We’re pleased to present the 2007-2008 Annual Report of the Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) at the University of Delaware (UD). This report is in the form of a calendar with highlights of the 2008 fiscal year (July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008). Each page features important information about the work of CDS and the fulfillment of our mission:

To enhance the lives of individuals and families in Delaware through education, prevention, service, and research related to disabilities. The Center promotes independence and productivity so individuals and families can fully participate in the life of the community.

Two 2008 events stand out as forces for future change at CDS:

- Longtime director Michael Gamel-McCormick was appointed to serve as interim dean of the College of Human Services, Education, and Public Policy. A national search resulted in the naming of Beth Mineo, Ph.D. as CDS director, effective September 1, 2008. She was formerly with UD’s Center for Applied Science and Engineering and continues to direct the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI).

- Thanks to efforts by Micki Edelsohn, a member of the CDS Community Advisory Council, and Michael Gamel-McCormick, the University received a $1 million gift from the Howard W. Swank, Alma K. Swank and Richard Kemper Swank Foundation to create the Swank Neuro-Developmental Disabilities Program at CDS. A model employment program for people with neuro-developmental disabilities will be developed at the University as a result of the Swank Foundation’s generosity.

Please visit our website at www.udel.edu/cds to learn more about the Center for Disabilities Studies.

For more information
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“It’s been ten years of triumph and ten years of challenges,” proclaimed New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS) director Heidi Beck at the program’s tenth anniversary celebration in June 2008. Through this interagency program, NDEHS provides quality care and family services that support and empower families and their very young children (birth through age three). Since its founding, NDEHS has served more than 1,500 children and pregnant women, including 150 children with developmental delays or identified disabilities, in their homes and through center-based and family child care partnership programs. CDS has been a partner from the beginning.

Family and child specialist Paula Chacon is a home visitor to about twelve New Castle County families each week. She knows the importance of a basic Head Start tenet, “By helping the mother we help the child.” Paula maximizes the opportunity for each pregnant woman to have a healthy child: she monitors the mom’s eating habits, takes her to classes, makes sure she goes to prenatal check-ups, and teaches her to talk to her unborn baby to begin a relationship that will continue after birth.

Paula also monitors development of the young children in the family and if she identifies a problem, she refers the child to a specialist. She also helps each family find a Head Start program before the child turns three and works to provide a smooth transition from home to the center.

“What I really love the most is to see the smiles on the children’s faces when they see me on a home visit,” Paula observed. “They consider me a friend — and I can be an avenue to their development.”

For more information
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www.udel.edu/cds/initiatives-childhood-ndehs.html
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- Groundhog Day: February 2, 2009
- Presidents’ Day: February 16, 2009
- Valentine’s Day: February 7, 2009
- Ash Wednesday: February 25, 2009
The Early Learning Center (ELC) is a nationally accredited, comprehensive early care and education clinical research facility that serves over 240 children, ages 6 weeks to 12 years, and their families. ELC specifically targets children with risk factors, including poverty, foster care, and disabilities. CDS is among its University partners.

In its fourth year, the Early Learning Center:
• Entered into a partnership with Neighborhood House, Inc. to provide a quality early care and education program for infants and toddlers in Wilmington’s Southbridge area, with the generous support of JPMorgan Chase, Nemours Foundation, and New Directions Early Head Start.
• Provided a site for observation, practicum, and research to more than 400 undergraduate and graduate students from six UD colleges as well as students from Delaware Technical and Community College and Delaware State University.
• Conducted more than a dozen interdisciplinary research projects on such topics as language acquisition, early literacy, parental discipline, maternal depression, and energy expenditure by preschoolers. ELC’s robot-assisted mobility study (see www.udel.edu/research/media) received national recognition and will be featured in a multi-series Discovery Channel documentary about transportation.
• Enabled 45 children to attend summer camp where academic skills are strengthened through daily reading, writing, and science activities. Opportunities for exploration of theater and drama, physical science and investigation, and Olympic sports are also part of this camp experience.
• Improved the children’s garden with funding from the National Gardening Association, Home Depot, and a private donation.
• Partnered with the UD Greek community, which contributed more than 240 hours of community service, and the Greek Council, which donated $10,000.

