



## NEWSLETTER December 2017

### Executive Director's Message

#### **Community Participation Supports Have Started**

In our last newsletter we introduced to you the then proposed service delivery plan by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Home and Community Based-Setting Rule (HCBS), and Everyday Lives called "Community Participation Support". Starting July 1, 2017 the delivery service "Community Participation Support" has begun at EARS.

Community Participation Supports is an umbrella service that provides our clients with a broad range of supports that engage them in lifelong learning by trying new things, building new skills, developing relationships, and finding new ways to move from just being in the community to being a valued part of the community.

EARS's primary goal of Community Participation Supports is to enhance and develop the skills necessary to increase the potential and opportunity for employment of people with disabilities within integrated settings. Future employment, for these individuals, will be based on a person's strengths, interests and where their particular skills/abilities are needed.

The intent of Community Participation Supports services are to:

- Provide people with disabilities the experiences, opportunities, and supports to be engaged and be valued members of their community including opportunities for meaningful community employment.
- Support people to be a neighbor, friend, and co-worker who enjoys what they do and utilizes their abilities and interests.
- To build skills that encourage interdependence and value in the community.
- Nurture community relationships that support inclusion and create a presence that is felt and appreciated by others in the community and missed when the individual is absent.

Over the past six months, EARS has been developing the strategic intent to implement Community Participation Supports. These action steps require our staff to be persistent, resilient, and resourceful.

Persistent in:

Seeking out and recognizing opportunities for our clients to share and be valued for their gifts, talents, and positive attributes within the community.

Resilient in:

Promoting the values of the person to their community. Anticipating potential community perceptions, including potential prejudice and discrimination towards people with disabilities.

Resourceful in:

Identifying community events and activities that can support the development of the skills and connections needed to achieve.

As you'll see in this newsletter the Staff have begun to be persistent, resilient, and resourceful in starting the delivery of Community Participation Supports. Our goal for 2017-18 is to have the individuals who desire to do so, participate in the community. As always we will keep you informed as we proceed with this service.

**David B. Lloyd, Executive Director**

# Great Things are Happening at EARS

## **Look out community, here we come!**

As of July 1, 2017 waiver renewals for all individuals took on a new service definition and added focus to Community Participation. The emphasis behind this change is a multi-tiered group including the ADA, Everyday Lives, the Governor's executive order of Employment First, Self-Advocates, WIOA (Workforce Initiative and Opportunity Act), ODP (Office of Developmental Programs), and HCBS (Home and Community Based Settings). Agencies such as EARS will have until September 2021 to comply with these new regulations that stipulate that individuals attending day programs will be required to spend 25% or more of their time, normally spent in facility based programs, in the community. We have been anticipating this change for some time now and have actively been addressing the new regulations. The Autism Unit, the SSU, the VU, and the WAC have all begun to pilot the program with a small group of individuals from each program participating in this endeavor. The EARS Community Participation Team (part of the EARS Strategic Plan) continues to meet regularly to discuss the results of the pilot and make the appropriate adjustments.

Who will participate? At the annual ISP meetings Support Coordinators will lead the team in discussing the individuals desire to participate. Some exceptions, as laid out by the variance form from ODP, include the following: a medical need that limits the amount of time a person can safely be in the community, an injury, illness, or change in mental health status, behaviors that are a risk to him/herself or others, or the person simply declines the option to spend time in the community having been provided with opportunities to do so. Opportunities available are consistent with their preferences, choices, and interests.

Why community participation? The purpose of the community participation support services is to broaden the types of life-long learning experiences available to individuals receiving services. The activities are expected to increase the individual's opportunity to build connections within his/her local community in integrated settings that include persons without disabilities and are not paid caregivers. These opportunities will be focused on training and educating for self-determination and self-advocacy as well as developing and/or maintaining relationships with members of the community.

What is the goal? These services should result in the individual increasing the potential for employment, developing and sustaining a range of valued social roles and relationships, building natural supports, experiencing meaningful community participation and inclusion, increasing pre-vocational skill development, as well as the identification of and participation in activities that provide a sense of purpose and responsibility.

