

**Niagara University**  
**First Responders Disability Awareness Training**  
**Advisory Council Minutes**  
**Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**Present:** David Whalen (Project Director), Dr. Timothy Ireland (Niagara University), Samantha Morgan (Project Manager), Dominick Busco (Project Intern), Taryn Hewitt (Project Intern), Jay Bowers (NYS DDSO), John Buttino (OPWDD), Peter Drew (Opportunities Unlimited), Jason Goldstein (Deaf Adult Services), Dan Hausman (OFPC), Robin Hickey – represented by Alicia (NYS DDPC), Jon Kemp (Main-Transit FD), Capt. Patrick Mann (Buffalo PD), Sarah Milko (Autism Up), Capt. Maria Walker (Albany FD), Jim Zymanek (Amherst Emergency Services)

**Absent/Excused:** Janine Hunt-Jackson (Project Assistant), Mjr. Robin Benziger (NYS Police), Tim Czapranski (Monroe Co. EMS), Bonnie Frazer (Mental Health Emergency Planning Coordinator), Edward Gehen (Retired West Seneca Police Chief), Richard Hermanson (Self Advocate), Undersheriff Holder (Chautauqua Co. Sheriff's Dept.), Renay Moran (Epilepsy Association), Kevin Neidemaier (Livingston Co. OEM), Tanja O'Brocta (Parent to Parent), Julie Phillipson (National Federation of the Blind), Heather Randolph (WNYIL)

- I. Welcome/introductions
- II. Review of October 10, 2013 minutes – Captain Maria Walker motioned for approval, John Buttino seconded
- III. Law Enforcement
  - A. Trainings conducted – minimal trainings have been conducted by departments that have “trained” trainers
  - B. Department response/scheduling
    - NU will continue to outreach to departments in the hopes that this program will be scheduled
    - It has been noted by some of the training coordinators that NU works closely with that it is very challenging given “flavor of the month” topics
    - Captain Mann noted how the recent spike in heroin overdoses coupled with actor Philip Seymour Hoffman’s death now has many departments, including Buffalo, needing to train officers on the subject. When this happens, DAT tends to get bumped.
  - C. Governor Cuomo State of the State
    - Governor Cuomo had a section in his State of the State titled “Justice” that states how he is directing the New York State Justice Center to look at law enforcement disability awareness training
    - Dave has sent a letter to the Justice Center executive director to meet on the subject. It should be noted that Dave has already established a relationship with them.
    - Dave sent an email out to all law enforcement associations and individuals he works closely with noting Cuomo’s comment and what may come of it
    - This comes on the heels of the Maryland Commission that is conducting an in-depth review on law enforcement DAT. The Maryland Commission is discussed later in the minutes.
  - D. 2014 LE plan – beyond what was discussed above, NU FRDAT has scheduled two law enforcement trainings in Erie County and Essex County in early April. We anticipate more training sessions later in the year.
  - E. Curriculum enhancement – we have added a pre- and post-test evaluation and are looking to develop online access of the powerpoint presentation for all trainers so as to ensure another medium for providing the program beyond the thumbdrive. There have been some instances where the thumbdrive has not been compatible with the systems the trainers are using.
- IV. Firefighter/EMS
  - A. Training rollout
    - Training conducted so far in Albany, Nassau, Erie, and State Fire Academy/Schuyler County. Scheduled trainings are in Sullivan, Westchester, Suffolk, Essex, Wayne/Ontario, Onondaga, and Otsego County. Talks with Monroe, Chautauqua, and Ulster County are under way.

- Attendance/outreach
  1. Attendance could be much better as we are averaging 10-14 attendants. However, it should also be noted that some individuals are training more than one department. One trainer is conducting his third session.
  2. Outreach has been through our newsletter (which we will now be sending out monthly), FASNY, State Fire Chiefs Association, and through the FRDAT office whereby we send correspondence to every department in that county, and possibly beyond, to be sure they are aware it is being conducted.
    - a. Jon Kemp explained the difference between fire protection *offices* and fire protection *districts*. He also noted that there is the NYS Association of Fire District Officers and recommended we reach out to them. Jon also offered up his national firefighter/EMS directory to NU.
    - b. Discussion ensued on parents outreaching to their police and fire departments when training is in their area in the hopes of ensuring they attend. This included some form of a letter-writing campaign. Parent to Parent and Autism Up, two major parent groups, will be utilized to move this forward.
- Top down connection/support – Dave noted the challenge with firefighter/EMS in that there is no direct outreach from the state offices to the responders like there is in law enforcement through DCJS. Discussion ensued on outreach to include some of the above.
- Evaluation summary - summary of the trainings conducted was made available to the attendees. Response to the Train the Trainer has been positive. See attached.

B. EMS online training

- Dave noted the office is a bit behind in finalizing the online training, however, it is coming along.
- Captain Walker noted that there needs to be ways to ensure viewers do not skip certain portions of the training and go right to the test.
- Discussion ensued on different methods of training to include rapid recertification program.

