



## Lafayette City-Parish President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities

Monday, June 11, 2012

Meeting Minutes

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**Board Members Present:** Donna Andrus, Randy Broussard, Rose Shuff, MarkGuillory,  
Donielle Watkins  
**Guests in Attendance:** Deborah Aymond, Lynn Blanchard, Chyvonne Blanchard

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1. Donielle Watkins called the meeting to order.
2. Lynn and Chyvonne Blanchard with Affiliated Blind Rehabilitation Training Center spoke regarding their program and services.

Their core services include Adjustment to Blindness, Home and Personal Management, Communications which includes Braille, Orientation and Mobility which is how to travel with a cane, Job Readiness and Placement, Technology Lab and Adaptive Software. Clients can stay in the dorm or attend as day clients. They have peer counseling on site and they have a grant for the older blind, 55 years and older. They have the Support Service Program for the Deaf/Blind which gives them a facilitator to assist them in the community. They have a new program through Department of Health and Hospitals for Communication Access Services. They provide interpreter services; they have a hearing aid program for those that meet financial and medical criteria. They have a telecommunications loan program and loan out telephone and adaptive equipment for the hard of hearing and deaf. They have Project Cope which also does adaptive equipment for the blind, so there is some crossover. They have been doing modular training with a grant through the WIB for people that were affected by the oil spill and they have worked with 10 or 11 groups working on computer skills and job readiness. They have two bingo halls, one in Abbeville and Judice to raise funds for their program. Chyvonne gave the committee the history of Affiliated Blind. It was started in 1983 by John LeMer a blind individual who was the Louisiana President of the National Federation for the Blind. At that time there were no training facilities in Louisiana for individuals who were blind and everyone had to go to Arkansas for training. He decided to start a commercial bingo hall and he raised funds to start Affiliated Blind. After three years he was able to pay back initial investors and purchase the property where Affiliated Blind is today. Chyvonne also indicated that they do a lot of Blindness Awareness Programs in the schools and on college campuses. Also, the Zoo of Acadiana is the first accessible zoo in the United States; there are sculptures and Braille descriptions of the animals.

### 3. Minutes

- The May minutes were reviewed and accepted. Rose made the motion and Randy seconded, all in favor.

### 4. Correspondence

- There was no correspondence.

### 5. Old Business

- The issue of building accessibility was tabled.

- Job Fair- The Job Fair Committee has had two meetings and is off to a good start. The date of the Job Fair is October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from 9:00 am to Noon at the Heymann Center for the Performing Arts. The Employer Breakfast Symposium will be from 7:45 to 8:45 and we have three confirmed speakers. City-Parish President Joey Durel, Thomas Levatino with the Workforce Commission who will be discussing Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Fidelity Bonding, and the Manager of the Lafayette Holiday Inn who has hired a number of people with disabilities. We should be getting our printed materials soon, and will start registering businesses soon. We are planning for the Autism Society of Acadiana to host the Resource Fair again this year. We have reserved the entire ballroom again this year which is 16,000 square feet. We have requested a waiver for the rental fee. We hope to have an ad in the Quick Quarter this year and have requested these funds. We will be doing other media including morning television shows and radio shows. Our next meeting will be on June 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 am at LRS. All are invited.

## **6. New Business**

- Awards Ceremony- The 2012 Awards Ceremony has been tentatively scheduled for October 30<sup>th</sup>. Debbie will ask Carlee to check on the availability of the Robicheaux Center for that date. Debbie and Carlee will work on re-doing the nomination form to make it more user friendly. They suggested having some previous winners as judges again.

## **7. Comments from the Public**

- Debbie shared with the Committee a Senate Resolution that was done in the Louisiana State Senate to honor Carol Glover, who passed away in February of this year. Carol was a Lafayette and State Award winner in 2009.

8 The next meeting of the President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities is scheduled for Monday July 9, 2012 at 11:30 am-12:30 pm in the Council Briefing Room on the first floor of City Hall.