

**COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT / ADULT LITERACY / DISABILITY
February 16, 2023**

Zoom Participants

Tom Bianco, Co-Chair
Julie DeLaurentis, Business
Janet Garraty, GC Chamber of Commerce
Heather Faulkner, GC Housing Authority
Joe Ferrari, DWD
Lois Forman, Jewish Family Federation
Michelle Pandolfo, GC Human & Disability Svcs.
Theresa Rohlfig, Center for Independent Lvg.
Joe Spencer, RCSJ
John Thompson, Center for Family Services
Christina Velazquez, GC Economic Development
Bridget DiGiambattista, WDB Staff

Lorrie Covelsky, Abilities Solutions
Glen Donelson, MASCEC
Amy Charlesworth, RCSJ
Stan Hershey, DWD
Daniele Fithian, Goodwill Industries
Jennifer Mauro, Goodwill Industries
Kimberly Quigley, SJOGCS
Brigette Satchell, RCJS
Shane Stevenson, GC Div. Social Services
Crystal Torres, Ctr. For People in Transition
Eileen Gallo, WDB Staff

Visitor

Jim Sinclair, GC Div. of Social Services

Lani Allen Davis, MASCEC

Tom opened the meeting at 8:30 am.

A motion to approve Oct. 20 minutes was made by T. Rohlfig, seconded by L. Covelsky.

Adult Literacy

Joe S. reported for fiscal year they have served 180 students for title II and are at 80% of fiscal year goal. They continue to see influx of refugee students from Ukraine and have a managed enrollment however, they find most of the students need to be in a program since their employment is tied to them being part of a program that is helping with English language. The lower level ESL students are mostly attending in-person. The intermediate-advanced ESL remains both online and in-person. Learning Link-still have minimal participants, currently have 2 individuals enrolled and 5 TANF enrolled (2 Ukraine). They are in process of starting (integrated education training (iet) program for ESL students, they offer 3 options-medical transportation; CNA; & business office manager certification.

WLL

No report

Literacy NJ

No report

Pureland East/West Community Shuttle

No report

Ex-Offenders – Re-Entry

Glen D. reported they were helped 23 obtain employment. They are working throughout southern part of state to help individuals on probation. Last month they assisted 65 individuals on probation obtain employment.

Brigette S. reported they are planning on holding another re-entry job fair. She asked to connect with Glen so they can assist his clients with an opportunity for them to participate in RCSJ training or pre-apprenticeship programs.

Disability Issues

Agency Updates

Jewish Family Service – Lois F. reported they are offering workshop called Shifting Gears/Tools and Resources for Women in Career Transition on 3/21/23 at Katz Jewish Community Center.

Soups and Sweets culinary training program for young adults with disabilities is looking for candidates for the spring/summer sessions. They will receive ServSafe certification and they also assist with finding competitive employment at end of training. They are DVR and DDD supported and funded.

Abilities Solutions – Lorrie C. reported their workflow is very good, there is no wait list for services for either youth or adult.

Div. Social Services – Jim S. reported they expect an influx of SNAP clients next month.

St. John of God Community Services – Kim reported they will off

RCSJ – Brigette S. reported within next 2 weeks they will be putting out information about info sessions that will be held for the Wind Turbine Tech training program. In addition, in April they will launch program with NJ American Water who will offer training program in utility mechanics and operating specialists. Brigette wanted to inform the non-profits participating on this committee that RCSJ offers free workshops through NJBIA which will upskill employees at no cost as long as employees work at least 20 hours week. She also stated if there are other training needs for staff, they will work to leverage funds to provide at no cost.

St. John of God Community Services – Kim Q. reported they will have an open house on March 8, 2023, 5-8pm highlighting adult services early interventions.

Michelle S. reported she and Tom recently met with community outreach advisor from Dimension Renewable Energy, they have state contracts and install solar panels on industrial complexes and energy gets put into the grid. They have a jobs program & will pay for the 8 week training program. A draft agreement has been created and RCSJ is listed as training provider for the OSHA (note agreement is not finalized). Dimensions will hire local participants once they have completed the training especially TANF/GA/Food Stamp population at a good starting salary. This is opportunity for training in industry (green jobs) that is growing and skills sets are linkable to other industries such as wind. Part of Dimension Renewable Energy agreement with the state is to engage with non-profits and social service organizations to work on community events and even sponsor.

Project Search – the Project Search program primary objective is to secure competitive employment for people with disabilities. They have partnered with Jefferson Health and the students are doing great. A video was created and is very inspirational, a copy will be forwarded to the committee to view.

Janet G. reported the GC Chamber of Commerce is partnering with RCSJ Entrepreneur program and will offer an entrepreneur workshop and get critical information on how to launch and scale your business. The event will be held March 29 at RCSJ.

The State of the County will be held March 16 at Rowan University. They are billing as Year of Small Business and keynote speaker will be Bill Hoffman of Hoffman's Exterminating.

Janet stated she is available to help with anyone needing literacy services.

Tom reported our Mega Job Fair will be held on Friday, March 24, 2023, 9am-12pm at RCSJ. We will be offering a Lunch & Learn immediately following the job fair for HR personnel to inform them of the free resources and programs available to them.

A motion for adjournment was made by M. Shirey, seconded by T. Rohlfig.

Respectfully submitted,

Bridget A. DiGiambattista, WDB Staff