**Schenectady ARC Update on Day Services**

Our day services (the programs at Maple Ridge, Princetown, Life Preps 1 and 2, the Discovery Academy and the City Clubs) have been closed at the direction of New York State since mid-March. While we have been able to provide day services to the individuals who live in our houses, we have only been able to provide very limited supports to individuals living outside our residences since that time.

Recently the State of New York authorized providers to re-open their day services, if the provider is located in a region that has moved to “Phase 4” of the state plan for phased reopening, and if certain restrictions and guidelines (such as submitting a safety plan) are followed. Schenectady ARC has been working with families and individuals since the start of the pandemic to prepare for how we might re-open our services in a safe manner. After reviewing the latest guidance and requirements from the State, we are preparing to expand our day service offerings in the following manner.

For people living in our houses: as noted above, we have been offering day supports to the individuals who live in our houses since our day programs closed in mid-March, similar to the way we would offer day supports on a snow day.  Because of the goal of keeping “cohorts” of people together, for safety purposes, and because of restrictions on transportation and on the numbers of people who can be served in site-based settings, our plan is to continue, for the foreseeable future, providing day hab supports to the people in our houses in their residential setting.

The change we are making is that we are building a supervisory and support structure that will ensure that these services are offered in a coherent, integrated manner with the residential supports.  Our vision for the day supports is that they will operate in a manner similar to our City Clubs—they will be smaller, more flexible groups that will be able to adjust their activities and schedules to the individuals in the house.

For individuals who live in the community, we will be offering two smaller site based programs, one at Maple Ridge and one at our Life Prep 2 site on Union Street.  The program at Maple Ridge will be different, though, from the “pre-COVID” program at Maple Ridge as it will be smaller and it will consist of individuals who previously attended both Princetown and Maple Ridge.

Based on our discussions with families, we anticipate starting at Maple Ridge on or about August 10 with 25-30 individuals attending.  At least initially, transportation will be provided by many family members.  For those who need assistance with transportation, employees working at the Maple Ridge site also will be providing transportation.

At our Life Prep 2 site we will continue to support individuals who previously attended this program. We will be starting out at about one-third of the capacity; we will look to grow that enrollment as families are comfortable returning and provided we can support individuals safely within the guidelines imposed by OPWDD. Life Prep 2 will also serve as the home base for the Discovery Academy, one of our “without walls” programs, which will be starting with a reduced number of individuals.

Right now we are not planning to reopen Princetown as a location for site-based day services. While that might change in the future, as long as the safety measures imposed by the coronavirus make it safest to support our residential people in their own homes, we believe we will have sufficient capacity at Maple Ridge and Life Prep 2 to serve all from the community who wish to attend.

We will have safety plans in place at both sites. These plans will require, among other things, that all employees and participants will wear masks and practice social distancing. Visitors (other than essential clinical supports) will not be permitted. Everyone entering the premise will be screened for symptoms and will have their temperature checked. Anyone who has a temperature over 100, who has been exposed to a confirmed case, who has any of the COVID 19 symptoms in the last 14 days, or who has travelled from a state with a high infection rate, will not be allowed access to the programs. In addition, there will be a variety of measures within the programs to encourage safe practices.

Our commitment is to provide the best supports and services in a manner that is as safe as possible during these challenging times. Changes like these can be difficult for families and for the people we support, but we encourage you to speak up and let us know your concerns and questions. Please let Jen Cole (Jenc@sarcny.org) or Kirk Lewis (Kirkl@sarcny.org) know if you have questions, comments or concerns. We will do our best to keep you up to date as our plans evolve. Thank you.