

REALTIME TEXT FILE

DISABILITY COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP WEBINAR

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REMOTE CART CAPTIONING PROVIDED BY:

Lisa B. Johnston, RMR, CRR, CRC

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** Edited **

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>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: There you go, perfect. All right. I will go ahead and introduce you now.

All right. Thanks, everyone, for joining us today. We have Christinne Rudd, who is a long-time Disability and Health Community partner for our grant. Christinne has a bachelor's in legal studies and a master's in criminal justice from the University of Central Florida. She is currently employed as a coordinator for Florida SAND, the Florida Self-advocacy Central. She's had a 22 year career in the disability field in Florida, has spoken at various disability conventions and written disability-related articles for various online publications. She's the ABLE united English and Spanish ambassador in the Orlando area and has most recently been appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis for the disability course and thank you for joining us, Christinne, and we look forward to hearing about all you have done.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: [Sighs]... thank you so much, Claudia, for having me.

I thought today I would talk a little bit about the resources that are offered to Floridians with disability and give people an overview of not only what I do, but what is actually offered to people, and in some cases to how stakeholders can also get involved in the disability field.

So, thank you, Claudia, for that introduction.

I'm just going to go right into it.

And then I'm going to try to keep an eye and see if I have any questions coming. But Claudia, if you could do that for me, because I'll take questions as we go along.

Let's see --

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: Sure.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: -- if my slide show wants to work. Ah-ha, I'll go onto the next one.

So as Claudia said, I have a 22-year career in the disability community field, and one of the first things, besides transportation, which I'll get to in a little bit, but it's kind of ironic and kind of full circle that Governor DeSantis has recently appointed me to the Transportation Disadvantaged Board, but one of my first professional jobs was with the Center for Independent Living in Central Florida, they're located in Winter Park, and here is

their Mission Statement. They promote personal rights and responsibilities -- and I'm not going to read to you guys -- but I'm going to talk a little bit about the services that are available.

So, one of the things that I did, I was actually involved with a couple of these, I wasn't involved with employment, but we did a lot of equipment, not only donation, but also funding for different pieces of equipment for people.

We did peer support. I did a lot of peer support and independent living skills, and I was also very heavily involved with home modification program, where they would do ramps and bathrooms and grab bars.

And at the end of all of this, I have my contact information, in case anybody wants to get in contact with any of these organizations, because I know that not only is there a CIL here in Winter Park, but there are Centers for Independent Living all over the state of Florida. So if you guys have customers or consumers or whatever you may call them that are in need of these services, there is more than likely a Center for Independent Living near you.

Let's see... I want to figure this out... I'm sorry about that.

And then there's FFAST, I spent about four years at FFAST, I was on the Board of Directors, and what they do, and again, I'm not going to read, but what they do and one of the cool things that they do is help people get assistive technology.

Well, what is assistive technology? You know, I know what it is. I have cerebral palsy, so assistive technology is my walking devices, my cane, but a piece of assistive technology is also, as an example, for me, I cannot use a standard knife to cut food, so I have a special knife, I have a rocker knife that allows me to be able to cut my own food, because I have limited use of one hand and I have full use of another hand.

So, you know, FFAST is really good at not only -- and I'm going to move to the next slide -- not only giving information and assistance, they do assistive technology loans for 30 days for you to try out pieces of equipment, if you're a person -- they call them customers -- but if you're a customer with a disability, they also do device demonstrations.

If you guys are familiar with Family Café that comes to Orlando in June, they're there, they have a big room doing device demonstrations. They also do trainings.

They also help with statewide financing, so they have the New Horizon Loan Program where they will help individuals get different pieces of equipment and finance them; basically help them get a loan at a lower -- at a lower rate than you necessarily might from a bank.

I'm going to step into my FFAST hat for a minute and say that people with disabilities, most of us, our credit isn't that good, but FFAST really works with people to help them get the equipment that they need.

They do device exchange.

One of the things they've done in the last couple of years is assistive technology reassignment and refurbishment of equipment. So I can donate something and they will refurbish it.

They also provide technical assistance out to the public, and I know they also do a lot of legislative advocacy. A couple years ago, they did AT Follow the Child which is where the child could take a communication device and bring it home with them, and not only that, when they went from elementary school to middle school, a lot of times the transition time was quite a bit of time, and that piece of legislation kind of helped that not be such a long period of time; I don't think it ended up being any period of time after that.

