

**CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE**

**October 9, 2020**

**10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

**Zoom meeting**

**Meeting Minutes**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Clara C, Co-Chair  
Kevin M., Co-Chair  
Angie P.  
Arthur B.  
Barbara G.  
Cathy M.  
Clement W.  
Eileen B.  
Denise R.  
John V.  
Joseph P.  
June T.  
Nancy D.  
Rafael R.  
Robert S.  
Roni W.  
William D.

**STAFF:**

Georgette Beal  
JoAnn Henn  
Myra Alston  
Katie Ramirez  
Stephanie Moreau

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Ernest B.  
Gauis C.  
James C.  
James H.  
Juanita C-F  
Paul B.  
Richard G  
Roni W.  
Traci S.  
Wendy A.

**GUESTS**

Kerry Thomas  
George Marzen

**I. Welcome/Introductions**

Kevin M, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:10 am. He welcomed everyone and introductions were made. A moment of silence was observed.

**II. Thursday's Child Program and Services.**

Before beginning his presentation, Mr. Thomas from Thursday's Child acknowledged the solemnity of September 11<sup>th</sup>, and coupled with everything going on with COVID-19, he encouraged everyone to give themselves space to grieve, deal with feelings and to reach out for support if needed. He stressed the importance of practicing some kind of healthy self-care to help process those feelings.

Thursday's Child program and Services. Mr. Thomas presented on Thursday's Child Program and services in the form of a PowerPoint that would be made available to committee members. The mission of Thursday's Child is to develop, to coordinate, and to provide services for people

with or affected by HIV/AIDS on Long Island. Founded in 1989, by school teacher, Sharon “Didi” Kelly and her partner MA Knoke, TC began as an advocacy organization to educate communities in order to address stigma, especially in regard to housing discrimination. “Didi” opened the door of their Westhampton Beach home to welcome People with AIDS who had nowhere else to go. The agency name stems from the “Monday’s Child” nursery rhyme which is supposed to foretell a child’s character or future based upon the day of his or her birth, *Thursday’s Child has far to go*. Even though located in Suffolk County, the agency also has clients who live in Nassau County.

Thursday’s Child has two county-funded programs:

- AIDS Services Access Program provides service coordination and benefits advocacy for People Living with HIV/AIDS. This program is meant to solve the root of the issue and identify a plan to help meet the person’s ongoing needs. An assessment regarding a variety of needs directs creation of a service plan, which acknowledges various potential issues that may interfere with continued access to care. Examples of actions taken as directed by service plans include facilitated enrollment into benefits through Suffolk County Department of Social Services for Public Assistance, SNAP (food stamps), and/or Medicaid. There are a variety of benefits/programs specifically related to HIV diagnosis, such as “enhanced rental assistance” grants, transportation services, legal services, health care coverage, and mental wellness services. This program provides information and referrals to these various programs and services as well.

- The Safety Net program is meant to meet emergency needs not covered by other sources in order that People Living with HIV/AIDS can live well and stay healthy. All applications have a review process to ensure proper use of funds. Housing insecurity or homelessness, food insecurity, lack of transportation, substance abuse, mental health conditions, and difficulties associated with low or fixed-income households are some of the barriers to care on Long Island. Available services may be limited or situations are unique and cannot be met through traditional “public assistance” resources or other sources. This program addresses the “gaps” in the system, as when applications for benefits are pending and a person has no source of income for basic needs. Safety Net mainly provides food cards, clothing vouchers, transportation vouchers, and packages personal care items.

Thursday’s Child also has two federally-funded programs:

- Ryan White Part A Early Intervention Services (EIS):  
It is important to know your status. The goal of this program is to identify people who are unaware they are HIV+, refer them to testing, inform them of their status, and provide linkage to care and support. Though community outreach efforts, prevention and risk reduction education is provided to at-risk groups and individuals. Assistance such as accompaniment to doctor’s appointments, assessments for a variety of additional potential needs to help determine eligibility for those services and assistance to complete enrollment are also provided. The targeted demographics are LGBT, Black/African American, Latinx, substance users, and others. Mobile HIV testing programs are available through collaborations/partnerships. There were 90 outreach events in 2019 (An average of 7 ½ per month). Even during the pandemic, Thursday’s Child is still providing services. Currently, substance abuse and behavioral health programs are being offered via Zoom. In partnership with The AIDS Institute, there will be a virtual event on November 12, 2020 with a focus on stigma, Thursday’s Child is seeking to recruit consumers to speak on the topic.

- Ryan White Part A Emergency Financial Assistance:COVID-Relief started mid-August

2020. Assistance is in the form of food cards, personal care items/household supplies, and personal protective equipment (PPE). RW eligibility is required and expenses must be justified as covid-related. Consumers can call Thursday's Child directly or be referred by other providers.

Additional programs include Long-term Survivors Program (LTS) funded by AHF for its start-up year, sponsoring four successful events. Beech House is an independent supportive housing program providing a home to dozens of families since 1992, and Holiday Magic which served 332 children in 2019. The program relies on private fundraising. (Plans for 2020 are as yet unknown). A new support group is being created, facilitated by George M., LCSW, dates and time to be determined.

To summarize, Thursday's Child is here to do their part to help End the Epidemic: defined as getting to zero new infections, zero AIDS-related deaths, and zero stigma.

### **III. Approval of August 7, 2020 minutes.**

June T. made a motion which was seconded by Cathy M. to approve the August 7, 2020 meeting minutes as read.

9 Approved 8 Abstained 0 Opposed.

### **IV. Announcements**

Kevin M. provided information regarding Nassau County AA located in Elmont, New York (516) 292-3045.

A motion was made by Cathy M, and seconded by June T. to adjourn the September 11, 2020 Consumer Involvement Committee meeting. **All in Favor-Motion carried**