The September-October 2012 issue of Project Bridge includes project updates from the past few months and events that will take place in September, October and November. Please send news and events for the November-December issue to khoffman@udel.edu by October 15.

**PROJECT UPDATES**

- The next session in the CDS Lunchtime Learning series, which focuses on issues addressed by CDS and topics related to disabilities, will be held on Thursday, October 11 from 12 noon to 1p.m at the Center for Disabilities Studies. As part of National Bullying Prevention Month, George Bear, Ph.D. and Debby Boyer, M.S. will present "What School Climate Surveys Tell Us about Bullying, Safety and Student Engagement." The surveys are administered annually across the state by the Center’s Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project (DE-PBS) with the support of the Delaware Department of Education. George and Debby will review results from the 2012 survey, which included questions about student perceptions of bullying at the school-wide level, as well as at the individual level regarding verbal, social, physical and cyberbullying. This workshop is free, but registration is required; contact Katie Hoffman at khoffman@udel.edu and indicate if you need an accommodation. You are welcome to bring a bag lunch. Water and snacks will be provided.

- CDS is pleased to welcome three new graduate assistants. Krista Jensen, a doctoral student in school psychology, and Bishwa Poudel, a doctoral student in special education, are working on the Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) project. First-year school psychology student Katie Hoffman has joined the Dissemination and Advocacy unit. Also please welcome undergraduate student Tara Bogseth, who is working with the Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities (HDWD) project. Returning as graduate assistants are Katie Borras (HDWD), Joshua Donaldson (CLSC), Sarah LeMonte (ACCESS), Dara Lipschutz (ACCESS), Lindsey Mantz (PBS) and Kristin Valle (PBS).

- Second-year CLSC (Career and Life Studies Certificate) student Geoffrey Steggell is one of 11 students in the United States who was awarded a scholarship from the O’Neill Tabani Enrichment Fund of the National Down Syndrome Society. The award is given to students with Down syndrome...
to help cover the cost of postsecondary or enrichment courses. In his application, Geoffrey wrote that during his first year in CLSC he learned that he really likes to do PowerPoint presentations. He did one for one of his classes on health and wellness. He plans to work hard in school so he can achieve his dream of living independently and getting a job. The mission of the National Down Syndrome Society is to be the national advocate for the value, acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome.

- Community Advisory Council (CAC) member Cory Nourie was nominated for the Leonard L. Berry Award for Service Excellence. The award is the highest honor available to a non-physician from Nemours Children’s Hospital. Cory is one of ten finalists from all of the Delaware Valley.

- As part of National Preparedness Month in September the Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities (EPID) project staff members conducted several workshops. Phyllis Guinivan and Gary Mears partnered with Independent Resources, Inc., the Modern Maturity Center, the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) and the Division of Public Health for an Emergency Preparedness Community Workshop on September 6 at the Modern Maturity Center in Dover. Phyllis and Gary also partnered with the New Castle County Office of Emergency Management and the New Castle Police Department for a seminar at New Castle Presbyterian Church on September 9. Participants at both events learned how to personalize emergency preparedness plans based on functional needs. More than 150 individuals attended these events. For more information about EPID, contact Gary Mears at gmears@udel.edu. All individuals are encouraged to assemble an emergency kit and make an emergency plan to share with family members and trusted individuals.

- October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. CDS is sponsoring Delaware’s fourth annual Disability Mentoring Day on October 17. This event is part of a national effort to promote career development for young adults with disabilities through hands-on career exploration, on-site job shadowing and ongoing peer mentoring. The University of Delaware, Newark businesses and CDS will join together to offer young adults with disabilities the opportunity to explore their roles in the workforce and cultivate professional interests. Governor Jack Markell will be the morning keynote speaker at the Courtyard Newark at the University of Delaware before participants begin their job shadowing experiences.