For more information
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www.elc.udel.edu
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School Age Initiatives Promote Inclusive Practices

CDS provides assessment, training, technical assistance, and evaluation for several projects funded by Delaware’s Department of Education (DDOE) that encourage inclusive practices and facilitate the development of positive learning environments essential to social and academic success for all children.

• During the 2007-2008 school year, the Delaware Alternate Portfolio Assessment (DAPA) staff provided professional development sessions to 465 Delaware educators from 89 schools in 18 districts on the administration of this alternate assessment for students with severe cognitive disabilities. Screening sessions were introduced to give educators the opportunity to have DAPA staff review and provide feedback on the required components of the assessment prior to submission. More than 1,000 student assessments were submitted for scoring by 260 teachers.

• To provide schools with additional data to evaluate the effectiveness of their Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program and other climate efforts, all Delaware schools were invited to participate in a survey. Close to 48,000 students, parents, and staff members from 129 schools statewide provided information regarding teacher and student/home relations; student-to-student relations; clarity and fairness of rules and expectations; and school safety.

• The 21st Century Community Learning Center project encompasses after-school programs developed through partnerships between school districts and community-based organizations. The goal is to provide academic enrichment opportunities, especially for children in low-performing schools and high-poverty communities. DDOE administers this federally funded project while CDS monitors 53 sites and provides technical assistance through workshops and individual consultations to support the implementation of quality after-school programming.

For more information
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www.udel.edu/cds/initiatives-school-age.html
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Transitioning from School to Adult Life

• CDS partnered with three school districts during the 2007-2008 school year on the Community-based Education Alliance (CBEA) to assist students with disabilities to develop vocational, educational, recreational, and daily living skills. The facilities of the University of Delaware campus were utilized to provide a consumer-driven, person-centered, education program for these 18- to 21-year olds from the Christina (Delaware Autism Program), New Castle County Vo-Tech, and Red Clay Consolidated school districts. Opportunities and supports were provided to maximize their independence, productivity, and integration into the community as they transition from school to adult life.

• Encourage, empower, educate, and support — these concepts are at the core of the Total Life Project (TLP) as young adults with disabilities discover their potential and learn skills critical to achieving greater independence. Through a collaborative process, coaches assist the students as they explore, test, and set goals that serve as the foundation of their person-centered plans.

  − TLP’s Total Life House opened on the UD campus at the end of 2007 to provide students with a unique environment in which to experience college life, learn daily living skills, and ultimately succeed on their personal path to independence.

  − Community Connectors provides opportunities for socialization, recreation, and community involvement, while encouraging participants to try new things, challenge themselves, and work on leadership goals.

  − STEP (Summer Transition Education Program) was held for one week in June 2008 to help six young adults with visual and other disabilities set goals and begin their journey to greater independence.

• The TransitionMapSM of Delaware (www.transitionmapde.org) continues to grow as a resource for information for students with developmental disabilities to use as they move from school to the future.

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www.udel.edu/cds/initiatives-adults.html
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Healthy Delawareans With Disabilities: Bridging the Gap

Healthy Delawareans With Disabilities: Bridging the Gap (HDWD:BtG) is a five-year cooperative agreement (2007-2012) between CDS and the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). HDWD:BtG is charged with working to improve the health of Delawareans with disabilities.

First year highlights include:

- Published the Delaware Health Status Report for Children with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs (April 2008).
- Developed and implemented Facilitating Inclusion Training (FIT) to address inclusion of individuals with disabilities in fitness facilities at 1614 Fitness & Aerobics. UD’s Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative and Department of Health, Nutrition, and Exercise Sciences partnered with this pilot training, which was funded by the Developmental Disabilities Council.
- Added a medical transition page to the TransitionMapSM of Delaware (www.transitionmapde.org) to provide access to medical transition booklets, checklists, and online resources. A questionnaire was developed to help identify accessible provider offices and create a database of accessible physicians’ offices. Funding was provided by the Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs of the Division of Public Health.
- Developed an Advisory Council of stakeholders who offered guidance and feedback, created a strategic plan for improving health of individuals with disabilities, and monitored HDWD:BtG activities.
- Established outreach to several health promotion agencies to encourage the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in activities and the distribution of accessible information materials.

