**Grant Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

**January 26, 2018: 9:00 am -12:33 pm**

**4900 Water’s Edge Drive**

Attendees: Keith Greenarch (Chairman) Tammy Koger

Mose Dorsey Renee Cummins

Sandy McMillan Alexis Medina

Karen Fraller Lynne Deese

Beatriz “Betty” Rodriguez Sonya Clark

Joy Tribble Laura Benedict

Sandy Johnson Philip Woodward

Felipe Cabrera Gloria Jinks

Frank Harden Rebecca Freeman

Kim Harrell

Also attending: Laura Kelly 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: May 4, 2018 was selected. Location: Waters Edge.

**Jim McAgy and John Mainey-(Made4Me):** **Tammy Koger**

Products were passed around so the attendees could touch and examine them. Jim and John presented using a PowerPoint and their products. Pamphlets and business cards were distributed.

Made4Me will celebrate its first year of business in March 2018. In 2017, 11 clients were helped by the customization of 22 different pieces.

* The Made4Me is a non-profit company, based in Wake Forest, NC, that makes cardboard adaptions for children with disabilities. No adults have been served yet.
* Company Mission: To ensure people with disabilities receive the custom adaptations they need to fulfill their developmental, social, academic and vocational potential.
* Cardboard serves as the main constructive material for all the items made by this company.
* Company Goals:
* First year goals:
	1. Become incorporated (achieved)
	2. 501 (c) (3) tax exempt status-(achieved)
	3. Set up a production facility (garage-suitable but not ideal)
	4. Form relationships with at least 3 organizations in the Triangle area in NC (achieved with Pediatric Therapy Associates, Abilitations Children’s Therapy and In-Kind Friends). Also, starting to establish a relationship with NCATP)
* This-year’s goals:
	1. Serve 1 new client per month
	2. Add 3 new partnerships
	3. Find a permanent facility with a training floor, “show & tell” room, receptionist area

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* Issues addressed by Made4Me:
	1. Doesn’t Exist: People cannot find an item that will address the specific need such as a specialized custom chair or tray.
	2. Expense: If an item exists then it is too expensive
	3. Wait Time: If an item is located and funds are found then the person usually has to wait 6 months or more to get the needed item.
	4. Item doesn’t meet the need: Item is not customized enough for the person

Jim and John shared fantastic examples of how Made4me designs and customizes items for various individuals with disabilities. A highlight of the presentation was a video featuring one of their success stories. Luke contacted Made4Me to design and build a chair for a sled so his sister, Lauren, could play with him in the snow. Lauren, diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy, did not enjoy sledding because an “off the shelf” sled did not meet her needs. The company designed a chair with a 5-point harness system that fit her sled. The video showed Lauren comfortably and safely enjoying her sled in the snow.

How do they do it? : Every item created is made from ecofriendly cardboard. Ecofriendly paint is used to produce a custom look or personalized style for the owner such as a favorite team or movie character. Water-soluble glue and polyurethane are used on used on each item. Created items are water resistant but not water proof. Though the company has not had any adult customers, products can be produced for adults also. The weight limit for Tri Wall cardboard is 1100 pounds. In the future, the company hopes to have a Strength and Materials Analysis study to share with its customers. Made4Me also works with therapists to assist with measurements, angles, positioning etc.

Cost: For every piece created, an invoice is generated. Staff tracks how much time, travel and materials are used to produce the final product. The invoice is then given to the client. There is a line item on the invoice titled “Discount”. That discount could range from $0.00 to the entire cost of the item. If the family cannot afford to pay for the item then Made4Me will give the item to the customer. One day, the company hopes that it will have funding so there will be no need to discuss price with customers. One suggestion made: It would be great to hire people with disabilities to help create the items. John shared that Made4Me plans to do that in the future once the company is more established.

