PROJECT BRIDGE

AUGUST 2013

Project Bridge is a periodic newsletter for the Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS). This issue includes project updates from the past few months and events that will take place in August, September and early October.

Please send news and events for the September issue to vinclark@udel.edu by August 9.

CDS IN THE NEWS

Delaware’s strategic plan for autism unveiled

On July 15, Delaware’s strategic plan for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) was unveiled to over 70 people, among them professionals, educators, legislators and family members. CDS program coordinator Annalisa Ekbladh and Jerry Petroff, associate director of the College of New Jersey’s Center for Autism, discussed the hands-on and collaborative approach, as well as plans for implementing the strategic plan. For more information, read the UDaily article “A better future.”

Junior Partners in Policymaking® helps youth find their voice

About 20 young adults (ages 15-22) participated in Junior Partners from June 16-21 to learn about getting involved in disability advocacy at the local, state and national levels. The one-week camp included a visit to Legislative Hall in Dover and presentations from past participants in the program. Visit the UDaily article “Finding their voice” for further coverage on this program.

Brian Freedman lends expertise in Psychology Today

Brian Freedman weighs in on the issue of divorce among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the article “Love in the Time of Autism.” For the full article, visit the Psychology Today website.
Autism Delaware scholarships awarded to disabilities studies minors

Disabilities Studies minors Thea Byrne, Ashley Green and Elizabeth McCabe each received Autism Delaware’s Daniel and Lois Gray Memorial Scholarship for supporting the autism community. Elizabeth has also been a mentor for the Center. Read the UDaily article “Scholarships awarded” to learn more about their efforts to help the autism community.

Ilka Riddle named director of the University of Cincinnati’s UCEDD

This June, Ilka Riddle was named director of the University of Cincinnati’s University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). Riddle is a University of Delaware (UD) alumna and former unit director of the Center’s Health and Wellness Unit. There are 67 UCEDDs across the country, including CDS. Additional information can be found at the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) website.

PROJECT UPDATES

Summertime research for staff and students

- **Wendy Claiser**, program supervisor for Swank Employment Services and program coordinator in the Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program, received a master of education in exception children and youth this past spring. Her master’s thesis, *Understanding Parent Roles of Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities During Postsecondary Transition*, was finalized and approved this summer.

- **Brian Freedman**, unit director of the Transition, Education and Employment Model (TEEM) Unit, co-authored an article for the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* about the development of a new tool for measuring change in core ASD symptoms. For more information, visit the electronic version of the article.

- Although most students go home for the summer, disabilities studies minors Rachel Gettinger and Seth Logan stayed at UD to contribute to ongoing program development for CLSC. In order to get a better perspective, both students have been involved in several CLSC activities over the summer, including new student orientation.

  - Rachel is working as a Service Learning Scholar to explore on-campus residential options for students with intellectual disabilities.
  - As a Summer Research Fellow, Seth is investigating the design of academic tutoring at the postsecondary level for students with intellectual disabilities.

CLSC program welcomes new students

On July 11, the CLSC program held new student orientation. The incoming students, parents and other guests learned about the CLSC program and its guiding philosophy. The incoming class has seven students, including one from Pennsylvania. **Matt Kuliszewski**, a recent CLSC graduate, spoke to the audience about his time at CLSC and offered tips to the students about...
how to make the most of their experience. UD undergraduates and an incoming doctoral student, Sara Shaw, offered campus tours to the students and family members.

Community Connectors members make the most of summer

Community Connectors is a program for adults with disabilities who want to build leadership skills through social, fundraising and service events. A person-centered approach is used to support members in fully participating in their communities.

Among their activities this summer, they attended a Blue Rocks game at Frawley Stadium on July 27. In addition to enjoying America’s favorite pastime, members celebrated the “King of Rock and Roll” by sharing Elvis Presley trivia throughout the game. The next event is scheduled for August 25, when the Community Connectors will provide breakfast for the Ronald McDonald House, a home for families of children who are seriously or chronically ill or injured.

If you are interested in becoming involved with Community Connectors, contact Debbie Bain at dbain@udel.edu or 302-831-7552.

STAFF UPDATES

Presentations

- In July, Karen Zalewski presented for the Birth to Three Interagency Coordinating Council and WIC (Women, Infants and Children) nutritionists and health promoters across the state. In both presentations, she discussed text4baby, Family SHADE and the public awareness campaign for developmental screening.

- Beth Mineo was a panelist in a session titled “Access to Educational Materials: State Leaders Speak Out” at the IDEA Leadership Conference in Washington, DC in late July.

- In July, Suzanne Milbourne presented at a Family SHADE membership meeting about making a difference in the lives of young children through the use of assistive technology. More importantly, the Family SHADE members shared ideas about collecting information from families in Delaware. Through the “Families Knows Best” survey system, Suzanne plans to collect ideas on how/what needs to be changed so that all children in Delaware have access to the assistive technology they need.

Arrivals and Departures

- This summer, UD undergraduate student Tatiana Burgess is working with the ACCESS project, adapting books for students with significant intellectual disabilities.
Graduate students **Marisa Kofke** and **Sara Shaw** recently joined the Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program as coaches for Life Studies and Career Studies, respectively.

