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COMMUNITY OPTIONS, INC.
FIFTIETH ANNUAL REPORT
2022

I am honored and humbled to be writing this year's Community Options, Inc. Annual Report as the Executive Director. The gravity of this responsibility in our world is heavy, yet I value the opportunity to serve in this capacity and the trust placed in me to navigate this new world – challenging as it may be, I am confident in our teams and our mission and look forward to building on our successes of the last 50 years.

The people we serve and those that love them are our purpose and mission... continuing for another 50 years is not something at which we can fail and we face the future armed with lessons from our past and the guiding values that have gotten us this far:

Everyone has something to contribute.

Life is meant to be enjoyed.

People deserve the dignity of making choices.

Everyone needs meaningful relationships.

As many of you know, we most recently completed the remodeling of our North Park building and realized a long-time goal to have our administrative offices close to program. There is so much value in the actualization of that vision and we are all very thankful to be settled across the way from our Montrose day services site. But while the remodel was going on for six months the former residents of the Allinson Administration building resided in our Park Place Day Program. Having had my office there previously for many years I thought, "this will be easy". It was not. But what it was, was a daily reminder of why I have dedicated almost ten years of my life to Community Options. And I heard that over and over from my co-workers. "This is hard but I'm glad we are here". I was once again connected daily to the people we serve. Every time I left my office or there was a knock on the door, I heard their joys and concerns. I got to help people unpack their lunches, I heard about their day and what they had for dinner last night, I heard about who was dating who, who had had a fuss, and saw countless art projects of which folks are so proud. I learned if I left my coffee unattended it was my own fault that it was gone because who doesn't love a perfect cup of coffee? I'm so thankful for those last six months – it has grounded us all in a time where with all that is happening it would be easy to lose sight, amongst our overwhelming reality, of what we are here to do. Perfect timing as we celebrate the last 50 years and look toward the next.

Our world is changing rapidly. Over the next year we will find out who the winner of the RFPs are for the catchment areas we have previously provided case management for and we will be supporting those entities in transition to be in compliance with Conflict Free Case Management. This will leave Community Options with CCB functions and as a provider agency. In preparation for this, the Administration Team and the Board of Directors will be engaging in a strategic planning process that includes stakeholder feedback so that we can continue to meet the needs of our community. Our aim is to do that better than ever while staying financially sustainable to ensure we are here another 50 years.

We have completed the transition away from offering sub-minimum wage employment for the people we support, and our Supported Employment team has worked diligently with HCPF to increase Competitive Integrated Employment. We partner with local DVR counselors and look for creative, person-centered opportunities.

Our gaze has turned outward to increasing our community partnerships and building capacity through those partnerships – in our small communities we all face the same challenges – housing, staffing, finding specialized providers, transportation, and meeting rules and regulations in rural areas and we are exploring our combined leverage when we collaborate. This is an exciting new chapter for our agency.

Our Early Intervention Department has transitioned to supervision by the Office of Early Childhood. And Community Options has become the entity to complete evaluations. The reality of the rates for services has again come knocking on our door after the enhanced rates of COVID have expired. We continue to work with Alliance Colorado and ANCOR, in addition to legislators to stabilize services.

Despite the whirlwind that is our world I often think of this quote from the book Big Sur by my favorite author, Jack Kerouac “Something good will come of all things yet.” What we do every day is hard, but what we do every day is important and good and our responsibility to those in our services requires that we look toward the future having taken every opportunity to learn and grow and do better. That is my charge to myself in this new adventure of leading Community Options towards the future and I hope our “village” supports us in making sure something good continues to come of all things.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Pelligra

Executive Director

Business Operations During Fiscal Year 2022

Fiscal Year 2022 was a year of turmoil, exasperated by a continued battle with COVID and its lingering effects. We have had many internal changes while keeping up to date on the slew of restrictions and precautions released by both the state and the federal governments. As we leave FY2022 behind us, we hold fast to the belief that we have sailed through the worst of it. Changes will always continue to come, some of them may be rather large, and we will work through them one issue after the next.

Internally: finance had 3 directors, a new business associate, and is currently training a replacement for our long-time Accounts Payable person. We survived a year of changing payroll cycles before landing on a semi-monthly schedule that should proceed for the foreseeable future. Also making changes to the foreseeable future is the new electronic time keeping system (MITC). This took several months of work to develop the back-end rules of the system, and now we are in the test pilot phase of a full agency wide implementation. The finance department also shared in the struggles of our Administration building being moved. For several months we were living side by side clients and day staff in 1 large building still subject to the COVID restrictions, luckily it went better than anticipated as we learned to cohabitate. There is also the addition of the Colorado Family and Medical Leave Insurance non-tax payroll deduction beginning in January of 2023 at a split rate of .9% of wages; the benefit will be claimable in 2024 but this program will likely replace COI's Extended Illness Bank (EIB) program.