So FFAST is kind of interesting, because it's got multiple locations where people can go and see these pieces of equipment and touch them and feel them and whatever.

So they have a FFAST, they call them regional demonstration centers, RDCs, there's one at UCF, there's one at Tampa General Hospital and then there's a list, you can either

call -- I didn't put it up here -- but you can either call the FAAST 1-800 number or you can go to www.faaast.org and there's a list of locations and how to get in contact with them but they have them all over, in Tallahassee, in Jacksonville, and they have one in Miami.

Florida SAND, Claudia mentioned Florida SAND and I kind of did these in the order that they have come into my radar of things and so I was blessed to meet Claudia many years ago and be involved with you guys, and so kind of Florida SAND fell in my lap the same way.

I have, as Claudia said, I have a lot of years of advocacy, and so Florida SAND is kind of interesting, because its grassroots self-advocacy.

So, we have a number of -- I'm going to go to the next slide -- we have a number of groups around the state which meet, they usually meet once a month, and I'm blessed, because MAGICAL is my group, I am the advisor for it and it gives me a chance to expand my advocacy, and what we do is just try to help the groups, I mean, in small areas. I know they go to, they go to DD day in Tallahassee when it's in March or in January, depending on the year, but they all work on different projects within their community to kind of increase inclusion and awareness of people with disabilities and our abilities.

I'll talk in a few minutes about another project that I did a couple weeks ago in conjunction with Disability Rights Florida.

So, ABLE United Brand Ambassador, I don't know how many people know about ABLE United, but ABLE United is yet again another one that came to me.

And the reason I put ABLE United and the unique thing about ABLE United is most people with disabilities receive Medicaid and so they have an asset limit that they are kind of constrained by.

But with ABLE United, you don't -- your funds in that ABLE United account are not counted towards your benefit.

And every state has an ABLE program.

So these are -- the things about ABLE United, you know, you can save tax-free and maintain your benefits. So that \$2,000 limit all of a sudden doesn't apply. You can keep money for disability -- and I'll talk about that in a minute -- qualifying disability-related expenses.

People can put money in there for you, they have different mechanisms available so that, you know, people are afraid to receive money or maybe somebody passes away in their family and they want to leave their loved ones some money. Well, with ABLE United, that actually makes it possible.

And there is -- there's something different, which is special needs trust. And I know special needs trusts have a lot more restrictions on them than an ABLE United account does, so I prefer ABLE United.

However, people use ABLE United accounts or ABLE accounts, as they're called, and special needs trusts sometimes in conjunction with each other, so....

Let's move right on....

Qualifying disability expense, I've gone -- with my ABLE United hat, I've gone places and people say to me, well, what is a qualifying disability expense? Well, it includes, you know, money for school, money for housing, money for training and support, money that would go for assistive technology, but money for that. Other things, legal fees, you know, funeral and burial expenses, which is not a great thing to talk about, but, you know, as a person with disabilities, you can actually have a life insurance policy. So that allows that to be available.

But I, from personal experience, can tell you that an ABLE United account helps -- helps you be able to not only be a homeowner, but not be so worried if something happens in your home, you don't have to worry so much and you can make contributions to this

year -- I believe it's \$15,000 you can put into an account this year, it changes. This year it's up to \$15,000.

And then there is REV UP Florida. So I wasn't really a political person until I got involved with FFAST, and then, again, REV UP Florida fell in my lap.

And one of the reasons I got involved with REV UP Florida, which they increased the visibility for people with disabilities voting, because that's really important. And somebody once said to me, if you don't vote, then you can't really complain about what's going on.

So, I've only actually physically gone to vote one time, I don't think I'll ever do it again, because it was not -- it was not terrible, but it wasn't the greatest experience of my life.

But I am very much interested in increasing accessibility for voters with disabilities, and so they do that, REV UP does that, they're called Access to Vote Florida Now, and they do in fact do that.

And the other thing that's interesting -- excuse me -- about them is that we are always -- and this is one of the reasons why I put this slide here, is because they're always looking for stakeholders and other interested people to join our calls.

