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

Some changes have been made to the format and layout of Project Bridge to increase its accessibility for all readers.

**PROJECT UPDATES**

**DE-PBS compiles and reports school climate data**

The Delaware School Climate Survey, which was developed by Delaware Positive Behavior Support (DE-PBS) project staff, includes student, teacher/staff and home surveys. The surveys are offered to public and charter schools statewide. The 165 schools participating this year represent 70% of eligible schools. More than 40,000 students across the state completed a student survey—the largest number in the project’s history. Results from each school’s surveys are compiled and reported to school administrators to provide information on student, teacher and family perceptions of school climate.

For more information on the Delaware School Climate Survey, visit the [DE-PBS project website](#).

**Autism strategic planning report to be released in July**

A report on the work that has been done to create a comprehensive plan for improving Delaware’s services for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) will be published in July. This effort has been led by Annalisa Ekbladh, CDS program coordinator for the Autism Planning Initiative. CDS is providing leadership on the two-year planning grant for this project, which was funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. The expected long-term outcome of the strategic plan is that all Delawareans with ASD have the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to live independent and interdependent lives within the community.
For more information about the state autism plan or planning process, contact Annalisa Ekbladh at annalisa@udel.edu. Reports on focus group sessions and the needs assessment are available on the CDS website.

Junior Partners in Policymaking® Program to take place in June

This year’s Junior Partners in Policymaking (Jr. Partners) will take place June 16 through June 21. This program, which has been offered every other year since 2005, was created by the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDDC) and is funded by DDDC, the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, the Delaware Department of Education and the Delaware General Assembly.

Jr. Partners is again being directed by Megan Pell, a research associate at CDS who also is a special education doctoral candidate at UD. The 2013 program staff includes five current UD students—Alyssa Fiume, Anthony Monaco, Matthew Nesi, Grace Wesley and Catherine Witanowski—and recent UD graduate Amy Smith. They come from a diversity of undergraduate programs, including human services, cognitive sciences and health behavior science, and some have a minor in disabilities studies. They also bring with them a wealth of experience from such UD disability-related programs as Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC), Project Sunshine, Sports Club for You and Autism Speaks UD.

During the week of Jr. Partners, program participants and staff will engage in a variety of discussions about advocacy and other activities related to disabilities and the rights of individuals with disabilities in the local and national communities. The week will conclude with a tour of Legislative Hall in Dover and a discussion with Representative Debra Heffernan (D-Brandywine Hundred), during which our participants will have a chance to practice the advocacy skills they learned at Jr. Partners.

Updates from Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities

- Through funding from the Delaware Division of Public Health Dental Program, Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities (HDWD) will hold a program this summer to teach family caregivers and direct support professionals about oral hygiene for individuals with disabilities. There will be five, half-day training sessions held across the state. There is no fee for this training, but pre-registration is required. To receive registration materials or more information about meeting locations, please contact Kara Magane at kmagane@udel.edu or 302-831-0140.
  - June 20, 4 to 9 p.m. at Clayton Hall, 100 David Hollowell Drive, Newark
  - June 21, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Delaware Technical and Community College, Stanton Campus, 400 Stanton-Christiana Road, Newark
  - June 25, 4 to 9 p.m., Delaware and Technical Community College, Terry Campus, 100 Campus Drive, Dover
  - June 27, 4 to 9 p.m., Delaware and Technical Community College, Owens Campus, 18800 Seashore Highway, Georgetown
  - June 28, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Milford Library, 11 S.E. Front Street, Milford
HDWD is completing a statewide needs assessment to gather information about the health status and issues of access for people with disabilities in Delaware. The needs assessment included multiple opportunities—including interviews, community meetings and an online survey—for individuals and family members to share their experiences with access to health care. The project also is conducting assessments of health care facilities, an inventory of state-based health promotion programs and a review of existing data reports. The findings from this needs assessment will be used to create the first state profile of the current health status of Delawareans with disabilities. The three-year project will generate a strategic plan to address health disparities and to improve the health of individuals with disabilities in Delaware. This project is being conducted in collaboration with the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services and is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For more information about Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities, visit the HDWD website or contact Eileen Sparling at sparling@udel.edu or 302-831-8802.

