

Core Team Meeting
12/2/2020

Kate Stevens – Transition Counselor with VocRehab in Brattleboro
Erika Korb – JOBS case manager at HCRS
Elizabeth Bull – VR counselor for the deaf and hard of hearing
Kathy Thielen – Career education work study program teacher at BUHS
Danielle Southwell – JOBS program coordinator at HCRS in Brattleboro
Hannah Woodring – Youth Services
Suzie Wagner – VSAC EOC Counselor
Lance Cutler – Kindle Farm School in Newfane, Transition Coordination
Bonnie Haug Cramp – VR Counselor Brattleboro, Linking Learning to Career Special Program
Shawn Garland – Business Account Manager for CWS Brattleboro
Mack Macking – Youth Services Youth and Young adult program coordinator
Emily Evans – Special Education Case Manager at Leland and Gray HS

Statewide Core Team event – Thank you to those who attended.

Announcements:

College Compass – partnership between College Steps and VR to provide academic social and vocational support while students are attending a program – they are looking for referrals. Kate will send a flyer to the group. This is a good thing to look at for HS juniors and seniors

VR and CCV are partnering for a new session for “Intro to College and Careers” At the Brattleboro CCV Campus but virtual. Projected start date is January 25th. This is a non-credit bearing course and is designed as a way to get a broad overview of how to make their way forward. Needs to be a VR client to be part of this special offering.

VSAC’s “Vermont Applies” – happening all month with the big college fair happening today.

Essay contest - every year congress is soliciting input from students around how to make the US a better place – they are looking for essay submissions now from HS students – please encourage them to apply.

Project 10 Million – a program that T-mobile has launched to help students and families struggling with internet access. Looks like a good legit resource to help out.

Presenters – 3 people from the VCIL – Vermont Center for Independent Living
Sefakor Komabu-Pomey, Khol and Nate Besio all joined the meeting.

Sefakor – Independent Living Coordinator at VDIL. Wears 3 hats – Main target today is for us to connect the Youth Transition Program connect with the IEP goals of the students. Works together with Nate and Khol

Nate Besio – Works in the VCIL Burlington office. Peer advocate and coordinator in that office. Supports Chittenden, Grand Isle and Addison Counties.

Khol Hitchcock – Works for VCIL in the Brattleboro office. Fairly new to the position and excited to join.

Note – everyone at VCIL is impacted by disability. Sefakor, Nate and Khol all shared some information about their personal experiences with their disabilities.

VCIL – a private non-profit organization. Receive funds from the state of Vermont and the Federal government with a model focusing on the independent living movement. Ed Roberts is the godfather of this movement. People with disabilities should be able to take control of their own lives and advocate for themselves. Independent living centers were created in every state around the country. VCIL was founded in 1979. The core belief is a peer centered model. Shared experiences to help others. A cross-disability and age organization.

Mission – to empower people with disabilities – and to advocate for people to have having difficulty advocating for themselves.

What we do? Agrability – farmers and sustainability to get back into farm work. Many injured veterans are taking advantage of this program. Community Access – community availability. Home Access – helps make homes accessible. Modification such as bathrooms and ramps. Meals on Wheels referral is a big piece. VCIL does many referrals. Peer Advocacy – one on one support for people to help them with their individual needs and goals. Sue Williams Freedom Fund – SWFF – this is up to \$1500 to help make accommodations at a person's home. VIRS – the Vermont Interpreter Referral Services for the deaf and hard of hearing. Equipment Distribution Program – helps people get items such as chairs, standing lifts. Youth Transition program – Working with young people on their future planning and needs.

Four Core Services – Information, Referral and Assistance. Systems Advocacy. Peer Advocacy and Community Outreach. Independence Living Skills. Transition Services.

RISE – Resilience and Independence in State of Emergency – This is a special program created to help people with disabilities remain as independent as possible during this pandemic. Funds can only be used for needs that are directly related to the pandemic. Rise may be able to help with bills if you lost your job. Youth may be able to benefit from this as well – please refer them! This can cover the cost of computers, cleaning supplies, utility payments and other equipment and services to mitigate isolation.

Apply by using info@vcil.org or call 800-639-1522. No income requirements and no co-payments. Fund ends September 30, 2021. It is funded through the CARES act fund.

Youth Transition Program – Funded through VR and focus is on self-advocacy – Ages 14 to 26. A new flyer is coming soon with more information. PAC – Peer Advocacy Counselors. Would like to see the involved youth in the future become part of the PAC in the future. Also, the youth advocacy council at the state – we would love to see our youth involved in this. Finally, bringing along youth who are of color and have disabilities to be part of this journey. Incorporating racial justice with disability justice is essential – work against implicit bias and helping students who have different cultural backgrounds around disability is important.

Questions:

How to contact – anyone can call of any ages.

Income guidelines – Sue Williams fund does have income level. The RISE fund does not have an income guideline – it just needs to be tied into COVID. Inability to do things that you might not be able to do. The limit on this is \$2500.

When are we coming to your school to present to your students? - Please contact Sefakor to set up workshops