I didn't put it on here, but the next call will be in January, after the holiday.

And so there, like I said, they're very interesting, because the other thing is that they want to get candidates to know that people with disabilities are out here voting. And they want the candidates to know what is important to people with disabilities.

So, I know last election cycle, we Access The Vote Florida and we're working in conjunction with Disability Rights Florida because they have the HAVA grant to increase voter access for people with disabilities.

And so we sent out questionnaires, candidate questionnaires, rather, to see how the candidates felt about disability-related issues, and we're going to have this coming election cycle, we'll be having candidate forums.

But we have a phone call, it's usually about every other month or so, and so that is super important.

From personal experience, again, I was not -- I won't say that anymore after -- you know, I don't say it in the present tense anymore, but previously I was not a political person, but things happen in life and you have to even just get your local government involved and you have to kind of navigate how that works.

And so I've been very blessed with the interaction that I've had with senators and government.

And so it's really important for people with disabilities to get out and vote, and for other stakeholders to be -- do whatever they can, rather, to assist us in our quest to let our voices be heard.

And then the Commission For Transportation Disadvantaged. The purpose of the Commission is to coordinate transportation services provided to transportation disadvantaged.

Now I'll tell a little story. So, when I started, after I got my master's degree, my first job was at the Orange County Courthouse, because I'm bilingual and I had a legal background, and so the problem is I don't drive. And so my mother, who at the time lived here in Florida, we had such a horrendous time using transportation to paratransit for me because my cerebral palsy limits my walking, that that was really my first taste of advocacy and how it worked.

And so I had to learn, from a personal standpoint, how the transportation and how paratransit works for people with disabilities.

And sometimes it may not work the way some people may think it should work or from the other side.

We need to be educating and having kind of a group discussion about how to make

things better.

So, who is transportation disadvantaged? Well, older adults; persons with disabilities; people with low income; and at-risk children. At-risk children, that's a funny definition to go look up; it's actually written in the statute.

And so the transportation disadvantaged has a fund that if you would like, anyone, when they go and renew their license, they can donate a voluntary contribution and that partially funds what the Transportation Disadvantaged Commission can do.

And so that's what I have.

I want to take some time and get some questions and get some feedback from you guys, so Claudia, I'm going to give it back to you.

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: All right. Thank you, Christinne. We're gonna open it up for questions, if anybody has any questions about any of these programs or any of these opportunities to get involved.

>> OPERATOR: Unmuted.

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: And Christinne, you had mentioned that you can donate to the transportation disadvantaged fund when you renew your license, is that correct?

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: I believe -- and now you have to give me a learning curve here because the Governor just appointed me at the end of September, I believe -- I do not have a driver's license, but I believe when I go and renew my I.D., they ask you if you want to donate \$1 and I also know that on the Commission For Transportation Disadvantaged, on the website there is a link where you can donate to the Transportation Disadvantaged Fund.

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: Okay.

[Pause].

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: Bryan, do you see any questions? I don't see any popped up, any that have popped up.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Yeah, I haven't seen any questions pop up either.

[Pause].

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: All right.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: Claudia, I know we had talked prior and you were saying how you didn't really realize how many things I was involved with?

Would you have anything from this presentation that I can maybe expand on?

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: Um... I mean, I think -- is there anything more about the ABLE account that you could, you know --

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: You're pulling at my heart strings!

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Hey, Christinne, this is Bryan.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: Yes?

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: I have a question.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: Yeah, sure.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: This is from a public health standpoint. What are some ways that you think you're -- and I'm going to throw -- I'm going to volunteer the Alachua County Health Department, volunteer them for assistance, but what, in the region where you work, what -- in the counties that you work in, what areas do you think your county health departments could partner with you? Or where do you think yourself could partner with the county health departments in your region?

What do you think that collaboration would look like?

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: Um... I think -- you know, I think there might be a couple opportunities for collaboration.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Mmm-hmm.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: I know -- and Claudia knows this, and I know, and different

counties, Bryan, can do this, because I know that we're working -- I mean, and I've done a little bit of it.

You know, I think that health departments can always use disability sensitivity training [chuckles].

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Oh, yeah! Absolutely [laughs].

