Driving Change Updated: 4/21/15

Goal Statement: Lead collective advocacy efforts to influence policy and resource allocation at the local, regional, and state level to cultivate a community of empowerment and inclusion for individuals with disabilities and special needs and their families.

**Priority Objective #1:**

Establish and advocacy agenda.

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| Action Steps / Task | Timeline | Who |
| 1. Research critical issues, barriers and opportunities
* *Review existing data*
* *Invite experts to share facts on funding, service delivery, etc.*
* *Engage diverse perspectives individuals with disabilities and special needs, parents/family members, service providers, etc.*
1. Identify best practices for solutions
* *Review what other counties in SC are doing*
* *Identify other cities or states that are doing progressive work (create a matrix for comparison)*
1. Identify and select priority issues for the advocacy agenda
* *Conduct a priority ranking analysis (can use the ranking tool that we used for LiveWell if you want)*
* *Develop solutions for priorities for which you want to advocate (outcomes)*
1. Approve agenda
* *Present the agenda to stakeholders*
* *Approve the agenda*
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**Priority Objective #2:**
Develop and implement a plan of action to implement the advocacy agenda.

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| Action Steps / Tasks | Timeline | Who |
| 1. Educate stakeholders on the key issues.

*Possible actions could include (and were mentioned in the session)*: * *Identify the target audiences and the messaging/language for campaign*
* *Prepare white papers/targeted materials for distribution*
* *Convene existing advocacy groups (United Way, ICS, ARC, others) and explore coordinated efforts*
* *Host stakeholder forums (much like Institute for Child Success) – for business leaders, policy-makers, community leaders*
* *Create a policy-maker “academy” for the Upstate’s legislative delegation*
* *Meet one-on-one with local, state and federal leaders*
* *Cultivate “champions” among elected leaders- build relationships (to propose legislation and/or lead/support the policy change)*
1. Engage parents and other stakeholders in advocacy efforts.

*Possible actions could include (and were mentioned in the session)*: * *Hosting advocacy training to equip those interested in advocating with the information, skills and confidence to advocate*
* *Engage the media in reaching a broader audience (Utilize social media, mass media and advertising (pro-bono?)*
* *Develop a speakers bureau to engage community groups in advocacy efforts*
1. Establish an expert panel to review legislation and benefit changes to provide feedback on impact of changes to individuals, families, providers, etc.
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**Priority Objective #3**
Build capacity and increase engagement to strengthen local advocacy efforts.

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| Action Steps / Tasks | Timeline | Who |
| 1. Recruit individuals with disabilities and their family members to serve on local boards and commissions to ensure a voice for those with disabilities and special needs (make a list of boards)
2. Reach out to local business leaders
3. Meet with County Council and City Council members
4. Advocacy training for parents

Cultivate “champions” among elected leadership and business community (see previous section) |  |  |

**Priority Objective #4**
Implement broader advocacy / communications campaign to build a community of empowerment and inclusion (change negative values and attitudes.)

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| Action Steps / Tasks | Timeline | Who |
| 1. Develop a broader communications strategy for building awareness throughout the community
2. Develop a one-page script for all partners – send out quarterly so partners can inform stakeholders of updates
3. Identify audiences for targeted outreach (family members/caregivers who may not value their own family members with disabilities, pastors/churches, businesses, etc.)
4. Utilize special events to heighten awareness (mentioned in the session - could build on the Special Olympics and offer a week of various activities; host “conversations/dialogues”)
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Issues identified for possible advocacy agenda:

Local:

* Recreation/quality of life/enrichment opportunities are limited – accessibility is poor all around the county
* Transportation
* ADA compliance and code enforcement

Regional:

* Employment (opportunities and training) (engage Ten at the Top and the Upstate Alliance)
* Inclusiveness – benefits for workforce and economic development
* Residential housing/care needs (none in Greenville County – surrounding ones are full and quality is not sufficient)

State:

* Explanation of benefits (not currently offered to families)
* Waivers; waiting list; funding for services
* Residential housing/care needs (none in Greenville County)
* Would like to be able to receive prescriptions through the mail (currently not able to do so)

Who to engage: All group members and experts in the issue areas, Tony Keck, Jamie Moon, Joe Waters, Margie (ARC), Advocates/ champions: Nick Theodore, Mark Tollison, Joe Dill

Additional Notes:

* Need to make sure universal language is used in all communications and across all initiatives.
* Develop a simulation similar to Beth Templeton’s “Poverty Tour” (note: transportation and infrastructure group may be doing something similar with accessibility)
* Broader communications/awareness campaign – “Top 10 things to do when you encounter a person with disabilities or special needs.”