In the agency, efforts to rebound from COVID have seen much enthusiasm, as well as its' share of setbacks. We served 82 clients in our Day Service through the year, up slightly in total from 80; however, our revenue is a bit marred by the lost of five clients, for whom we have not yet received replacement resources from the state. The Supported Living Services continue to lag from COVID effects, and 60 clients were served this year, a decrease from 65. We served 85 individuals in our Residential programs; this includes the new increasingly popular Family Caregiver program: a likely road of development in our future. The Case Management Separation continues to loom over us, the department is fairly cost neutral with this year seeing a small profit. However, at this time it is looking like the Family Support Program will be going with the case management division, a program that operated at a loss during FY2022.

Loans and leverage were one of the winners of FY2022, Community Options is now completely debt free!! Including the remodel of North Park. This is mainly due to sale of properties, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) temporarily increasing rates, and a necessity to clear remaining notes before we could sell the Administration building. We sold the vacant land east of Montrose that was donated to us, as well as the Garnet building in Delta.

Many items are in Community Option's future, but together we will get through them one item at a time. COI will soon celebrate 50 years as an agency providing community services, after surviving COVID another 50 years sounds promising.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Souder

Director of Finance

Case Management, Family Support, and Children's Services

The Case Management, Children's Services and Family Support programs are made up of professionals who take their jobs and responsibilities seriously. Fortunately, all who work in these departments understand the importance of their roles in making sure that the many individuals, children, and family's needs are being met, that they are satisfied with their services and that planning is person/family centered focused.

Here are our teams as of this report:

Elaine Wood (Director of Case Management/Children's Services)

Assistant Case Management Director:

Michelle Rice

Family Support Case Manager:

Paula Weed

Case Managers:

Sarah Crawford

Tannis Daguerre

Abigail Fleming

Genevieve Ingersoll

Heather Langford

Assistant Director/EI Coordinator:

Margaret Davey

Service Coordinators:

Shirley Diaz

Debbie Fischer

Early Intervention/DI:

Chelsie DeHorta

Changes are happening in both the Children's and Case Management Departments. By this time next year, the new Case Management Agencies (CMA) will be known, and transitions will begin. This is the beginning of the end of the CCB/CMA system in Colorado. It is a new world. In the Children's world, evaluations have become the responsibility of the Office of Early Childhood and no longer the responsibility of the Department of Education.

As we navigate all these changes, we will try to make the transitions as smooth as possible. We will continue to meet our responsibilities of making sure that needs are being identified and met in a person-centered manner, that people are satisfied with services, and that there is fiscal responsibility in all that we do.

I want to thank all of those on our teams. These folks display the highest level of knowledge and professionalism. They are committed to provide the best to those we support. These are qualities that those we support deserve to have from those helping in their lives. Through all the changes, we will continue to work to minimize the disruption to those we support.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Wood

CM and Children's Services Director

Human Resources & Safety

- ◆ The first big task of 2022 was working with the business office to implement the Colorado mandate that requires all DSPs to earn a minimum of \$15.00 per hour. While it was a very welcomed increase for staff, we had hoped the increase would give us a leg up on our hiring wage over those companies that were still paying minimum wage (\$12.52); however, with the tight labor market and the inflation increase most other business in our areas had to also increase their hiring wages greatly, so it left us still struggling with hiring.
- ◆ Another collaboration with the business office in January was changing our payroll from monthly to a bi-weekly process. Overall, the change from a monthly payroll was well accepted by most staff; however, it was an adjustment for the long tenured staff who for some, had been paid monthly for 30+ years. We did feel like the bi-weekly payroll would also benefit us in recruitment as we had past candidates that decline positions with us due to our monthly payroll.
- ◆ February brought on a very hectic time with the move from the Allinson Administration Building to the South Park Building, as we awaited the remodel of the new administration building. Recruitment continued to see hiring challenges. We ran into problems of candidates applying but not returning calls when calling for interviews or not showing up for interviews.
- ◆ In July, the HR department was blessed with an electronic Applicant Tracking Program (ATS) that greatly streamlined our application processes by making it much easier for candidates to complete and submit applications and greatly reduces the time that HR has spent in the past on the application process. Also, when a job is posted through this ATS, the postings reach over 20 job boards, which gets our job openings out to a much wider scope of possible candidates. Since we've started this program, we have filled several positions that had been open for about 9 months.
- ◆ Currently, we are working on getting our entire employee in-service program up and running again. Over the past two years, due to COVID, our training has been spotty by just getting staff trained on the most important classes and getting staff trained when we can in between the fluctuations of COVID spikes.

