

Chrysalis Center, Inc. Legislative Impact Committee Helps Clients Speak Out

“There was so much talk surrounding the future of agencies like ours, that we had to do something,” reminisces Hank Davis, Recovery Specialist at Chrysalis Center and member of the Legislative Impact Committee. The Recovery and Empowerment Center (REC) that he works in at the agency provides treatment for persons living with psychiatric disabilities ranging from addiction recovery classes to employment services and training. “If certain things weren’t going to be resolved by government officials, then might be facing cuts in the services that we could provide. Thus, the Legislative Impact Committee was created.”

As an organization committed to helping persons with psychiatric disorders live their best lives, staff members at Chrysalis Center felt that clients needed a voice in the matter of policies that affected them. Thus, the Legislative Impact Committee was created in September 2016. The goal of the committee is to educate clients on local legislative issues, so that they in turn educate the community.

A secondary, but also important objective is to educate legislators about persons that have psychiatric disorders. “Just because I have a psychiatric disability doesn’t prevent me from having a voice,” say Lillie C, a member of the REC. “When persons in power discount what we have to say, its’ like adding on another disability to the one you already have. But the Legislative Impact Committee helps us all join forces and speak out.”

Comprised of staff members from various programs in the agency, the Legislative Impact Committee meets twice per month to strategize on outreach to both the community and local legislators. The Committee has gained a number of local legislative allies that include House Majority Leader Matt Ritter, and State Representatives Brandon McGee, Angel Arce, and Edwin Vargas. Amongst others, these legislators have been committed to the cause of speaking out for Chrysalis Center clients and other agencies that serve similar populations during policy meetings and regularly visit Chrysalis Center to speak with clients about what’s happening that affects them in government.

So where does the Legislative Impact Committee see itself in the future? “Ideally it would be great if similar organizations created their own committees and we all teamed up. No one can deny a united voice like that!”

Chrysalis Center is a private, non-profit, socially innovative multiservice organization that serves individuals and families living in Connecticut. (www.ChrysalisCenterCT.org)
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