autism month. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised it would be preferable to present the Resolution and Proclamation along with Crystal Academy's presentation at April 21, 2020 commission meeting.

Miami Beach Pride Event – April 4 & 5, 2020

Ms. Palacio-Pike advised Board of Miami Beach Pride Event taking place on April 4 and 5, 2020 and how for the first time they have invited Crystal Academy to participate. Ms. Palacio-Pike advised they will be having a tent at event.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

NEXT MEETING: April 1, 2020

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 9:02am