

People First of Montana/MCDD



Information Bulletin # 4

By R. Timm Vogelsberg, Council Member / Family Member

People First Chapters Controlling the Funds

As most of you know during the last Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities meeting a unanimous decision was made to fund People First Chapters directly instead of passing the funding through an existing advocacy organization. During a long discussion about the decision Council members agreed that true empowerment means controlling the funding and the decisions.

Since that decision Roger Shelley of the Rural Institute has worked with Deborah Swingley and Timm Vogelsberg to visit with 13 chapters and set up their individual budgets. He is continuing to meet and work with individual chapters. His reports to date are that each chapter has questions, but once members understand that it's their decision (instead of someone else's), then things are accepted and have worked smoothly with almost every chapter. We hope that Roger will also be

able to work with chapters to help them identify approaches to work within their communities to raise additional funds for their various activities.

The Council has always hoped that their funding would be used by People First Chapters to support additional fund raising. Hopefully this new approach will assist Chapters to expand their community support.

The expectations for each chapter to receive Council funding are simple, the chapter must agree to meet with Roger, share their existing budgets, and discuss how they'd like to spend the funding which the Council approved for them. They must prioritize their activities and vote to decide how they'll spend the funds. The Council funds are federal funds and their expenditure must be documented and reported to the federal government. Chapters which are not interested in following these expectations, are welcome to refuse Council funding.

One People First Member suggested that this was disrespectful to People First Members. I believe that providing the funding and the opportunity for People First Chapters to make their own decisions about the use of their funding, is very respectful. It provides each member with the opportunity to identify how they'd like to use the funding and then the opportunity to vote on their most important goals.

The People First Senate has been a topic at meetings and many chapters have voted to use some of their funds to attend Senate meetings. Council members have been told that Montana Advocacy Coalition will continue to manage the People First Senate and that they will hold a meeting in the near future. People First Members should direct questions about the People First Senate directly to Montana Advocacy Coalition. If the Coalition decides not to continue the

Senate, then Roger will talk with each Chapter about their expectations for future meetings.

Contact Information

Phone: Helena - 443-4371 or 443-4332

Phone: Outside of Helena at no cost - 1/866-443-4332

Deborah Swingley Cell Phone: 406/439-5077

Email: Deborah@mtcdd.org

Roger Shelley Cell Phone: 406/425-1634

Email: r.shelley@worldnet.att.net

Timm Vogelsberg phone: 406/243-5467

Email: rtvogelsberg@ruralinstitute.edu.umt