How can attendees help? Assist Made4Me by:

* Find clients that the company can help.
* Donate your time and talents (painters, engineers, therapists, office staff)
* Contribute monetary donations

**NCATP SharePoint Site and Doc-U-Sign:** **Lynne Deese**

NCATP is serving as the pilot agency. Lynne gave a PowerPoint presentation. Staff can use SharePoint to share information, exchange files, etc. with each other. **SharePoint highlights:**

* Event Calendar: Staff can post events on this calendar for staff and the GAC to view.

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* AT Reuse: SharePoint has a special “area” for Reuse. This allows us to share database information, documents and information such as how to clean equipment, etc.
* Evidence Based Practices: Information, supportive articles and research, training, etc. can be posted here for staff to view.
* Films, Videos, and PSAs: That is a project area for Lynne and some DHHS staff.
* Quality of Life: NCATP is developing a “quality of life” survey which will give feedback re: staff and program’s actual impact the quality of life for people with disabilities.
* Staff Development: This area will contain presentations that staff can access and use.
* Grant Advisory Council (GAC): Council members will be listed in this area. Small or large groups can exchange files, post agendas, etc.

Access can be gained through a Microsoft 365 account. If GAC members have a state email account, he/she may be receiving an invitation to SharePoint from Lynne soon. Lynne will also email GAC members a link to a video that explains how to sign a Doc-U-Sign document.

**Doc-U-Sign:** Doc-U-Sign is a tool that allows a person to create templates. to create “envelopes” that allows the individual to email documents. People can then confidentiality and legally sign documents. People can email the signed document back to the sender. The NCATP intake process requires various HIPPA or legal forms be signed by parents/guardians. We want the ability to obtain signatures in numerous ways. Rather than faxing or mailing documents for signatures, we can use Doc-U-Sign to acquire signatures via on-line or email. NCATP has used this tool to obtain a signature on a legal release from a client who uses eye glaze technology. We have also acquired a signature from a parent on our Self-Pay form. So far, this tool is working well for NCATP.

Now NCATP is using Doc-U-Sign to test sending completed assessments to obtain signature proof that assessments have been received. We are still researching if Doc-U-Sign meets all the criteria of confidentiality for DHHS.

**Federal Report: Sonya Clark**

A copy of report was distributed. This year’s report was submitted on time. Compiling the report was very challenging since the database crashed. Staff could only use an Access database created (Thanks Frank!) for them to collect data. This database saved us! Highlights from the report:

* **State Level Activities:**
1. Device Reutilization:
	* Consumers received 120 items through open-ended loans/exchanges/reassigned.
	* The 3 primary areas involved were daily living, speech communication and seating/mobility.
	* Customer satisfaction rating was 93%

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* + Total cost savings = $ 206,659
1. Device Loan (short term):
	* 1, 600 loans
	* Primary areas were daily living, speech communication, computers & related
	* Customer satisfaction rating was 98%
2. Device Demo:
* 4, 348 individuals were served
	+ Primary areas were speech communication, computers & related
	+ Customer satisfaction rating was 98%
* **State Leadership Activities**:
1. Training Activities:
* 1, 335 individuals participated in training events
* IT/Telecommunications trainings (82)
* 212 training related to transition
* Performance rating of 90%
1. Technical Assistance: Previously, the report required numbers. Percentages are used now.
* Education 12%
* Employment 38%
* Health, Allied Health, Rehabilitation 13%
* Community Living 13%
* Technology 24%
1. Public Awareness:
* Examples-The G.R.E.A.T. Conference in October 2017
* On-line webinar for UNC at Chapel Hill (Resources for AT Funding)
1. Information and Assistance:
* 5,658 individuals reached
* Individuals with disabilities, family members and representatives from health and rehabilitation facilities were the largest groups served

**AFP (Alternate Finance Program) Update: Laura Benedict**

Handouts were distributed. When the Self-Help Credit Union first applied for this federal grant, it did not get the grant. Feedback received suggested that the company partner with NCATP. The latest proposal was accepted, and the grant was awarded on October 24, 2017. NC now has an Alternative Finance Program. NC is the only instance is the country in which the grant has been awarded to the financial institution. With all the other instances, 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!

