

Keeping you “In the Know...” 4/3/15

Exploring New Opportunities:

CSC staff members completed and submitted a proposal Monday, March 30th to become one of the nation’s 92 Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) programs of the Social Security Administration (SSA). In the words of the SSA, “The purpose of the program is to support [SSI and SSDI] beneficiaries who want to return to work to make a successful and profitable transition the workforce.” WIPA Counselors educate beneficiaries about the many work-incentive programs offered by the SSA, and about the likely effects of earned income on their federal, state, and local income and healthcare benefits. CSC is proposing to help beneficiaries in 12 counties of northeast Ohio to achieve lives of greater independence, self-determination, and self-sufficiency. SSI and SSDI beneficiaries who are blind or have low vision are among those with the lowest labor participation rates in the nation. Our operation of a WIPA program would truly help educate, empower and employ adults, as well as adolescents and young adults who have blindness or other disabling conditions.

CSC will learn in August if we have been selected to serve as the WIPA program for beneficiaries of northeastern Ohio.

Strengthening Partnerships:

The Shop at The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio celebrated their grand opening on Tuesday, March 31st. Barb Piascik and Tom Sawyer, who were instrumental consultants on this project, attended the grand opening of the retail store which features merchandise to help people with vision or hearing loss live safely and accomplish daily tasks with greater ease.

With the March 31st termination of the Independent Living contract, the CSC team met all contracted goals under challenging conditions and worked well to prepare the agency to the transition of a new model and process that began April 1st. Congratulations to Susie Meles, Debi Welsby, Bryan Manthey, Annette Jakse, Stephen Penberthy, Erin St. Denis, Scott Williams-Riseng, Sherry Raymont, Joel Zureick and Charlotte Fornal for their hard work to ensure this smooth transition.

CARF Corner:

CARF is the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and its mission is to promote the quality, value and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process and continuous improvement services that center on enhancing the lives of persons served.

Which CSC programs or services have been accredited by CARF in the past? In 2012, Cleveland Sight Center was awarded a 3-year accreditation for the following services:

- Community Employment Services (Employment Supports)
- Community Employment Services (Job Development)
- Employment Skills Training Services
- Vision Rehabilitation Services (Comprehensive Vision Rehabilitation Services)

What does this mean? It means that we have opened our organization's service delivery and business processes to outside scrutiny to improve the quality of our programs. Being accredited is a public statement that our organization strives to ensure that our services are of the highest possible quality.

Follow-Up from the Consumer Council:

Earlier this month, the Consumer Council held a forum and welcomed Oliver Draper from RTA to speak and answer questions from participants. Mr. Draper has offered to help staff of Cleveland Sight Center in improving the current RTA/Paratransit travel schedule. For those who depend on this service to travel to and from the agency, please forward the following information to [Anthony Easley](#) (x8751): name, paratransit ID, address and times you utilize Paratransit to go home.

This information will be forwarded to Mr. Draper to assist in developing a better trip schedule and experience for those who utilize this service.

A recent article appeared on [cleveland.com](#) discussing persistent gaps in transportation for people with disabilities. The full article can be found [here](#).

The next Consumer Council Forum is Thursday, April 9th at CSC and advocacy will be discussed. Contact [Anthony Easley](#) (x8751) for more information.

Argus II Update:

Jennifer Dean recently prepared 20 copies of the Argus II consent form using the American Thermoform Braille & Print machine and delivered them to our Cleveland Clinic partners working on the project.

An article from the AARP Bulletin discusses an end to blindness and features the Argus II, among other technological advances. Click [here](#) for the article.

Items of Note:

Chris Gruber and his 4-year-old daughter Sarah will be guest DJs on [WJCU 88.7FM's](#) country-themed show "Beautiful Mess" on Wednesday, April 8th. Be sure to tune in from 6:00pm – 8:00pm!

A reminder to be aware of the many construction projects surrounding our building. There is now a fence at the north end of the parking lot which prevents access to the Temple parking lot. A drivable loop is being added at the north end of the parking lot to allow for turnarounds. Please do not park in the spots marked with cones. The Facilities team continues to work with Paratransit, the City of Cleveland and construction crews to ensure smooth ingress and egress to the main parking lot.