

## **MDS Biennial Plan FY2006- FY2007**

### **MDS Mission Statement**

Because we believe ...

- that everyone, from children to the elderly, has the right to experience a safe, supportive family life, in all its many facets;
- that respecting each person's and each family's values is the foundation for building and strengthening people's lives;
- that power, authority and responsibility lie with each person for how they will live their life;

The mission of MDS is ...

to work toward inclusion, participation and mutual relationships for all people who are at risk of isolation from community. We will promote self-determination and quality of life, develop an environment which encourages creativity, innovation and individuality, and ensure quality of supports.

### **Explanation of the Planning Process**

In order to obtain input from a broad representation of constituents in Region V, staff from MDS designed a planning activity that was done at regularly scheduled meetings to get feedback about key areas for this Biennial Plan. This activity was done with the Board of Directors, the Family Support Council, Provider agencies, and the Self Advocacy group. In addition, staff at MDS gave their feedback during department meetings. Also, some information from the Family Support Council plan was incorporated in the agency Biennial Plan. Overall, about 70 people contributed to the content of this plan. The data from these sources was consolidated into one document, and reviewed by the Management team, the Board, and the Family Support Council.

### **Key Issues for Region V**

Five key issues have been identified for the Region and for fulfilling the mission of MDS:

#### **Community Participation**

**Vision:** People with disabilities and those who support them are integral, valued, and contributing members of the larger community.

**Training and Education**

**Vision:** Direct support professionals and family members have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivation necessary to help people with disabilities be valued, contributing members of the their community.

**Sustainability of Community-Based Services**

**Vision:** Community-based services for people with developmental disabilities are supported through a variety of creative resources, including adequate funding.

**Quality Services**

**Vision:** People with disabilities will have high quality supports and services that are designed to address their specific needs and promote their gifts and assets.

**Transportation**

**Vision:** All people will have affordable, accessible transportation.

Goals and activities have been written for each of these key issues.

While the Family Support Council contributed in all areas, an asterisk (\*) indicates a goal or activity directly from the Family Support Council Plan.

## **Community Participation**

**Vision:** People with disabilities and those who support them are integral, valued, and contributing members of the larger community.

### **Goals:**

- Asset-Based Community Development forms the foundation for people with disabilities to connect with their community.
  - Create an ABCD committee including Board members to write an action plan to implement some of John McKnight's ideas
  - Develop connections with community agencies and organizations to bring the various associations together
  - Identify resources in our Region to fund the ABCD initiative
  - Schedule high profile discussion events about community building and inclusion
  - \*Focus on developing opportunities in the greater Peterborough area
  
- Community involvement is based upon the matching of individuals' gifts with the needs of the community.
  - Use the arts as a connecting point with the community and schools
  - Participate as individuals and an organization in Chamber of Commerce, Center City, etc.
  - Focus on on-site job training and intensive training of support people e.g. job coaches, roommates
  - \*Evaluate the development of a "Time Dollars" initiative
  
- \*Employment and connections with businesses are used as a vehicle for individuals to connect with the community.
  - MDS has people actively seeking out and networking in communities we serve for employment opportunities for people with disabilities
  - Host receptions introducing the business community to people with disabilities and the gifts they have to offer in the workplace
  - Improve dialogue with private companies to increase employment opportunities by knowing employers' needs
  
- Training and public relations support the connection of individuals to their community.
  - Generate publicity about people with disabilities who are working
  - Publicize the experiences of young adults after graduation
  - Conduct training in the community with employers and schools
  - Highlight success stories about individuals and families

## **Training and Education**

**Vision:** Direct support professionals and family members have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivation necessary to help people with disabilities be valued, contributing members of their community.

### **Goals:**

- MDS will increase collaboration with other regional entities to access and offer a wide array of training and educational opportunities to its constituents, as well as serve as a resource to the community.
  - Continue Gentle Teaching instruction and make it available to schools
  - Develop a cadre of facilitators for futures planning, training, etc.
  - Increase collaboration with Providers (e.g. re-enact Regional Training group) and other organizations on training issues
  - Publicize some of our training/ parent education programs (e.g., in the Sentinel and Shopper calendars)
  - Offer training resources about people with disabilities to all law enforcement agency employees
  - Collaborate with local colleges to create internship programs to build a pool of potential staff who are professional, knowledgeable, and motivated
- MDS will decentralize training and educational opportunities through the region geographically.
  - Continue outreach to provide extensive training and development to Direct Support Professionals, Home Providers and families
  - Develop the capacity for Direct Support Professionals to receive more hands-on follow through for training
  - Expand the training model that it reaches all staff
- MDS will develop training about how to support people with disabilities to find and maintain work.
  - Education with regard to the ways individuals can connect with communities
  - Help people see people as people, not defining them by their “problem.” and can support individuals in respectful ways
  - Offer trainings focused on thinking creatively about employment options, learning banking skills, learning how to live on your own, solving problems, and learning to use your disability to help others

## **Sustainability of Community-Based Services**

**Vision:** Community-based services for people with developmental disabilities are supported through a variety of creative resources, including adequate funding.