For more information
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www.gohdwd.org
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Research and Evaluation Projects

A broad range of issues related to disabilities, programs, and services, using a variety of methodologies such as outcome evaluation, surveys, and focus groups, are researched and evaluated by CDS each year. The projects described below represent a small sample from the 2008 fiscal year.

- CDS collaborated with Easter Seals of Delaware and Maryland’s Eastern Shore to evaluate its Assistive Technology (AT) Integrated Service Delivery Model by collecting data from two sources: the clients, through the consultation notes of AT specialists; and the staff, through a series of focus groups. Staff consultation notes documented the progress each client made in using an AT device between sessions, while focus group discussions provided examples of the ways in which the outcomes of assistive technology increased independence, quality of life, and active participation in Easter Seals adult day programs.

- A doctoral candidate in the School of Education conducted focus groups with parents, students, administrators, and community representatives to gather information for the Community-based Education Alliance’s evaluation of the views of stakeholders and their recommendations about the program.

- Students pursuing the disabilities studies minor provided feedback through a CDS online survey about the program and their satisfaction with advising and the senior seminar. Data also were compiled from one-, five-, and 10-year follow-up surveys of minor program graduates and former CDS graduate assistants. The information is incorporated into the National Information Reporting System, which enables Association of University Centers on Disabilities members like CDS to manage and monitor their training programs, projects, activities, products, and compliance with federal reporting requirements.

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www.udel.edu/cds/research.html
Why a Minor in Disabilities Studies?

“Every individual, regardless of what field they enter, should learn about people with disabilities. After graduating with a disabilities studies minor, I feel much more knowledgeable about disabilities, as well as how to teach others about attitudes and behaviors.” This was the assertion of Sara Kanoff, a 2008 University of Delaware graduate, who majored in exercise physiology and plans to attend medical school.

One of the reasons senior Max Kursh, a senior leadership major, chose the disabilities studies minor was because a family member has a disability caused by a stroke. Senior psychology major Steven Adamson believes that with a minor in disabilities studies he is gaining a better understanding of people with disabilities and their families and a good foundation for his future career as a school psychologist.

Sarah Defilippis’ interest in working with people with disabilities led her to add the disabilities studies minor to her double major in psychology and educational studies. For her senior thesis, Sarah examined social interactions between Community-based Education Alliance (CBEA) students and other students on campus, researched models for supporting the social interactions of young adults, and recommended ways to enhance this aspect of CBEA. Sarah learned first-hand the value of a mutual relationship when she became an academic mentor to a young woman with a disability who was auditing a UD class.

Update on Other University Education Programs

- Fifteen UD students served as graduate assistants for such CDS projects as Positive Behavior Support, National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities (NLCDD), and Delaware Alternative Portfolio Assessment.

- NLCDD offered three week-long institutes and mentoring to more than 75 rising leaders from across the country.

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www.udel.edu/cds/university_ed.html
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Community and Family Education and Support Professional Development Training

- Since January 2007, CDS has offered Training in Early Care and Education (TECE) courses to 350 workforce members who are seeking certification as assistant teachers or teachers in child care programs. CDS partners with the Early Learning Center (ELC) to provide the curriculum developed by the Delaware First Professional Development System of the Delaware Department of Education.

- CDS, ELC, and UD Cooperative Extension collaborated on “Moving Youth Ahead in School-age Programs,” a pilot program for professional development training for afterschool program staff. Training focused on planning activities and opportunities that support youth development, goal setting, and leadership, as well as having fun. Participants confirmed that the knowledge they gained enhanced their professional skills.

- The Family Education and Support Project served families that have children with behavioral health issues by helping them to better understand these issues and develop skills to participate more fully in their children’s treatment. The aim of this process, which is overseen by the Positive Behavior Intervention Project, is to augment therapies and enhance outcomes. The curriculum is available at www.udel.edu/cds/familyeducation for child mental health therapists, parents and caregivers, educators, and social services providers.

- The Delaware Family Voices Family to Family Health Information Center (www.delawarefamilytofamily.org) opened at CDS in June under the direction of Ann Phillips. Families of children with disabilities and special health care needs serve as a resource and provide help to families new to the world of children with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and physical or mental health conditions.

