



NEWSLETTER May 2017

Executive Director's Message

Community Participation Support

As I have discussed with you in past newsletters EARS has been working for the past two years on a changing service delivery that has been mandated to be in place by March of 2019 by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Home and Community Based-Setting Rule (HCBS), and Everyday Lives. Over this time span several variations of how these mandates would be implemented in Pennsylvania have been studied and reviewed.

As of April 1, 2017 the Department of Human Services (DHS) submitted a service plan for Consolidated and Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) waivers to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). These waiver plans include modifications as to the way services are delivered at EARS and the unit rate structure that supports those services. At this point in time CMS has 90 days to review the renewal applications for the Consolidated and P/FDS waiver plans and changes may occur to the content based upon discussions with CMS, but at this point in time this is how EARS perceives the service delivery to be.

The EARS present services: our SSU program (State License 2380), Vocational (State License 2390), Small Group Employment, Adult Autism, and Job Placement will operate as they are along with a new caveat called "Community Participation Support".

The purpose of the "Community Participation Support" service is to broaden the types of life-long learning experiences available to individuals receiving services. EARS will be required to:

- Offer community activities no less than 25% of the person's time in an EARS program;
- Offer a choice whether to participate in community activity, the amount and frequency will remain with the EARS program participant;
- Assure the decision to participate in "Community Participation Support" will rest with the EARS program participant's team.

The "Community Participation Support" activities provide opportunity to build connections within the participant's local community and include (but are not limited to) the following supports for:

- Participation in community activities, groups, associations, or clubs to develop social networks with community organizations and clubs;
- Building and maintaining relationships and social networks that provide friendship and support;
- Participation in community opportunities related to the development of hobbies or leisure/cultural interests or to promote personal health and wellness;
- Participation in formal/informal associations or community/neighborhood groups;
- Selecting and participating in volunteer opportunities;
- Learning to navigate the local community, including using public transportation and/or private transportation And other transportation options available in the local area;
- Developing and/or maintaining reciprocal relationships with members of the broader community.

Starting in July of 2017, EARS will start to implement the Community Participation Supports services, although they may not be provided in our actual facility that holds a 2380 or 2390 license. These supports will be offered out in the general community with a ratio on one (1) staff member to three (3) participants. During the fiscal year 2017-2018 we will slowly implement the program, as well as, investigate the willingness of clients to participate in the program. EARS will be required to provide the 25% community participation agency-wide by September of 2018.

These past two years have had several interpretations of possible services that could have been offered to our clients. Although this present interpretation of "Community Participation Support" seems difficult, we believe it will be manageable and help our clients experience meaningful community participation and inclusion. We will keep you informed as we proceed with this service.

Submitted by: David B. Lloyd

Great Things are Happening at EARS

Autism Unit Update:

There have been a lot of changes in the Autism Unit at EARS. It has only been a program since June of 2015 and there have been multiple challenges to navigate as we have gone through some “growing pains”. We are now providing services for twice as many individuals and the Autism Unit was expanding quickly. We offer two different programming tracks in the Autism Unit. One is for individuals that are here to learn vocational skills and work towards competitive employment (WAC) and the second is a group that is here to participate in enriching activities that enhance independence and a better quality of life (SSU). Both of our programs were happening in the same area. It was challenging to keep the WAC clients focused on vocational tasks while the SSU group was doing interactive group activities. As a result there were behavioral concerns that would affect the entire group. We were seeing individuals expressing their frustrations over being in such a busy and active work setting.

Thus, we decided to split up the Autism Unit into two separate spaces. This was an extremely challenging task because we had to tackle it utilizing the same amount of staff and resources. The staff outside of the Autism Unit understood the challenges we were facing and graciously gave up a staff lounge so that we could keep the two units close to each other. Another major concern was that most of our clients participating in the Autism Unit are not big fans of change and this one was significant. We put a lot of time and effort into planning how the split would work best, and kept clients involved in the process. We are now a couple months into the split and it has gone wonderfully. Staff and clients are able to focus much more effectively on what the expectations are for the day. The two separate groups still have the option of seeing each other at break/lunch/social skills class and enjoy catching up during those times. Autism WAC clients are working hard on vocational skills, and Autism SSU clients are participating in a larger variety of engaging activities. Thanks again to the dedicated staff and clients at EARS for making this transition a smooth one.

Submitted by: Andy Ebersole, Program Specialist/Autism Unit

EARS Client Advisory Committee Update:

The Client advisory Committee meets monthly to discuss concerns and suggestions from their peers. They share thoughts, opinions, and ideas that will help to continue to provide a positive and productive work environment. The committee will suggest new agency wide program ideas in an effort to insure that individual needs and interests of all EARS participants are included, met, and that all continue to be self motivated.

The Committee members are: Brenda W., Shawn D., David M., Dezaray R., Rochelle M., Kaitlyn G., Chris C., Bev S., Randy W., Jason S., Barry K., Kandi S., Ebony J., Kathi K...

Following is a list of several projects the committee has participated in:

- Assist with the Walk For Dez
- Assist with Children’s games for the Lititz Ambuc’s Christmas Party
- Plan and serve holiday luncheons at EARS
- Help to run the EARS Snack Shack (in-house store)
- Assist with the EARS Garden, Reading Literacy, Computer and Math classes

The latest endeavor of this committee was to bring Speaker Bill Krebs to EARS to address EARS participants about Self-Advocacy. He visited the Ephrata EARS facility and spoke of Advocacy, Competitive Employment as well as making personal choices. He was very enlightening and informative to all.

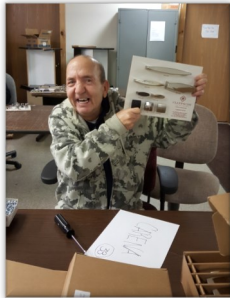
Submitted by: Brenda Woodcraft and Kaitlyn Good, Committee Members

Small Group Employment (Mobile Work Crew) Update:

We have been busy in this area thanks to the addition of several ongoing work contracts. These small groups are working side by side with non-disabled employees as well as independently throughout the companies. We welcome and appreciate the opportunities they are providing to EARS participants.

- Weaver Nut Company Inc.: Labeling and Packaging of various food products
- Primitives by Kathy: Packaging and Labeling of gift items
- Cliffside Industries: Janitorial work, Dock work, Packaging and Assembly of hardware
- SR Cover Properties: Maintenance, Janitorial Services and Gardening

Submitted by: **Ron Hummel, Mobile Work Crew Manager**



Small Group Employment at work.

21st Annual Agway-EARS Golf Tournament

When: August 15, 2017

***Where: Fairview Golf Course,
Quentin PA***

Time: 1:30 PM (shotgun start)

***For more information contact
Dave at Ephrata Agway
(717)733-6593***

***Have fun playing golf while
supporting EARS.***



Your Yard, Garden, Farm and Pet Place

Board Meeting Schedule

May 15, 2017
June 19, 2017
July 17, 2017
August 21, 2017

Holiday Schedule

May 29, 2017—EARS Closed for
Memorial Day
July 3 & 4 2017—EARS Closed for
July 4th

Future Important Dates

August 15, 2017—Ephrata Agway/
EARS Golf Tournament

***A big thank you to all of our Attendees,
Sponsors and Door Prize Donors for the
Annual EARS March Fundraising Dinner.
It was a successful event and we appreciate
all of your support. We could not do this
event over the years without you!***

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Serving the community for 45 years.

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EARS Mission Statement

*Providing supports that improve the
quality of life and self worth of individuals
we serve.*

The official registration and financial information of the Ephrata Area Rehab. Services may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. EARS is an equal opportunity employer.