Updates from Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities

- Research Associate Gary Mears has been invited to conduct a series of in-service training workshops for nurses about emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities at the Governor Bacon Health Center in Delaware City. Nurses are awarded continuing education units (CEUs) for this training. The next workshop is scheduled for July 23.

- EPID Project Director Phyllis Guinivan and Gary Mears participated in a full-scale disaster exercise at the New Castle County Airport on April 27 where they played the role of plane crash victims (including the application of Hollywood-style disaster make-up). They also provided feedback to emergency managers about the performance of the first responders who came to their aid during the exercise.

STAFF UPDATES

Presentations

- CDS Director Beth Mineo participated in a panel presentation titled Accessible Instructional Materials—What is New with AIM? at the 2013 Assistive Technology Act Entities Directors Meeting in Bethesda, Md. in May.

- Members of the Delaware Positive Behavior Support program (DE-PBS) attended the 2013 Northeast Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Network Leadership Forum in in Cromwell, Conn. Linda Smith (Delaware Department of Education), George Bear (UD School of Education), Debby Boyer, Sarah Hearn and Megan Pell (CDS) shared two oral presentations: School Climate and Bullying and Tell Me More: Utilizing Student Focus Groups to Further a Community’s School Climate Dialogues; and two poster presentations: DE-PBS Key Features Evaluation: Matching Philosophy and Measurement and Student Leadership at the Secondary Level in DE-PBS.

- Eileen Sparling, Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities project manager, presented two posters at Health Disparities at the Intersection of Race, Ethnicity, and Disability: A National Conference in April in Washington, D.C. Eileen presented with UD Assistant Professor Mia Papas and Michelle Axe, a UD health sciences graduate student. The posters were titled Disparities in Cervical Cancer Screening Rates by Race and Ethnicity and Disability Status.
in Delaware and Race/Ethnic Disparities in Oral Health Care Utilization are More Common Among Individuals with Disabilities Compared to Those without Disabilities in Delaware.

- Project Coordinator Annalisa Ekbladh presented at the Combating Autism Act Initiative National Conference in Washington, D.C. in May. She joined Jerry Petroff, Associate Director of the Center for Autism at the College of New Jersey, in a session called Blueprint for Collective Action: Delaware’s Strategic Plan to Improve Services for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

- Chris Barthold presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Behavioral Analysis International in Minneapolis, Minn. She shared the session, The ABCs of Behavior Analysis: A Review of the Basics for Students and Teachers, with Charles Catania, professor emeritus at the University of Maryland.

**Honors**

- At the Spring CDS staff meeting, five staff members were honored for “milestone” years of service: Teresita Cuevas, 15 years; Sandi Bradford and Judi MacBride, 10 years; and Terri Hancharick and Michele Sands for five years.

- Brian Freedman, director of the Transition, Education and Employment Model (TEEM) unit, was accepted for the 2013 University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) Leadership Development Institute. This is a special session of the week-long intensive executive development program for UCEDD staff members who, in the opinion of UCEDD leadership, demonstrate both potential and willingness to assume senior leadership roles in the UCEDD network. The institute, which is a program of the University of Delaware, will take place in June at UD. Former CDS staff member Ilka Riddle, now associate director of the UCEDD in Cincinnati, also will participate.

- 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 exceptional children and youth at the May 24 College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) convocation. She wrote her master’s thesis on Understanding Parent Roles of Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities during Postsecondary Transition. Graduate assistant Katie Hoffman received a master of arts in school psychology and graduate assistants Katie Borras and Josh Donaldson each received a master of science in human development and family studies at the CEHD convocation. Graduate assistant Lindsey Mantz recently was accepted into the doctorate program in school psychology. Katie Hoffman and Lindsey will continue as graduate assistants at CDS for the 2013-2014 academic year. Congratulations to Wendy, Josh, both Katies and Lindsey!

**Arrivals and Departures**

- UD graduate student Matt Wattenmaker recently joined the Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program as a coach.

- The following staff members are concluding their time with the Center for Disabilities Studies. The Center appreciates their efforts on behalf of people with disabilities and wishes them well.
Chelsea Claiser has been a coach with the Transition, Education and Employment Model (TEEM) unit for close to four years. She will pursue opportunities in the theater, with her first role scheduled for June in “Death on the 16th Fairway” at the Media Theatre. See the theatre website for information.