### **Goals:**

- MDS, its Board, and Family Support Council will continue to develop and pursue advocacy and educational efforts on the local and state levels.
  - Parents continue to address legislators in Concord to make them aware of the financial needs and the gifts of people with disabilities
  - Educate families on legislative issues and all the financial ins and outs of providing support
  - MDS staff become clearer with families about what they can offer and more proactive about offering it
  - Develop the ability to adjust budgets to meet changing needs of individuals with chronic health issues (e.g. increased cash, faster response)
  
- MDS will increase the capacity of the service system to access and use resources outside of the formal service system.
  - Increase grant writing (e.g. Behavioral Staff Development or Transportation)
  - Become a Vocational Rehabilitation Provider since we already provide a lot of day work supports
  - Provide transportation to schools, etc.
  - Continue aggressive fund-raising activities including a signature event
  - Look for other revenue sources (e.g. starting a small business that provides employment and a product to sell)
  
- MDS will develop a capacity to proactively address crises and the changing needs of individuals supported.
  - Develop a better capacity to adjust budgets during unexpected crises
  - Increase natural supports to decrease costs
  - Increase our capacity to address elder care issues in ways that promote self-determined lives

## Quality Services

**Vision:** People with disabilities will have high quality supports and services that are designed to address their specific needs and promote their gifts and assets.

### Goals:

- Determine a definition of high quality services that is grounded in our mission and subject to on-going scrutiny and discussion.
  - Develop a statistically valid quality-assessment tool to be used by ISP teams
  - Determine the elements of high quality supports (e.g. health, safety, independence, meaningful work, relationships, etc)
  - Develop a system for the regular review of services
  - Solicit direct feedback from people we support about the quality of their services
  
- People with disabilities and their teams/ family have the tools they need to design their services and assess the quality of these services.
  - Continue to support transitions from school to adulthood with information and on-going planning
  - Individuals or their families participate in hiring the people who will provide support for services they have contracted
  - Teach the skills of job development that network with a broader number of companies
  - Promote asset-based community development concepts and strategies for improving relationships, quality of life, and expanding networks with unpaid people
  - Staff will help people learn about what their gifts and talents are
  - All staff will have knowledge about the needs and the difficulties of the particular disability of the person they support
  
- A premium is placed on the recruitment, training, and retention of excellent direct support professionals.
  - Increase training about goal development for ISP team members
  - Commit to recruiting and retaining qualified, connected staff (e.g. make sure they are well trained and well paid)
  - Direct Support Professionals will attend workshops and trainings to increase skill level in ABCD, Behavioral Supports, the Gentle Approach, and Human Rights
  - Direct Support Professionals commit to being flexible by working around the person with a disability's day so that person's day doesn't get screwed up
  
- \*Families who need and want respite have access to qualified providers.
  - \*Develop strategies to identify and recruit interested providers.
  - \*Consider developing drop-in respite program again.
  - \*Evaluate possibilities for improving allocations and reimbursement in high need cases.

## **Transportation**

**Vision:** All people will have affordable, accessible transportation.

### **Goals:**

- MDS will help connect existing resources to improve access to transportation.
  - Develop connections within the community for car pool transportation (e.g. start small by focusing on the needs of just a few families in a town)
  - Investigate the feasibility of providing vouchers for bus or taxi
  - Negotiate with bus services to provide special pricing for special needs
  - Collaborate with social service agencies and organizations to develop improved options for transportation (e.g. City Express could have a variety of routes with stops at major housing areas; public transportation is not available town to town.)
  
- MDS will increase flexible transportation options in the region, including wheelchair-accessible transportation.
  - Explore the idea of having a staff person on call for transportation as needed
  - Determine the feasibility of various creative transportation solutions (e.g. the use of MDS vans at night, hiring college students as weekend and evening drivers, starting our own small transportation system)
  - Increase awareness at Department of Transportation and with local bus companies about the need for evening and weekend service as well as improving accessibility for wheelchairs