**Marvin Williams** has been an assistive technology (AT) specialist at the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI) and CDS for nearly 11 years. He accepted a position as the AT coordinator for California State University, Fresno, where he will help students find the AT they need to succeed in the classroom and assist in improving the overall accessibility of the campus. We wish Marvin the best of luck in this new endeavor.

**EVENTS**

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

**August 7**

**Supporting Your Child’s Social Self-Esteem**, Center for Disabilities Studies – Room 132, Newark, 6–8 p.m. The Delaware Positive Behavior Support (DE-PBS) project and Delaware Department of Education are sponsoring a workshop for parents and caregivers, as well as educators if there is space. The workshop presenter Jill Kuzma, a speech-language pathologist who specializes in social/emotional language skills, will cover many topics, such as promoting optimistic thinking, responding to teasing and bullying, and flexibility in social situations. If you are interested in this workshop, contact Sandi Bradford at sandi@udel.edu or 302-831-3355 with your name and email address or phone number.

**August 8**

**Facing the Frontal Lobe: Strategies to Support Executive Function Skills**, Education Technology Building – Room 727, Delaware Technical Community College, Dover, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Jill Kuzma is presenting a workshop for educators called “Strategies to Support Executive Function Skills in Students with Planning, Organization, Emotional Control, Working Memory and Attention Needs.” Registration is officially closed, but email Sandi Bradford at sandi@udel.edu if you are interested in attending.

**Community Garden Fair**, Delaware Health and Social Services’ Herman Holloway campus, New Castle, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. The Department of Agriculture and Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) are hosting a garden fair to raise funds to support the Planting Hope in Delaware initiative. The fair will promote healthy foods and teach fair attendees how to create simple home gardens, and is catered to people with disabilities and others served by DHSS. For more information, visit the [Garden Fair website](http://www.udel.edu/cds/index_calendar.html).
September 12

**Delaware’s Annual Direct Support Professionals Day**, Executive Banquet and Conference Center, Newark. 11 a.m.–2 p.m. This event is designed to promote the valued role direct support professionals (DSPs) play in supporting people with disabilities, as well as to provide them with networking opportunities. As part of the event, four DSPs in Delaware will be honored for their outstanding service. Further information will be available on the [Delaware Association of Rehabilitation Facilities website](#) closer to the event.

September 21

**7th Annual Family Emergency Preparedness Day**, Delaware Agriculture Museum and Village, Dover, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. This event is free to the public and features numerous exhibits, interactive demonstrations and free food. For more information, visit the [Delaware Citizen Corps website](#).

October 4

**2nd Annual Delaware Educator Fall Symposium**, Dover Downs Conference Center, Dover. The Center’s ACCESS project is once again hosting the Delaware Educator Fall Symposium. The theme of the conference is “Gaining Momentum: Moving from Perceptions to Practice,” and the [ACCESS website](#) will have more information closer to the event.

RESOURCES

**Family SHADE releases mobile app**

Family SHADE recently released a mobile app for Android and Apple products. This app allows users to quickly and easily search the Family SHADE database on a mobile or tablet device. The app is free in the Google Play and iTunes App Stores.

**EARN launches a new website**

The Employer Assistance & Resource Network (EARN) launched a more usable and accessible website earlier this year. The [EARN website](#) includes webinars on disability and diversity in employment, and features a monthly newsletter and weekly news blasts with disability employment statistics, best practices, special events and updates.
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 vlnclark@udel.edu.

Applications open for Partners in Policymaking

The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) is accepting applications through December 19 for the 2014 Partners in Policymaking (PIP) class. PIP is an innovative leadership training program for adults with disabilities and parents of young children with developmental disabilities. Classes will be offered on the following weekends:

- February 14–15
- March 14–15
- April 11–12
- May 16–17
- June 13–14
- July 25–26
- August 22–23
- September 12–13

Visit the Partners in Policymaking website for additional information or to complete the application online.

Legislation to improve Medicaid and Medicare for people with disabilities

- **Senate Bill 56** expands preventive and urgent dental care to all eligible Medicaid recipients. It becomes effective upon appropriation of funds by the General Assembly.

- **Senate Bill 42** ensures that individuals who are eligible for the federal Medicare program due to disability are able to purchase the same Medicare supplement policies available to those eligible due to age. This bill is awaiting the governor’s signature.

If you have any information you would like shared with legislators or questions about the legislative process, please contact Jamie Wolfe at jlw@udel.edu.

Gov. Markell honored for Employment First Initiative

On July 11, Governor Jack Markell was given the Champions of Equal Opportunities Award by the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) for leading the National Governor’s Association Employment First Initiative. Present at the event were former CDS employee Terri Hancharick and her daughter Brigitte, and Pat Maichle, Director of the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council and a member of CDS’ Community Advisory Council.

Flash mob at Legislative Hall offers a “moving” tribute to legislators

Diann Jones, chairman of the Developmental Disabilities Council for Delaware, organized a flash mob at Legislative Hall on June 27 to thank legislators for supporting disability issues. Watch the flash mob in action or read about the flash mob in the *Dover Post*. 