For more information
Debbie Amsden • 302.831.8880 • irmc@udel.edu
Debby Boyer • 302.831.3503 • dboyer@udel.edu
Ann Phillips • 302.831.1705 • aphillip@udel.edu

www.udel.edu/cds/comm_ed.html
www.udel.edu/cds/initiatives-school-age.html
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Dissemination and Advocacy

As resource and advocate, CDS raises awareness of the ways in which the lives of persons with disabilities and their families are enhanced through research, evaluation, education, and services. The Center informs the community about supports and services that persons with disabilities need to fully participate in the life of the community.

CDS has played a key role in disseminating information about the Governor’s Commission on Community-based Alternatives for Individuals with Disabilities. During the 2008 fiscal year, CDS published *A Path Forward*, the Commission’s final report, which includes a five-year plan for a service and support system to enable individuals with disabilities to live and work in the integrated setting of their choice. Other reports written by CDS staff were *Credentialing Curriculum for Delaware Direct Support Professionals*; and *Respite Care in Delaware: The Delaware Lifespan Respite Information Network*. Rita Landgraf, Chair of the CDS Community Advisory Council, also chairs the Governor’s Commission.

Highlights of 2007-2008:

- Forty people attended an educational session to learn about eligibility and enrollment for Delaware’s Medicaid Buy-In program, now known as Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities.
- CDS was a sponsor of Legislative Disability Awareness Day, which featured a training session for professionals and consumers about educating legislators, followed by visits to state legislators.
- The *delAware* newsletter focused on the CDS education programs that encourage positive learning environments and access to the general education curriculum for all children.
- Two dissemination team members, Paula Talarowski and Michele Sands, recorded an interview for the StoryCorps project when it visited Delaware. Paula shared her thoughts about living with a disability. The interview is archived at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

For more information
Michele Sands • 302.831.3038 • msands@udel.edu
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Community Advisory Council

The Center for Disabilities Studies benefits from community partnerships, including the Community Advisory Council, which is composed of individuals with developmental disabilities and related disabilities; family members of individuals with developmental disabilities; representatives from disability-related training, service, and advocacy organizations; and representatives from state agencies.

Current CAC Members
Marie-Anne Aghazadian
Parent Information Center of Delaware

Judy Brimer
Parent

Ernest Cole
Freedom Center for Independent Living

Aaron Deede
Advocate

Russ Dynes
Division of Public Health

Micki Edelsohn
Parent

Caitlin Gamel-McCormick
DFRC

Judy Govatos
The Arc of Delaware

Ann Grunert
Special Olympics Delaware

Andrea Guest
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Brian Hartman
Delaware Disabilities Law Program

Linda Heller
Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities

Peggy Hirsh
Parent

Kyle Hodges
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

Yolanda Jenkins
Division of Child Mental Health Services

Dan Keating
Bancroft NeuroHealth

Michael Kelleher
Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Tom Kelly
Division of Developmental Disabilities Services

Rita Landgraf, Chair
Parent and Advocate

Pat Maichle
Developmental Disabilities Council

Karen Mancini
University of Delaware ADA office

Raetta McCall
Advocate

Daniiese McMullin-Powell
Advocate

David Michalik
Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance

Laurie Nicoli
Parent

Elizabeth Nolan
Advocate

Terry Olson
Mosaic, Inc.

Alfred Onuonga
Delaware Center for Justice

Paul Poplawski
Adult, Adolescent, and Family Psychologist

For more information
Michele Sands • 302.831.3038 • msands@udel.edu

CDS Director Beth Mineo (standing left) meets with CAC members (from left) Judy Brimer, Rita Landgraf, Micki Edelsohn, and Elizabeth Nolan.

Monika Shafi
Parent

Marianne Smith
Division of Developmental Disabilities Services

Martha Toomey
Department of Education

Bob Valihura
State Representative

Members whose service concluded during the past year
Martha Brooks
Jack Jadach
Tina Fields
Ray Hunt
Brenda Kramer
Ann Phillips
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Funding and Financials

The Center for Disabilities Studies had an operating budget of $4,268,104 from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008. In addition to the operating budget, CDS received support from the University of Delaware, valued at more than $750,000.