EARS continues to be dedicated to providing quality and innovative opportunities to those we support.

## **Self Advocacy Training**

The past few months have been very busy in the VU & WAC programs. The Client Advisory Committee is always looking for ways to increase the training opportunities for the individuals who participate in these vocational training programs. After several meetings and lively discussion it was recommended, by the Advisory Committee, that training on Self-Advocacy and Employment, be provided to individuals in our vocational programs.

In September, EARS hosted an all-day training event, with trainers provided by Self-Advocates United as 1 (SAU1). SAU1 brings together people with developmental disabilities (across Pennsylvania), to build bridges that lead to an everyday life. Using tools of enthusiasm, ideas, information, and knowledge, they offer trainings statewide on how to dream big and make real plans; how to make choices; how to fight for individual rights; and how to seek out organizations/individuals to provide answers and assist in navigating the ever changing system.

SAU1 works with diverse groups to make changes for all people with intellectual disabilities. The curriculum they present is designed and presented by Self Advocates. Approximately 40 individuals participated in this all-day event, with a morning session, "Let's Speak Up" and an afternoon session, "Let's Get to Work". The Clients who participated were attentive and contributed many good ideas throughout the discussion portions of the training. The Self-Advocates and their support staff were impressed with the EARS clients and their willingness to learn more about these topics and they offered to return to EARS to provide follow-up training to several of our individuals.

## Autism Unit is pumping on all cylinders

EARS is providing services for a total of 26 individuals diagnosed with ASD in both the vocational area (WAC) and the adult enrichment area (SSU). The staff to consumer ratio in this program exceeds the requirement set by state mandates, but EARS has found this to be beneficial when dealing with individuals who have more significant needs. The dedicated staff are assisted by two Board Certified Behavior Consultants contracted to help with issues big and small. Dr. Carolyn Bruey has been involved from the inception of the Autism Unit and continues to give valuable insights focusing on the “big picture” concerns. Julianna Brim visits weekly, and works with staff on day to day behavioral concerns. Julianna provides helpful strategies ranging from antecedent approaches, environmental changes, staff coaching, visual aids, integrity checks and social skills curriculum. EARS values both of these individual’s professional experience and expertise.

Currently the Autism Unit is at capacity with the vocational aspect of the program while the adult enrichment part of the program does have a few spots available. Conversations continue on how to navigate and provide additional services specifically for individuals with Autism with the focus on Community Participation. The Autism Unit is doing their part to adapt by having a small group of three consumers and an Autism staff member replicating these important community outings. We are gaining valuable information with these efforts and resolving logistical problems/issues as we move forward in the process.

It is a very exciting time to work in the field of adult services.

Thank you also to our Businesses, Organizations and Individuals providing us with:

- Work, both in house and for our Small Group Employment Program.
- Job Placement and Assessment sites.
- Community Participation sites.

*Without all of you, EARS could not provide the individualized and various services we do.*

**From all of us at  
EARS:**

**A Very Merry  
Christmas and  
a Blessed New  
Year!**



**21st Annual Agway-EARS  
Golf Tournament .  
A Huge Success!  
Proceeds of \$9,500 from  
the event were donated to  
EARS. A big thanks to all  
individuals involved!**



Your Yard, Garden, Farm and Pet Place

**Everyone at EARS  
would like to thank  
all who  
donated to the  
LCCF Extra Give.  
It was the most in  
donations that we  
have received:  
\$10,430**

**THE EXTRA  
ORDINARY  
GIVE**



### **Board Meeting Schedule**

December 18, 2017  
January 15, 2018  
February 19, 2018

### **Holiday Schedule**

December 22-26, 2017 EARS  
Closed for Christmas  
January 1, 2018 EARS Closed for  
New Years Day

### **Future Important Dates**

Watch for flyers regarding dates  
for future dances and bowling.  
**March 11, 2018—EARS  
Annual Fundraising Dinner at  
the Historic Revere Tavern.**

EARS Inc.  
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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.