HR Goals 2023

- ◆ Update and revamp the layout of the employee Handbook
- ◆ Continue to make all personnel files electronic
- ◆ Implement an HR & safety training program specifically for supervisors so they can become very knowledgeable on HR and safety laws, policies and procedures.
- ◆ Work with Payroll to make our current paper format of the benefits form into an electronic format.

2022 Safety Accomplishments

- ✓ Workers' Comp premiums have dropped again (about 7%: \$108,041 vs \$115,916)
- ✓ We received a dividend of \$11,241, due to our low Workers' Comp claims.
- ✓ There were 8 claim this past year and our cost per claim decreased slightly. Our total claim costs also dropped by about 9.5%, \$67,724 to \$61,014.
- ✓ Received good feedback on the Risky Business newsletter from all levels of the employee tree.

2023 Safety Goals

- ✓ Continue to work with Pinnacol to quickly resolve cases and provide return-to-work options as often as possible if work restrictions are present.
- ✓ Continue to update safety-related policies and procedures and related documents.
- ✓ Update the Safety Advisor's Desktop Procedures.
- ✓ Work with facility Managers and staff on what constitutes and genuine safety concern within their environment.
- ✓ Cross train a new staff member to the HR/Safety department to perform safety tasks during my absence with the future goal to be my replacement.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Clifford

Human Resources Director

Residential Services

If there is anything that I have learned after 28 years of working in this field, it is to always expect the unexpected. From day to day, year to year, the interplay of philosophical, political, economic, societal, and programmatic forces mold and shape us like the tide, creating both difficult challenges and exciting opportunities. I have seen many changes, some good, some not. I have seen long term employee's come and go by the way of retirement or move on to new adventures. I have seen programs change and grow and end. This last year has been no different.

Most recently I have been given the opportunity to serve as the Director of Residential Services. I provide support to all five Group Homes in Montrose and Delta, the Montrose and Delta PCAs, the Host Home department, and the Family Care Givers and Providers.

We currently are serving eleven PCA clients in the Delta area and eight in the Montrose area. We are serving thirty-six clients in our Group Homes. We contract with thirteen Host Home Providers and eight Family Care Givers. Our Family Care Giver Program has really taken off with more to come and we are excited about the future of this service model.

The world of Residential Services changes often. We never know what the next day is going to bring us, but we do our best to be prepared to deal with whatever comes our way. The restructure of our programmatic administration team has brought more consistency and excellence in the services and supports we provide. We are lucky to have a knowledgeable, dedicated group of people to provide the services our clients need and want. We also have dedicated staff that makes our jobs easier and who provide excellent care to all those we support. If we didn't have the staff we do, we would not be where we are today. Staff play a major part of COI and what we do. They provide non-stop client support 24/7.

With the ongoing COVID pandemic, our Residential Group Homes are still required to continue with mandated mask wearing, social distancing, sanitation, testing and reporting. We keep up with the new changes, updates, when to test, when not to test and follow the RCF Guidance, as required. We have been very fortunate the last year in that we have not had a client hospitalized due to COVID and most have been asymptomatic. If you are a visitor to our Group Homes you have seen the plans we are required to have in place, our screening stations, and staff wearing PPE. We provide ongoing COVID training to all staff, clients, and families of those we serve. We thank our dedicated staff for having help us stay in compliance.

Despite the pandemic, we have moved forward with full implementation of the Final Settings Rule and supported full community access based on client choice by going on outings like day trips to Grand Junction, Telluride, overnight visits to Denver to meet family member, going to malls, fishing, shopping, out to eat, and going to the local Rec Centers.

Some of Residential Program accomplishments are:

- We have made several facility improvements such as, painting the client's bedrooms to the color they want, we have upgraded appliances, such as washers, driers, stoves, refrigerators, new furniture plus much more.
- The outside of the facilities has taken on a better look by removing scrubs, bushes and trees that have hidden the beauty of the homes.