The Self-Help Credit Union 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.

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Some information Laura 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 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.
* Now the Self-Help CU has branches across the state with hopes of opening more branches (Raleigh area) in the next couple of years.
* 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.
* The grant amount available for loans is @ $600,000.00. Since the grant was awarded in October, the AFP has disbursed funds for two loans. One was for eSight technology and the other was for a vehicle modification.
* NCATP will help the CU by collecting the information/data on the individual first and then sharing with the CU. If the person is not sure what he/she needs NCATP may assess the client to ensure appropriate need/device is recommended. Also, Tammy will assist the Advisory Council. When NCATP starts writing its new State Plan, it will include AFP and collecting data related to AFP.

If anyone knows of an individual that might have an interest in being on the Council/Board, please let Laura know. Laura will talk with Philip Woodward and Sandy McMillian about ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) accounts.

**Announcements: Tammy Koger**

* Staff Announcements: A vacant AT Consultant position has been converted to an Intake Coordinator position. Right now, Connie does both intake of referrals and billing for all

fee based services. This new position will allow the tasks to be divided; an Intake Coordinator and an Billing Coordinator. We are interviewing for the position now.

Monique Cox accepted the position and began as Intake Coordinator on April 9, 2018.

* Reeves Grant: NCATP created a proposal for acquiring portable ramps for the NCATP Centers which can be used for our Demo/Loan program. The type of ramps will be threshold ramps and portable ramps up to 10 feet in size. NCATP submitted the proposal and made it through the first round of screenings. Tammy has completed/submitted the needed paperwork. NCATP has been awarded the grant
* NCETA Conference (NC Employment and Training Association): Mose has recommended that NCATP present at this conference in April. Tammy and Julie Dutchess will present focusing on assistive technology in the Workforce Centers and making sure Center are accessible.
* May is “Older Americans” Month: NCATP hopes to plan an event with Rebecca and other staff from DAAS to recognize this.

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* Veterans Workshop: NCATP has contracted with NC A &T State University again to provide more workshops. Flyers for the workshops were distributed.
	1. Farming Resources for Military Veterans (Western Regional):
		+ April 26, 2018 in Mills River, NC 28759. Shelby Kennerly and Tammy

will be presenting.

* 1. Farming Resources for Military Veterans (Eastern Regional)
		+ May 16, 2018 in Fayetteville, NC 28306. Gloria Jinks and Tammy will be presenting.
* GREAT Conference Announcements: NCATP is not co-sponsor the conference with NCRA in 2018. Our staff have partnered with NCRA in planning this conference for the past six years. NCATP staff will probably present at the conference and be there to support NCRA (but not at the level of a co-sponsor).

**2018 Events Discussion: All**

NCATP conducts and/or participates in a lot of events. Tammy asked for feedback regarding events or ideas for events in which NCATP could participate. NCATP has been approached about partnering for an accessible expo (1 day event) but nothing has been agreed upon yet. Sonya Clark will be attending the SC Expo so we will know more about its structure/success afterwards.

Some feedback shared concerning the needs of event attendees and suggested partnerships:

* It is great when new products are showcased.
* It’s very helpful when a person can compare items (especially big-ticket ones) from different vendors. Also, it is valuable to find out what vendors are offering services and/or products, “who is in the business”.
* Suggested agencies to partner with: DSB, VA, DSDHH and DPI

**Updates/Announcements:**  **All**

Update from Karen Fraller (Easterseals): The grant timeframe will end June 29, 2018. Money is still available!!! Karen reminded everyone that funds cannot be used for co-pays. Grant will allow an amount of funding up to $10,000 per person.

Please contact Karen if you know anyone that may qualify. Karen can be contacted at 919-865-8606 (office) or 1-800-662-7119 ext. 8606, Info@eastersealsucp.com or karen.fraller@eastersealsucp.com

If everyone has suggestions for future presentations, please contact Tammy Koger.

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

Meeting adjourned 12:33 pm