C. FDNY – Dave met in November with Chief Fitton and other captains, all based in the EMS division. He left them with a TTT manual for review and will come back together with them in the spring to discuss how they will carry out the program.

D. Buffalo FD – Dave met with Commissioner Whitfield again who said he wants to get moving on the training. We are also exploring the Jeremiah Lucey grant submission.

E. Curriculum enhancement – Note what was stated under law enforcement. What has also occurred is updating of statistics and handouts, revision of the trainer cover pages to make it easier to read, and the citing of sources and permissions.

V. 911 operators

A. Train the Trainer development

- It is progressing and could be done by the end of spring/summer. Dave is looking to discuss with NYS 911 Operators Association President John Merklinger on the best way to roll this out.
- This will be about 70% different than the other two programs, with a heavy emphasis on speech challenges and different modes of communication. Jason noted the 711 system, which we showed the council, is becoming antiquated and offered insight into programs like Speech-Relay Operators and the companies that provide this service.
- Dave noted that even though TTY is becoming a thing of the past, because it is still identified under the Americans with Disabilities Act, it must be recognized as a possible communication method.

B. 2014 plan – would like to rollout in summer or fall 2014. Statewide Conference in October may be a good place to introduce it.

## VI. Website

### A. Content

- Reorganized into more logical tabs:
  1. Home
  2. About Us
  3. Tools – links to other resources (emergency preparedness, mental health training, sign language video library, relevant videos and webinars, etc.)
  4. Contact Us – Report an Occurrence, Join Our Trainer Network, Become a FRDAT Ambassador, Contact Us form
  5. Disability Info – disability definitions, ADA resources, articles, data and statistics, etc.
  6. Services/Support – NYS and national disability organizations/agencies, NYS first responder agencies, NYS ADA coordinator listing, NYS independent living centers, etc.
  7. Training – calendar, map, training descriptions and evaluations summaries
  8. Town Hall Training – articles, resources, about THT and evaluations

### B. Apps

- Intern Dom Busco is currently developing a FRDAT app through a free online program. It will be available to anyone and everyone to have access to the most important FRDAT information while out in the field (definitions, contacts, resources, etc.)
- Looking to expand on this in future and create more apps to be used by first responders

## VII. Sustainability

### A. Funding – DDPC Year 4 reduced from \$175k to \$100k

- Looking into other grants (ex. Juvenile Police Officers Association)
- Outside interest in purchasing product (to varying degrees) – MO, AK, VT, NJ, TX, GA, MD, Canada
- Foundations – Golisano; members mentioned Golub Family Foundation (Price Chopper) and Walmart
- Corporations – Lawley Insurance, Ellicott Development
- Dr. Ireland may look to do an alumni campaign through NU
- Dave asked the council to assist in identifying potential resources and forwarding that information on to NU

### B. National outreach

- National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability – Dave was asked and has accepted the invitation to be a member on the advisory council. This center is a branch of the National Arc. They received a 2 year \$400,000 grant from the Department of Justice and began operations October 2013.
- Maryland – as discussed above, the Commission is in full swing. Dave had an hour and a half advisement discussion with the Executive Officer in late October. The Commission has put out its first report, which does note our program. Dave has let them know that he would be glad to come and present to the Commission so as to ensure they are going in the right direction.
- Alaska – the Executive Director of the Alaska State Independent Living Council has discussed with Dave their strong interest in bringing the program to their state. She is presenting it in an upcoming full council meeting and hopes to see it initiated in the near future.
- Others – see notes above

### C. DAT 101

- Dave has developed a syllabus for an introductory disability awareness course to be incorporated at NU
- Relevant to multiple different majors – education, nursing, criminal justice, sociology, social work
- Dr. Ireland is now reviewing the syllabus draft and will work with Dave to finalize it. The hope would be that this course will be offered as early as the fall semester of 2014.

### D. Institute/NU disability initiatives

- All the pieces are in place to move forward with a national institute. This would include the material being copyrighted, the signing of a non-exclusive license agreement, permissions and sources obtained and identified, and a strategic plan for sustainability.
- Next step is a meeting to be held at the end of February with the Vice President of Academic Affairs
- NU is taking on several different initiatives relevant to disability awareness and response. These include a Bachelor's and Master's in Developmental Disabilities, a minor in ASL, Community Border Service CERT training, the recent move of Access Buffalo (a restaurant accessibility review program) under the Hospitality department, and on-campus training and accessibility reviews.

VIII. Town Hall Training

- A. D'Andrea Trust – the Trust decided not to fund Town Hall Training after four years, three of which were at NU. This has put the program on hold, however, student interns will still address specific aspects of the program. We will look to fund this through different avenues in the near future.
- B. DDPC NYSILC grant – put on hold due to D'Andrea Trust being withdrawn. NU and NYSILC are hopeful this will be active come July.
- C. 2014 plan – on hold until funding is secured

IX. Next meeting – June 12, 2014 (tentative)

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha L. Morgan

Project Manager