**HIGHLIGHTED PROJECT OF THE MONTH**

**Young Adults Develop Employment Skills in Pre-vocational Services Pilot Program**

- This summer, Swank Employment Services staff members rolled out a pilot pre-vocational services program for young adults who found it difficult to be fully independent in competitive employment positions. The program, funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS), provided intensive supports and services over the summer break to these individuals who could benefit from extended and consistent services.
Participants were offered a variety of experiences as part of the program: internships, an employment curriculum delivered in a classroom environment, vocational and recreational activities, navigation training and self-directed goal setting. The five participants, ages 18-26, attended classes in reading and math, developed skills in areas that lend themselves to job success, and worked together to organize and execute community-based recreational activities. Included as recreational activities were a night of bowling and a trip to the UD pool, where they interacted with each other and with the local community.

Participants and their families were delighted with this new opportunity, in part because it provided a way for them to explore new employment options while increasing their overall independence and the ability to build relationships with their peers. For example, one young man who had previously relied on his mother or others for transportation is now successfully taking public transportation independently. Not only has he learned a critical life skill, but he feels incredibly proud of this accomplishment, particularly because he did not believe he would be able to master this skill.

Over the eight-week session, participants exhibited tremendous growth academically, vocationally and socially. Transition, Education and Employment Model (TEEM) members Wendy Claiser, Deanna Pedicone and Sophie DeMesse spearheaded the design of this new program, which they hope will continue in the future.

For more information about the summer program, contact Wendy Claiser at wclaiser@udel.edu.

RESOURCES

- **October is Disability History and Awareness Month** in Delaware. The purpose is to encourage schools to include information in their lessons and sponsor activities to promote the accomplishments of individuals with disabilities throughout history. The hope is that this will increase awareness and the acceptance of students with various disabilities. The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) includes resource materials on its website for teachers.

- **Bring the Vote Home** helps homebound individuals, senior citizens and people with disabilities maintain the ability to vote. Bring the Vote Home’s interactive website enables users to locate their state of residence and discover how to register to vote and request an absentee ballot in time for the upcoming presidential elections. For more information, contact the organization directly at help@bringthevotehome.org.

- The **Vanderbilt Kennedy Center** is looking for families to complete a short survey about adolescent siblings as part of its investigation about how having a brother or sister impacts adolescents. Participating families must have two children between the ages of 12 and 18. Families with and without children with disabilities are welcome to participate. The study should take less than 20 minutes to complete and all participants will be entered into a drawing for prizes. The survey will be available through November. More information, as well as the survey itself, is available on the
Grace Lutheran Church in Hockessin is a Rejoicing Spirits Congregation. **Rejoicing Spirits** is an innovative ministry that reaches out to enrich the spiritual lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, friends and other supportive community members. The worship service is adapted to be more welcoming to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Upcoming Rejoicing Spirits worship services will be held on October 13, November 10 and December 8 at 4 p.m. Visit the **church's website** for more information.

**EVENTS**

Also visit the CDS website calendar at [http://www.udel.edu/cds/index_calendar.html](http://www.udel.edu/cds/index_calendar.html).

- **October 5. Delaware Educator Fall Symposium**, Dover Downs Hotel and Conference Center, 8 a.m.–4 p.m. “Shifting Perspectives: A New View on Accessing the General Education Curriculum for Students with Intellectual Disabilities” is a symposium for teachers, administrators, speech-language pathologists and other professionals who work with students with significant disabilities. It is hosted by the **ACCESS** (Adapting Curriculum and Classroom Environments for Student Success) project at CDS.
  - An afternoon panel discussion will include CDS Director **Beth Mineo** and **Mary Ann Mieczkowski**, Delaware Department of Education, and other administrators discussing the impact of these issues on our schools in Delaware.
  - Register for $25 (includes lunch), on the **ACCESS website**. The deadline is October 1.

- **October 5. Professional Development Seminar for Individuals with Significant Disabilities**, Easter Seals, 61 Corporate Circle, New Castle, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. This seminar will feature presentations on a variety of topics, including classroom management, social skills and assistive technology. CDS staff members **Christine Barthold** and **Brian Freedman** are among the presenters. For more information or to register online, visit the event **website**.

- **October 6. Boardwalk Buddy Walk**, Rehoboth Beach Boardwalk, 9 a.m. The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) is hosting this annual event, and all of the net proceeds will be donated to provide social, educational, and occupational opportunities to people with Down syndrome. For more information the walk and other events during the weekend, or to pre-register, visit the event **website**.

