Quarterly Report

RSS Board of Directors, Sue Schuld, chair

January 2024

Starting on a personal note, my son has been a resident of North 18th for twenty five years now. Since he became a resident, it has been our routine to spend Wednesday afternoons together. I never would have thought that we would both be spending one Wednesday a month going to board of directors meetings! Justin represents residents of the group homes and I like to think that I am a voice for parents and caregivers. This past year I have been especially proud to be a member of this organization. We have added new members with amazing talent and skills and are becoming a much more dynamic group.

This last quarter we dealt with staff shortages by hiring a program director, Kacey Epping, and have begun inviting a group home manager to every board meeting, to help increase transparency and to increase communication between staff members. Sharing knowledge and skills is proving to be very beneficial and is helping to increase communication and understanding between staff, administration, and the board.

This year it was decided to cancel the annual Christmas party and give staff workers bonuses instead, since not all staff members have been able to attend the party. From what I’ve heard, the bonuses have been much appreciated.

At our December board meeting we held a work session. The finance, ethics, and executive committees met to discuss our current policies. Reports from the committees are as follows:

The executive committee is reexamining current policies and is focusing on overall fundraising. We would like to find someone who could help us get our image out to the public more, exploring online, in the news, and print on our buses. We would also like to expand grant writing and are reexamining our mission statement and our guiding principles. We feel that we have a great story to tell. We’re proud of what we do and who we serve!

The finance committee, working with Leanne, examined RSS finances and are trying to address the concerns over overtime. It seems that 13% of our total expenses go to overtime, which means that too many people are working too many hours. The main concern is that we will lose some really good people due to burnout. We are trying to address how to attract new employees and how to keep them. We are a non profit organization and as such we can’t compete with the private sector in wages. Can we ask prospective candidates what their needs are beyond salaries? Child care and transportation come to mind.

The ethics committee is working on a policy regarding pets in the group homes. In the past some staff have brought their dogs or cats to the group homes with them. While it seemed like a good idea to promote the family style setting by including pets, there have been incidents involving cleanliness and safety. As of now, the new policy reflects that unless a pet has been certified as a support animal and the paperwork has been received by the administration office, no pets will be allowed. Another item tackled by the ethics committee has been SCOMMS. It was suggested that talking face to face about an issue is better communication than texting. The ethics committee has also been examining our policy manual and handbook, with the objective of simplifying the three hundred page documents and making sure the overlap in each is consistent. Michelle Brockman says there are computer programs that can help with that.

As you can see, the board is working hard to make RSS a company we can truly be proud of. We do have a great story to tell and we are indeed proud of what we do and who we serve! I am looking forward to the month to come!