



Stevens County Developmental Achievement Center

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Thursday, February 21, 2019

This is a year of big changes at the DAC. Change in locations, changes in lunch routines, changes in time and attendance, and the onslaught of data tablets everywhere.

The architect expects to advertise for bids on our building updates in March. Then we will have to skedaddle to someplace else during the demolition. Our updated building will eventually have bigger hallways, a much larger kitchen, and new plumbing throughout. But first they have to knock down our front entrance and rip up our floors. So right now we are having an alternate location inspected by the Fire Marshall, the Building Inspector, and the MN Department of Human Services. Once we receive approval, we will move offsite for about 5 months. We have never done that before.

Already we expect a major adjustment. It doesn't look like our temporary quarters will have a licensed kitchen so we will all have to bring sack/bag lunches during the summer. We have never done that before either.

We will need to adjust our calendar to move all our equipment there and back also. Plus we have so many snow days already and winter isn't over yet. We need to make most of them up because when we lose days, we lose income. At this point our calendar is more of a plan than a commitment. We have never been in this situation before either.

At the same time, our billing and attendance system is changing one client at a time. So far we have 10 clients out of 63 clients on the new billing units. Already that has put our billing several months behind. Next up we have ordered 14 tablets so that moving forward we will record everyone's movement from job to job and bus to home in real time and in 15 minute increments. How this will work, none of us knows. It is a leap of faith and we have ordered the same new system as all our neighboring DACs. We have never done this before either.

Meanwhile the legislature is in session and they still need to complete a budget for 2019 & 2020 that was vetoed last year. When they couldn't reach an agreement, the Department of Human Services arbitrarily reduced all DAC funding by 7% on July 1st of 2018. We are now operating at a deficit because we didn't layoff program staff to pay for the reduction. We have never done this before either.

So 2019 will be a year of huge changes. We hope to be moved back into our remodeled offices by Thanksgiving and we hope to be good at recording all the 15 minute billing units by then too. We will do our best. Maybe the legislature and the Department of Human Services will make us whole again. I hope so. We literally pray that they will give us back the money they took away last summer. Please pray for us too.

Thanks,

Charlie Oakes
Executive Director
Stevens County DAC Inc.