



**Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2012**

In attendance: Dave, Ginny, Jennifer Weigand, Bill, Edna, Billy Foelker, Sharon Van Acker, Mary Jo Mattke, Tom Behnke, Rick Wilson, Bob Baker, Don and Kris Hale, Michael, Maureen Wilkes, Gary Shaw, Linda Branson, Barb LeDuc, Betty Arntson, Thomas Cook and Robin Kennedy

Mission updates:

▪ **Awareness:**

I. Video Testimonial update: A TEAM videos are currently being reviewed and edited further by Rehabilitation for Wisconsin (RFW) in preparation for posting on RFW You Tube site and sharing with national organizations. Members interested in sharing their video stories are encouraged to contact Robin Kennedy for further information.

II. A TEAM formations around the state: 7 additional A TEAMS are setting up around the state of Wisconsin based on the model established here. Exciting news for the team, as other committed families and individuals with disabilities are uniting for choice and protection of all services. It is promising that all the A TEAMS will have opportunity to network with each other through a grassroots advocacy website in the near future. More information to come!

▪ **Advisement:**

Thank you to the 20+ A TEAM members that provided valuable feedback for Opportunities, Inc.'s now completed 2012-2015 Agency Strategic Plan.

▪ **Advocacy:** Special Guest Tom Masseau, Executive Director for Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW)

DRW has been organized for the past 30 years. It has offices in Madison, Rice Lake and Milwaukee Wisconsin. There are 62 employees and it operates a 5 million dollar budget. Disability Rights Wisconsin is designated by the Governor to ensure the rights of all state citizens with disabilities through individual advocacy and system change, DRW is part of a national system of federally mandated independent disability agencies. DRW is completely independent of government and the disability service system in order to be free of any conflicts of interests which would undermine our capacity to advocate vigorously on behalf of the human and legal rights of people with disabilities.

Mr. Masseau also explained the **Family Care and IRIS Ombudsman Program** which provides advocacy and advisement in resolving funding and service issues. More information can be obtained at <http://www.disabilityrightswi.org/programs/fcop>.

The discussion concluded with a sharing of thoughts and opinions from both Mr. Masseau and A TEAM members in relation to the article that appeared in the Capitol Times on October 3, 2012 that highlighted Opportunities, Inc. and other Community Rehabilitation Programs, along with integrated employment settings that portray community jobs as the best option for individual achievement. Lively discussion followed with several A TEAM members speaking up about the importance of their choice to work at Opportunities, Inc. and their frustration over the on-going debate on the varying definitions of work and pay for performance. Mr. Masseau listened attentively to the members and offered diplomatic responses that promoted the importance of finding common ground with others to move forward on solutions that all can be satisfied with. Members appreciated his presence and agree that the future will be promising if open, non-judgmental communication continues.

DRW materials were available to members and further information can be found at <http://www.disabilityrightswi.org/>.

Next meeting set for December 2012 - date/topics to be determined – watch for upcoming email invitation.

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

~ Helen Keller