

April 2007

Opening Doors Newsletter

*A publication to promote the inclusion of individuals
with disabilities within AmeriCorps programs.*

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Managing Medication

Recently material was provided to an AmeriCorps program where practical information was reviewed for managing medication storage for individuals taking prescription drugs. A regional supervisor had the insight to see potential issues arising concerning staff assisting in the self-administration of medications with members who are not 18 years of age. “What can be done?” Policies can be set in place to provide protocol to regulate who is responsible for lost or damaged medications. Staff may be educated to recognize problems when they occur and determine what actions are to take place in response to these problems. For example, if a member is exhibiting irregular behavior or he/she is experiencing a possible side effect or reaction from taking their medication, staff who’ve been prepared know what action(s) need to be taken. Proper recording of medication administration provides documentation that benefits both the member and the program. To have a protocol for medication management policies or guidelines already in place serves the best interest of all to provide proactive solutions. What I find most exciting is the effort programs (you) put forth in continuing to build and maintain inclusive service environments. If you would like to see a copy of the medication document or recording form, or if you have any questions, please contact me at kbean@mt.gov.

Media Happenings

At our April 5, 2007, Montana Commission on Community Service board meeting, I was finally able to show off our finished product, a DVD where former members expressed their success stories within their AmeriCorps programs. The Commissioners and guests received details of the hard work that went into creating this public service announcement promoting successful disability inclusion within our AmeriCorps State programs. This entire process began in early July of 2006. All of this would not have been possible without the commitment to teamwork and professional interaction of the actors, two former AmeriCorps members. Our work is not done yet. With disability grant monies we hope to purchase broadcast time to utilize this outreach tool. The announcement illustrates the promotion of all individuals and provides contact information that should increase an awareness of volunteerism within all AmeriCorps programs. I’ll let everyone know when to be on the lookout for the announcement and I’m keeping my fingers crossed that it will be played when most of us are not sleeping soundly.

The idea of inclusion and diversity is the resounding message I’m sending today. I look forward to working with all of you and thank you for your efforts toward promoting disability inclusion.