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: They can always use disability sensitivity training.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Mmm-hmm.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: And I'm not going to talk about my experience. I have an 8-year-old son.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Mmm-hmm.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: And so that's how I found Claudia, in a nutshell.

But I think that -- I think that especially Florida SAND, okay, and there are different areas of Florida SAND, but even the CILs, even myself, because I've done extensive research and speaking. I spoke at Family Café a couple of years ago about healthcare providers and accessibility with -- not only with healthcare providers and their equipment, but the interaction to sensitivity trainings.

So, I think that, you know, and as far as public health, I can say this, because I can certainly tie, if not all of these organizations, I can tie a few of them, I can tie all of them in.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Mmm-hmm.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: I think all of these organizations are super important to the health and well-being of people with disabilities.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Oh, absolutely.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: Because they each provide a source of independence. Even if you are someone who is currently, you know -- when I worked at the Center for Independent Living, for example, we worked, and Claudia knows I worked in conjunction with my husband, who is no longer living, but we worked quite a bit with people who needed ramps and who needed access outside of their homes.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Mmm-hmm.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: So, CILs could do that or Florida SAND, they meet in different areas, they go do different social activities, they do advocacy activities and gets us out of the house, it gets us feeling better, and gets us to learn how to use our voice.

And so I think certainly, and health departments, I know they're all different around the state, but I certainly think that health departments could learn more about the social interaction people with disabilities have within their communities and how that helps the overall health of people with disabilities.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Okay.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: You know, and I will say one other thing about that, because it's funny here, and I'm going to throw you under the bus for a minute, Claudia, so Claudia hooked me with the national center for health and physical activity, and Bob Lugiano (sp), I don't know if you guys know who he is, but he's a Paralympian, but I'm not plugging people's Facebook, but if you watch their Facebook, you know, he had a health scare and he decided to get more active.

And I have to tell you that videos like that actually made me more active.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Oh, great.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: So I wasn't getting on the treadmill and I have cerebral palsy and I don't walk that well, but it's gotten me more active.

And my point is, Bryan, and the reason why I said to Claudia it was a good idea to do this, because all of these organizations can help contribute to the overall health and education, you know, because I'm sure, for example, with FFAST, I'm sure the health department could get information from them or they could do trainings with them, to kind of

not only educate them on equipment that's available to the health department as far as accessible, more accessible or more -- more adaptable equipment, because I think another problem is that people think that stuff is so expensive, and that's not necessarily the case.

I think that it could be certainly partnerships to help educate one and the other; in other words, educate the health department about these are the pieces of equipment that could help you serve the people you serve.

Or these are the pieces of equipment that are available to help the patients that come to the health department for things.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Sure.

[Pause].

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: Oh, and the other thing I wanted to say, because Claudia, and I didn't put it on here, but if you guys wanted to get involved with Florida SAND, let Claudia know; I can send you our mailing list, because we do a -- we do a newsletter, we do online articles, we have a Facebook page.

And like I said, and CILs, I'm sure the same thing, you can get in contact with them, and FAAST has a 1-800 number and you can get in contact, they're all very easily accessible.

I mean, I think -- I have a habit of choosing very important -- very important kind of organizations and I'm going to get back to ABLE United, because they're my heartstring and they just fell in my lap -- most of this stuff falls in my lap -- but I think that, you know, everything is there. People need to know how to get to it.

And then that was the other thing, you know, none of these things are a cost, except for the new Horizon Loan Program where they help you and you set up payments with them to repay, because it's an actual loan.

And then ABLE United is really, really... um... I hate to sound really like their brand ambassador, but they're really wonderful, because you can just -- you just have so much flexibility. And, you know, special needs trusts are different.

But they have -- but they each have their positive spins.

However, I feel like ABLE United is much more, again, flexible, I have more control over my money, I can put money in, I can take money out. Their platform is very easy to use.

Their 1-800 number, I mean, I've used it because I have an account, but I'm funny because I'm the brand ambassador and I go out and I do these informational for people, but I'll call every once in a while and just give them, like, a test question -- don't tell anybody -- but I'll give them a test question with the 1-800 number and see how they do [chuckles], because when I go out with ABLE United, I would hate to hear or I want to be prepared if I hear how they do on customer service, because I'm a big, big believer on if I'm going to support your work, you have to really believe in what you're doing.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Awesome. Well, I may want to -- I may need to see if you could send me contact information on the SAND groups. I may be able to make some connections at those local levels for you.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: No, that's fantastic!

