

Hello All,

My apologies that I am unable to provide in-person support at the August 2nd meeting. I would like to offer a brief summary of what I would have liked to share had I been available for this meeting.

I was hired by MacCanon to serve as Medical Clinic Coordinator at Repairers of the Breach in October, 2012. In my year of working under MacCanon's mentorship, we successfully doubled the number of volunteer medical professionals, the amount of medical care available for free to homeless adults, cultivated numerous community partnerships (with Medical College of WI, Milwaukee School of Engineering, Aurora Healthcare, Marquette University, local optometry and dental clinics, and many more organizations to expand the availability of care available to adults with no other places to turn for their health concerns). By late 2013, we had over 50 clinic volunteers, allowing homeless adults to receive medical services 4 days a week as well as some Saturdays. Repairers of the Breach was growing in its reach and impact on homeless adults in Milwaukee. The renovated building was just beginning to realize its full potential of providing literacy services, job readiness programs, mental health support, wellness programs, including yoga, gardening, speakers on preventative health behaviors and much more.

As I watched the actions of the ROTB board of directors demonstrating hostility toward the agency's mission and growth over 20+ years, the mistreatment both MacCanon and I endured was truly heartbreaking. MacCanon and I were not allowed to speak during meetings, our voices were literally silenced. There was a sense of desperation. Every day, MacCanon and I witnessed the insurmountable needs and challenges facing homeless adults, and we were making so many strides in building capacity to address these. The idea that a three person board of directors could simply turn their backs on our work to pursue a different agenda seemed absolutely unbelievable. We felt there had to be a way to put a stop to these actions, because our work was so clearly making a difference. We were told by trusted supporters that there was a way to fight back against what was occurring. We felt we had no choice but to take this course of action. To this day, I cannot understand why a board would take the actions they did to prevent a growing and thriving agency from realizing its full potential. When the board took the action to remove MacCanon from her leadership position, I could no longer remain with the organization.

I left ROTB in November, 2013 to become the Director of Operations with Rogers Memorial Hospital in Kenosha, WI, where I remained until 2018. I am currently on the faculty at the Carthage College school of social work, where I serve as Field Director and Clinical Assistant Professor. I work with nonprofit agencies on a daily basis, and I have never witnessed the level of unfair treatment of a dedicated Executive Director in another agency as what I observed in my time working with MacCanon. I urge your continued support of MacCanon's renewed efforts to bring her vision of empowerment to the most vulnerable members of the Milwaukee community.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions. I would be happy to meet any of you in person at an alternate time when I am available.

Sincerely,

Debbie Minsky-Kelly, LCSW
Field Director/Clinical Assistant Professor
Carthage College