

Best laid plans

We are all familiar with that old adage about mice and men, and because of his novel of the same name, I somehow thought it was credited to John Steinbeck. In doing a little research, however, I learned that it is a paraphrase of a line in a poem by Robert Burns (1759 - 1796). Anyway,



Community Options Ink

By Tom Turner

in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, that old adage seems incredibly appropriate on multiple levels, here at Community Options, and everywhere else.

Relative to this monthly column, following last month's column about Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Day at the Capitol, I was all set to write about our efforts to finally end the waiting list for services. We had been mounting a very successful campaign with the state legislature to finally provide services to the approximately 3,100 adults statewide who need and want services, some of whom have been waiting a decade or more. Our campaign involved a broad coalition and had engendered great support with legislators, including having joint budget committee members saying they not only supported this effort, they were "determined" to make it happen. Then you know the rest... the COVID-19 crisis unfolded, people started getting sick, businesses and schools everywhere shut down, the economy went in the tank, and the general assembly had to recess. Best laid plans indeed. We will fight that battle again at another, hopefully better time.

In the meantime, our focus has shifted to all COVID, all the time. On March 18 we closed our day program facilities in Montrose and Cedaredge, and have been working diligently to try and keep the people we serve and our staff healthy and safe. Many of our employees are now working remotely from home. Unlike many businesses that are disengaged from their duties once they close, however, we still have people in group homes, host homes, and apartment settings that require services. Many of these people have significant health issues that make them highly susceptible to this virus, and social distancing is irrelevant when helping someone shower. Needless to say, our task is daunting, especially given the scarcity of personal protective equipment (PPE). Who knew that term a month ago?

I am always proud of our staff and the critically important work they do on behalf of the vulnerable people we support, but I've never been more proud than now. Their dedication, caring, compassion, and selfless courage have been remarkable, but not unexpected. It's something that we witness every day. As we all struggle through this difficult time, please keep us in your thoughts and prayers. And if you are able to help, donations are especially needed as we face the decreased revenue and increased

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