And SAND is such a great and, like, it was one of the ones, again, that just kind of fell in my lap, but I really enjoy it, because it's kind of what I was -- I was doing a bit of advocacy at the Center for Independent Living and I was filing -- helping filing ADA claims when there were accusations of inaccessibility or different cases, and so Florida SAND just brings it all the way back down. It's just a grassroots kind of -- it's just a grassroots kind of organization and they really do -- and then once a year, I know their conference this year we're going to have it for 2020 in November.

But, you know, the groups are just growing. And we do different things. That's what I was going to say.

We did, last month? Yeah, last month, my group, we did in conjunction with Disability Rights Florida, we did a project vote training which helps people learn how to go to the polls, what the equipment looks like, how to actually navigate that whole thing.

And then if we're doing an absentee ballot, which is what I choose to do anymore, when you get that ballot originally in the mail, what you're kind of looking at.

And the other reason -- even though I said I'm not political -- the reason why I like to work with REV UP, they're non-partisan, and so they're not this political... um... I don't even know what it's called anymore, but this political issue that you see in certain social media circles, it's just giving you information on what you can do to make your voice heard.

I just think that that's so super important.

I mean, I've had issues myself, I've had issues with my son.

And so... but, again, I think all of that in conjunction with each other is so important to the health of people with disabilities, so that they can feel -- and it sounds kind of silly -- but the whole mind/body kind of holistic connection.

You know, if I can make a difference in my community, if I can make a difference for myself, if I have a transportation issue, and I can help resolve it or I can figure out who I need to go figure out who I can talk to, then I'm going to feel better about myself.

Because when I was 22, 23-years-old, getting work at whatever God-awful time they were getting me to work, I wasn't feeling too good about myself [chuckles] and so I wasn't feeling too good. It was a little taxing on my health, certainly.

But, yeah, I think all of these things are super important to the health and independence of people with disabilities.

[Pause].

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: Thank you so much for sharing all this, Christinne, and for, you know, I feel like whenever I have a question about anything, I go to Christinne [chuckles] because she knows, she knows....

So, thank you for sharing with us. And --

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: And thank you for having me. And thank you for what you guys do, because -- you know, it's -- I know it's sometimes a trickle down kind of effect, but, you know, since I have been involved with you guys, I know, it's funny that I see differences when I go places, you know, we were talking about the health department earlier, but I certainly see differences when I go places.

As far as my health, as far as access, as far as my healthcare providers and how they interact with me and how they interact with my son, because that's a whole different ball of wax when you have -- my son is not disabled, so....

For me to go somewhere with him, to a doctor or something, so that -- that certainly has changed.

And I have to chalk that up to the work that you guys are continuously doing.

[Pause].

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: It's our pleasure. And, you know, we're here to work together, and that's what this partnership is about; just our DCPG and we're just thankful to have people like you on it. Thank you.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: Oh, Claudia, if you did get stuff asked, because I know you will send this out, you can share, like, I shared my e-mail, I will always take questions, and Claudia said she can always go to me.

That thing is, if I don't know, I will find the answer.

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: Yeah.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: I'll find her the answer! [Chuckles].

So, I'm very blessed. So thank you so much.

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: Thank you.

All right. If anyone has any questions? I don't see anything up right now.
But if anything pops up later, feel free to e-mail Christinne or myself or Bryan and we can get messages to her as well.

So, thank you again. And everybody, I hope everybody has a wonderful holiday.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: And a Happy New Year.

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: Yes. All right. Thank you, everyone.

>> BRYAN RUSSELL: Thanks.

>> CLAUDIA FRIEDEL: All righty. Bye-bye.

>> CHRISTINNE RUDD: Bye.

[Concludes at 2:40 p.m.]

** Edited **

Recommendations and Findings:

- Partnerships are a good way to maximize resources available for PWD.
- Resources for PWD in Florida include: CIL, FFAST, Florida SAND, ABLE United, REV UP Florida, and the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged.
- Recommendations include advertising current resources for PWD in Florida more heavily and creating/sustaining partnerships between public health and disability organizations.