- We continue to provide recreational opportunities such as swimming, bowling, track and field, basketball just to name a few.
- We have continued to staff facilities during COVID outbreaks
- We continued doing monthly monitoring, with very few issues that needed attention
- Some of the facilities have been provided with Transits through CDOT grants, which provide a nice roomy ride to and from their destinations.
- We have had all residential Provider Transition Plans approved by HCPF.

The year behind us has certainly presented its challenges, especially with our struggles to attract staff while at the same time striving to maintain program quality.

The CDPHE Compliance survey last November was excellent with minimal deficiencies which were easily corrected.

For this coming year Residential Services will:

- Continue to increase community awareness of COI, our staff, and the value we have in the community
- Continue with the development of new staff recruitment and retention initiatives and strategies
- Continue to improve our staff training program

We will go into this new year with our heads held up high and take on all the challenges that come our way. We are a team and teamwork make the dream work!

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Elliott

Director of Residential Services

Information Technology

Accomplishments:

- Replaced an aging phone system with Integrated IP phones for entire Agency
- Assisted remote workers with mobile access and remote connectivity during COVID
- Incorporated new meeting software to assist users with meetings and document sharing during COVID
- Successfully moved entire network and all users to temporary location during building remodel
- Completed new network wiring and connectivity for new Admin building
- Successfully moved entire network and all users to our new Admin building

GOALS:

- Support implementation of Electronic Time Entry
- Develop data system to replace State Systems when Case Management reorganization happens
- Replace aging server equipment
- Continue to upgrade user computers as needed
- Continue to upgrade facility Internet access
- Assist in Agency rebranding and community outreach

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Tea

Director of IT

Day Habilitation and Supported Employment Services

In Day Habilitation Services we are currently serving 48 individuals at Aspen Crest, and 57 at Park Place. We also provide community-based SCC to a number of individuals who choose not to access facility-based services.

We have a Supported Employment program that currently serves twenty-two individuals in Montrose and thirteen in Cedaredge/Delta. They help people find jobs in the community (Competitive Integrated Employment), partner with DVR, and coach at their jobs with skills and training and navigating employment. We also have an active work group at our Second Impressions store in Montrose.

We are lucky to have a knowledgeable, dedicated group of people to provide the services our clients want and need. Like many service agencies though the pandemic has taken its toll on our programs – staff stability/turn over continues to be a concern, however the core group of dedicated staff provide excellent programming to all those we support in every aspect of programming from wants and needs, to personal goals and desires to going to spectacular, educational places in the community.

Our Day Services requirements for COVID have been met with our prepared communication plan that we follow for all programs. Every Friday transmission levels are updated by the CDC and programs are required to follow a procedure that is in place per the community levels. With the Group Homes following a different set of guidelines it can be very challenging and confusing to the individuals we serve but we emphasize our priority to keep people safe and continue education.

Some of the accomplishments for Aspen Crest and Park Place are:

- New Transits through grants from CDOT, which provide a roomy, comfortable, and accessible ride to and from destinations for SE and SCC, in addition to transports we run each morning.
- Wonderful support from the town of Cedaredge to continue involving the people we serve in every day life in that community.
- Focus on volunteer activities in our Montrose and Delta communities – the local food banks, Meals on Wheels.

Some of the challenges facing Park Place and Aspen Crest are:

- Staffing/number of employees
- Finding and maintaining staff

Some of the accomplishments for SE are:

- Having capacity back to pre-COVID, full team to support people who request services.
- Three job coaches are ACRE Certified by WISE which helps them provide customized employment that aligns with our person-centered philosophy.

Some of the challenges for SE are:

- Partnering with more employers to create customized positions for the individuals we serve.
- Building community relationships
- Navigating the DVR process in tandem with the waiver services to provide continuity of services.
- Educating the community.

The year behind us has certainly presented its challenges, especially with our continuing struggles to attract staff while maintaining program quality to our standards.

Much credit should be given to the Day Habilitation Program Supervisors and staff of all Day Services departments for their dedication and care for the people we serve.

For this coming year our goals are:

- To continue to hire quality, vested staff and get the word out about what a great place Community Options is to work.
- To continue to improve our programs and offer more individualized service options.
- Plan and hold a craft fair to give people an opportunity to share/sell the things they have made.
- Invite even more community members to come do presentations and be more involved in COI.
- Utilize all the space each program offers to facilitate bigger and more variety of activities

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Hoover

Director of Day Habilitation Services