- **October 8. Division of Developmental Disability Services New Castle County Day Service Provider Fair**, 2540 Wrangle Hill Road, 2nd Floor, Bear, 1–4 p.m. and 5–8 p.m. DDDS, DVR and the New Castle program's **website**. Please pass this information along to other families who would qualify and might be interested.
County Day Service Providers are offering a day of learning, connecting and advocating. Sessions on Early Start to Supported Employment, benefits counseling and guardianship will be available. TEEM staff members will present information about services to families interested in learning more about employment services.

- **October 9. Delawareans with Special Health Needs: Medicaid Managed Care Panel**, Call in at 11 a.m. Click [here](#) for more information.

- **October 11. Lunchtime Learning**, Center for Disabilities Studies, 461 Wyoming Road, Newark, 12 noon–1 p.m. "What School Climate Surveys Tell Us about Bullying, Safety and Student Engagement" will be presented by George Bear, Ph.D. and Debby Boyer, M.S. See Project Updates or [CDS website calendar item](#) for more information.

- **October 17. Accessible Voting Machine Demonstration**, Division for the Visually Impaired, Biggs Building, 1901 N. Dupont Highway, New Castle, 9:30 a.m. Learn how to use accessibility features on Delaware voting machines. Audio technology enables persons who are blind or visually impaired to vote independently. Contact Alice Johnson at 302-255-9818 if you have any questions.

- **November 7. Exploring the V™ and Vmax™**, Georgetown Professional Park, 20123 Office Circle Conference Room, Georgetown, 1–4 p.m. If you have a new V™ or Vmax™, or will be getting one soon, join us as we explore tools and resources you can use to quickly and confidently launch your communication journey. This session is designed to save users time and effort through provision of the best vocabulary and strategies for the V™ or Vmax™ user. The [Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI)](#) is hosting this event. Visit the DATI [website](#) for more information or register with marychristine.rindaldi@dynavoxtech.com.

- **November 15. InterAACt: Empowering Communication**, Center for Disabilities Studies, 461 Wyoming Road, Newark, 10 –11:30 a.m. Learn how augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) can help individuals participate in successful day-to-day conversations. [DATI](#) is hosting this event. Visit the DATI [website](#) or register with marychristine.rindaldi@dynavoxtech.com.

- **November 15. Exploring the V™ and Vmax™**, Center for Disabilities Studies, 461 Wyoming Road, Newark, 1–4:00 p.m. Please see November 7 event of the same name for detailed description and registration information, or visit the DATI [website](#).

- **November 29. InterAACt: Empowering Communication**, 100 Enterprise Place, Suite One, Easter Seals Conference Room, Dover, 10 –11:30 a.m. Please see the November 15 event of the same name for detailed description and registration information, or visit the DATI [website](#).

- **November 29. Exploring the V™ and Vmax™**, 100 Enterprise Place, Suite One, Easter Seals Conference Room, Dover, 12:30 –3 p.m. Please see November 7 event of the same name for detailed description and registration information, or visit the DATI [website](#).
- **November 29. DynaVox Fun Stuff: Photos, MP3, Videos, etc.**, 100 Enterprise Place, Suite One, Easter Seals Conference Room, Dover, 3–4 p.m. Learn how to use DynaVox products for media storage purposes. Visit the event [website](#) for more information or register with marychristine.rindaldi@dynavoxtech.com.

- **Save the dates** for these annual conferences:
  - **January 17, 2013.** LIFE Conference
  - **March 14, 2013.** Inclusion Conference
  - **April 15–16, 2012.** Transition Conference

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### ADVOCACY CORNER

This section is dedicated to informing you about advocacy efforts and new or pending legislation or policies that relate to individuals with disabilities. If you would like to suggest information to share in upcoming editions of Project Bridge, contact khoffman@udel.edu.

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### CONTACT US

The University of Delaware’s Center for Disabilities Studies is located at 461 Wyoming Road, Newark, Delaware, 19716. Please call us at 302-831-6974 or 302-831-4689 (TDD), send an email to ud-cds@udel.edu or visit our website at [www.udel.edu/cds](http://www.udel.edu/cds).

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