



## Meeting Minutes- October 15, 2020

The meeting opened at 9:05am. There were 25 MERC members in attendance.

**ARCH House Services-** Raechell Young presented on ARCH House services and requirements. She shared that many people think they are a “half-way house” or Oxford-type house and that is not the case. ARCH House is a step-down program from residential treatment or the criminal justice system. They provide services for men, and they receive referrals from a variety of sources. ARCH House required that their clients participate in treatment services. They are also required to attend a 12 step program and work with a sponsor at least one time per week. Another focus of the program is to help the men attain financial stability. They are required to find employment and to save at least 30% of their net income. Another 30% of their net income goes toward rent, and the clients are able to spend the remaining 40% as they wish. This accountability helps ready them for when they graduate from the program. ARCH has capacity for 21 men during normal occupancy. COVID restrictions have them capping capacity at 14, and as of the meeting time, they had 11 men currently in residence. Raechell shared that the criteria for successful completion of the program includes meeting their treatment goals, including having a job and participating in a 12-step program. Clients usually stay from 3-6 months, with 5 months being the average stay. Raechell stated that they do take clients from throughout the state and have received referrals from St. Louis City and County. They also currently have a contract with Southwestern Illinois Correctional Facility. They also work with drug court programs throughout the state. ARCH House is a treatment facility, licensed with the state. They receive additional funding from the 708 Board of both St. Clair and Madison Counties. There was a question about what happens when a client leaves the facility. Raechell shared that many clients go home, but some are unable to do so due to unhealthy family environments. Some of those clients go to Oxford Houses, and others go to the 2116 Club located very near ARCH House. They do hold a graduation ceremony when a client leaves the facility. Graduates are welcome to come back to visit, and many do so.

**Services for Pregnant and Postpartum Women-** Stacy Nonn presented on behalf of JoEllyn Patterson who had an unexpected conflict and could not attend. Stacy shared that Chestnut Health Systems provides extensive services for pregnant and postpartum women with an opioid use disorder. The program is funded through one of the State of Illinois, State Opioid Response (SOR) grants. She talked about the “Baby and Me” digital photo album that clients receive which documents pregnancy, birth, post-pregnancy, as well as the other client benefits: infant massage training, peer recovery support, group services specifically for new moms, parenting education and family counseling, medication assisted recovery (MAR), and employment assistance. The program is unique in that women have access to a doula who can provide the client with continuous physical, emotional and informational support before, during and shortly after childbirth to help them achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible. Stacy mentioned that Chestnut is seeking to strengthen the external referral

process and asked agencies for the opportunity to have one of the PPW staff present for their employees.

**Partnership Website Update-** Raechell and Elizabeth discussed the changes to the Partnership website. Since MERC has provided support for the project, there will be a recovery tab with access to referrals, support groups, and a host of other information. There were numerous conversations about possible additions to the website, including:

- Access to transportation assistance such as bus tokens. Jason discussed how this works in Madison County. Ashley shared that St. Vincent DePaul in East St. Louis also distributes bus passes. She will provide contact information to Donna and the group for follow-up.
- Instructions regarding how to apply for Medicaid. Jean suggested this as many individuals are lacking this information. The suggestion was made to include a link to the application website and agencies who can provide support in completing the application.

Several members who either run or are affiliated with small non-profit harm reduction and recovery service providers asked that their contact information not be included on the website due to limited funding. Donna assured everyone that no agencies or resources will be listed without their permission. Anyone with any additional ideas for the website should pass those along to Raechell or send them via email to the MERC email account (listed on all agendas and minutes).

**Family Support Committee Update-** Jean gave an update on the Family Support Committee. The group continues to meet every Wednesday at 10am via Zoom. Jean asked for additional volunteers to serve on the group. The Family Support Network is open, but there have not been any calls yet. The publicity plan for the phone line includes press releases, social media, and a billboard. The group feels confident that calls will start to roll in soon. They also plan to contact local churches to advertise the service. The group is also working on other family support ideas. Elizabeth shared that the Madison County Youth Board members are excited to provide supports for youth who may be struggling with a family member's misuse of alcohol or substances. The Family Support Committee will provide assistance as needed for the Youth Board as they begin to collect resources to be shared on a digital platform. It was discussed that the intended audience for the Family Support Network project is adults. Youth who are concerned about a family member or friend's alcohol or drug use will be encouraged to call the Warm Line. The next meeting of the Family Support Committee is on Wednesday, October 21<sup>st</sup> at 10am.

**Announcements, Events-** Several members shared information, including the following:

- Elizabeth is stepping down from her job and will be unable to continue to be part of MERC or the Partnership for Drug-Free Communities. Her role as the Vice-Chair of the Partnership will be vacated as a result. The Partnership Executive Committee is accepting nominations for a new Vice-Chair. Anyone interested should contact the group at [PartnershipDrugFreeCommunities@gmail.com](mailto:PartnershipDrugFreeCommunities@gmail.com).
- Toy Beasley (TASC) shared that there is an upcoming Winner's Circle Facilitator training. Members were reminded that the training information can be found on the flyer that was emailed to all MERC members a few weeks ago.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00am.

The next meeting will be at 9:00am on Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup> via Zoom.