

CTVSC meeting 11/17/15

Pia welcomed everyone and thanked Disability Rights for hosting.

VSO Spotlight:

- I. Disability Rights: Disability rights reviewed their origin and services offered.
 - a. They were founded in 1977 and currently are funded through 9 different govt. grants.
 - i. Their goal is to help disabled individuals understand and exercise their rights.
 - ii. Their services are statewide and primarily include Advocacy & Legal Assistance.
 - b. Their major areas of specialization are:
 - i. Education Rights
 - ii. Healthcare Rights
 - iii. Employment Accommodation Rights
 - iv. Housing Rights
 - v. Other Accommodation
 - c. Worked to add services for Women Veterans and legal services.
 - i. Offer trainings at Vet Centers & training specialized to the clients' needs.
 - ii. Also offer free legal consult after trainings.
 - d. New project: 2min legal tips.
 - i. Partnering with another org to produce Youtube videos w/ tips on legal matters:
 1. Housing, Transport, Education, Job Accommodation
 2. Plan to launch in January 2016
 - e. Q&A- Chris Araujo & ACC both requested workshops for their clients.
- II. DARS: Vocational Rehab (Rikka Quan)

Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services offers a Vocational Rehab (DARS-VR) program that serves veterans, but does not require a client to be a veteran. DARS-VR is a payor of last resort, but may be able to come to a client's aid when the VA's VR program cannot. A client may have both the VA's VR and DARS-VR at the same time, but the VA coverage is applied for first, and DARS 'fills in the gaps.' A client may qualify for DARS-VR and not qualify for VA-VR, they are two separate programs with separate application processes.

 - a. How does DARS help veterans?
 - i. DARS helps veterans who are eligible for services with obtaining and maintaining employment
 - b. How is a veteran eligible for DARS services?
 - i. Must have a documented physical or mental disability
 - ii. The disability must create a "SUBSTANTIAL IMPEDIMENT OR BARRIER" to employment (the reason you cannot get or keep a job).
 - iii. Must be employable and be able to benefit from VR services.
 - c. 3. How do I refer a veteran for DARS services?
 - i. Call or visit the nearest DRS (Division for Rehabilitation Services) Field Office.
 - ii. Ask for the "Contact of the Day" for help applying for DARS services.

- d. A DARS representative will enter the veteran's contact information into our database and explain how to schedule an Application appointment.
- e. Timeline



- f. 6. What services does DARS offer?
- g. Services are individualized and based on what is reasonable and necessary to meet an employment goal.
 - i. Some Examples
 - ii. Vocational Counseling and Guidance
 - iii. Job Placement Services
 - iv. Supported Employment Services
 - v. Training
 - vi. Rehab Technology
 - vii. Sign Language Interpreters
 - viii. Therapy
 - ix. Surgery

***All consumers need to use comparable benefits for services, such as the VA, TWC, GI Bill, Hazelwood Act, Pell Grant, ATCIC (MHMR), Medicare, etc. as DARS is the payer of last resort.

III. Comfort Crew Presentation:

- a. CC is part of the USO and has a TVC grant for Veteran families, focusing on children 6-12.
- b. CC's programs :
 - i. Bringing Families Together (For Deployment)
 - ii. Coming Home (For Reintegration)
 - iii. Wounded Warrior (For Recovery)
 - iv. Grief Kit (For lost loved ones)
 - v. Together Again (For veteran families)

- c. Kit Contents:
 - i. All packs include a Comfort Item (Bear)
 - ii. Prompted Journal – (This helps children learn to talk about their feelings, it has prompts for drawings and other activities as well as writing)
 - iii. Family Guide Book (For caregivers)
 - iv. DVD (for whole family on exploring how to cope)
 - d. A supplemental 'Sibling Kit' is also available for each child that includes an additional comfort item and journal.
 - e. CC also has referral list for caregivers and families who inquire about additional help.
 - f. CC requested leads on how to get the word –and the bears- out!
- IV. NEW BUSINESS: Furniture Committee
- a. Bo-
 - i. Reviewed progress- now have Warehouse (Thank you Freedom Office Supplies), a website (Thanks TexVet), VA donated 50 queen size beds- need to document who they go to, 2 semi's of furniture/mo (thank you Jason and Goodwill), Social Design Alliance working to teach skills and hopefully generate funds, Senator Watson & Mayor Adler's office working for additional PR.
 - ii. New- Looking at getting 200 'home in a box' kits that have necessities like dish soap and sponges etc.
 - b. NEEDS:
 - 1. PEOPLE-
 - a. To offload from Semi's
 - b. To deliver Furniture
 - i. Pia has contacted UT ROTC and RR JROTC to help.
 - 2. Brian @ Military Order of the Purple Heart sates he can donate ½ time to help with warehouse administration/running.
 - 3. Vista @ Caritas says she may be able to help organize.
 - c. Is a dedicated computer needed at the site?
 - d. Twin Lakes Fellowship in Cedar Park has a furniture bank w/ no furniture, maybe a place to move the administration/continuing care of the furniture project?
- V. NEW BUSINESS: Resource Fair
- a. March 30- from 2pm-8pm. Hosted by Goodwill.
 - b. Open to Vets & Spouses
 - c. Logistics:
 - i. Accommodations: April
 - ii. Safety officer needed
 - iii. Food provided by Goodwill/ Casey (my note may have been wrong on this one).
 - iv. Cleanup crew- we are all drafted.
 - d. Ideas:
 - i. Onsite resume review.

- ii. Pia & Casey are Points of Contact for any Employers that wish to be at the event.

VI. Closing Announcements:

- a. Voted for no December CTVSC Meeting (committees will still meet)
- b. Chris Araujo announced that he just received \$20,000 from TVC to start a veteran's one-stop in ATX. Looking for volunteers from VSO to staff/do casework there once a week.
- c. VSA has an art show from now-Dec23 to raise funds. @ AGE of Central Texas 3710 Cedar St. Rm 101