Sources of funding:
51% Federal
33% State of Delaware
15% Local Agencies and Foundations
1% Gifts

Funders — Government, Agency, and Foundation
American Express
ANCOR (American Network of Community Options and Resources)
Autism Society of Delaware
Bancroft NeuroHealth
Chesapeake Care Resources
Chimes Delaware
Christina School District — Delaware Autism Program
Delaware Advisory Council on Career and Technical Education
Delaware Department of Children, Youth and Families — Division of Child Mental Health
Delaware Department of Health and Social Services:
  – Division of Developmental Disabilities Services
  – Division of Public Health
  – Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Disabilities
  – Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health
  – Division for the Visually Impaired
Delaware Department of Education
Delaware Disabilities Planning Council
Delaware Department of Labor — Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Easter Seals of Delaware and Maryland’s Eastern Shore
Family and Workplace Connection
Female Benevolent Society
Jesse Ball duPont Foundation
Jewish Federation of Delaware
Liberty Health Care Corporation
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
New Castle County Vo-Tech School District
Red Clay Consolidated School District
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Therap Services, LLC
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:
  – Administration for Children and Families
  – Administration on Developmental Disabilities
  – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  – National Institutes of Health through Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

The Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired partnered with CDS in June 2008 to present the Summer Transition Education Program (STEP), providing funding for four students with disabilities to attend. All six program participants are shown celebrating their graduation.
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Center for Disabilities Studies 2007-2008 Staff, Faculty, & Students

Michael Gamel-McCormick, Director through June 30, 2008
Beth Mineo, Director as of September 1, 2008

Debbie Amsden
Debbie Bain
Heidi Beck
Keith Boger
Sherry Boleslawski
Blake Bossert
Debby Boyer
Sandi Bradford
Tim Brooks
Martha Buell
Sarah Celestin
Paula Chacon
Alison Chandler
Teresita Cuevas
Sarah Driscoll
Steve Eidelman
Laura Eisenman
Carolyn Graves
Norma Grice
Terri Hancharick
Moneick Hancock
Robin Harbaugh
Vanessa Harper
Amy Harter
Sarah Hearn
Ron Kelley
Debbie Koch
Esther Lauser
Judi MacBride
Tracy Mann
Suzanne Milbourne
Patrizia Pannebaker
Michael Partie
Deanna Pedicone
Gwen Perella
Ann Phillips
Julisa Quixchan
Ilka Riddle
Whitney Rutherford
Jim Salt
Michele Sands
C. Renée Settles-Bean
Eileen Sparling
Beverly Stapleford
Peggy Sudler
Susan Sullivan
Mary Thomas
Karen Townsend
Pat Tressell
Donald Unger
Nancy Weiss
Jamie Wolfe
Graduate Students
Lisa Becker
Juliet Bradley
Karen Brown
Tracy Davenport
Ralph Godbolt
Johanna Homan
Megan Pell
Bo Kay Polly
Dorit Radnai-Griffin
Kim Reinagel
Amanda Rich
Michael Sturm
Desere Tubb
Mehmet Uygur
Michael Williamson
Undergraduate Students
Emily Dourte
Andrew Hodgkins
Becky Koch
Erin Konrad
Laura Milazzo
Nicole Sampson
Brendan Sullivan
J. D. Sullivan
Erin Venturato
Meghan Walter

See CDS website for list of current staff members (www.udel.edu/cds/contact.html).
About the 2009 Calendar Artwork

The artwork in this calendar was created at Artfest 2008, a special event that brought together persons with disabilities, University of Delaware students with a minor in disabilities studies, CDS graduate assistants, and other volunteers. They created colorful murals, using novel implements to apply the paint, and made individual works of art with other media. Photos of the artists are part of this calendar and can also be found, along with photos of the artwork, on our online gallery, www.udel.edu/cds/art. Artfest 2008 was led by art therapist Lisa Bartoli of the Art Therapy Express Program, Inc., an instructional art education and therapy program that allows children, teenagers, and adults to explore alternative means of communication through the arts (see www.arttherapyexpress.org).