Terri Hancharick’s work as a research associate in the Health and Wellness unit for five years has included coordinating the Healthy Transitions program. She will continue her advocacy and volunteer work on behalf of people with disabilities and spend more time with her daughter.

Michele Sands has been director of the Dissemination and Advocacy unit for most of the five years she’s worked at CDS. After her retirement at the end of June, she looks forward to spending more time with her family, particularly her two grandchildren.

After two years as graduate assistants at the Center, Sarah Lemonte, Dara Lipschutz and Kristin Valle will spend the final year of their school psychology program as interns in Delaware school districts.

Throughout the 2012-2013 academic year, many UD undergraduates conducted research with staff members, served as interns or worked on projects at the Center. Best wishes to the undergraduates who have completed their experiences with CDS and received bachelor’s degrees in May.

HIGHLIGHTED PROJECT OF THE MONTH

Career and Life Studies Certificate students graduate from UD

The first cohort of Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) students graduated at the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) convocation ceremony on May 24 after completing the two-year program. This non-residential UD program provides students with intellectual disabilities with skills needed to become more independent in employment or education settings and in their daily lives.
CDS staff members Brian Freedman, Laura Eisenman and Debbie Bain joined CEHD Dean Lynn Okagaki in awarding CLSC students their certificates and congratulating them on this major accomplishment. Each student graduated with a UD Certificate in Career and Life Studies. They were featured in articles in UDaily and the Newark Post.

This class, whose members enrolled in summer 2011, is the first to graduate from the program. CLSC was established after CDS was awarded a Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grant in 2010.

In Year 1, CLSC students learn how to be college students, while in Year 2, students focus on “what’s next” after CLSC. Throughout their coursework, students learn about goal setting and self-advocacy. Students intern in a field of their choice as part of the Year 2 experience. Additionally, CLSC students have the opportunity to be matched with a mentor, a UD student who is enrolled in a mentoring course through the university. CLSC student Matt Kuliszewski reflected that his mentor “helped me learn how to work with people.”

This year, a group of CLSC students, called the Classic Composers, joined together with several coaches to publish the second issue of the CLSC Gazette. As the introduction to the issue states, it was written “by students, and for students and other young adults with disabilities.” The Classic Composers describe the writing process for the Gazette as “a big challenge,” but one that “lets others see just what a group of motivated students can do with the right supports.” The Gazette is available on the CDS website.

As the class of 2013 moves on to pursue new endeavors, another cohort of students will soon enter the program. The class of 2015 has seven students who will attend an orientation in June and a one-week summer session in August prior to beginning the fall semester. They will join the second-year students (class of 2014) in the CLSC program.

For more information on CLSC, visit the CDS website or contact Mary Thomas at clsc-info@udel.edu or 302-831-2940.

EVENTS

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

June 4

Easter Seals Caregiver Education, Easter Seals Conference Center, 61 Corporate Circle, New Castle, 6 to 8 p.m. Barry Fabius, long-term care medical director at United Health Care, will share facts and tips on caregiving in this interactive session. Registration information is available on the Easter Seals website. Contact Joyce Medkeff with questions at jmedkeff@esdel.org or 302-221-2076.

June 7–8

Special Olympics Delaware Summer Games, University of Delaware. In this annual event, athletes and unified partners compete in six sports—aquatics, bocce, powerlifting, softball, tennis, and track and field—over two days. The Opening Ceremony will take place at 7 p.m. on June 7 at the Bob Carpenter Center. Admission is free and open to the public. For a complete schedule of events, visit the Special Olympics Delaware website.
June 7–July 25

**Art Show: Geraldo “The King of Transit” Gonzalez**, The Creative Vision Factory Art Studio, 617 North Shipley Street, Wilmington. Geraldo created the artwork that is on the cover of the CDS 2011-2012 Annual Report/2013 Calendar. Artwork by Ken Segal will also be featured at the art show, which begins with an Art Loop reception on June 7 from 6 to 9 p.m. and also will be part of the Art Loop on July 5. Their work will be on display Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through July 25. For more information, visit [Geraldo’s website](mailto:gtransit2009@hotmail.com) or contact him at gtransit2009@hotmail.com.

June 13

**Children’s Charity Art Auction**, 6 p.m., MOT Charter School, 1156 Levels Road, Middletown. Artists include children from the Down Syndrome Association of Delaware, the Boys and Girls Christian Home in India, Art Studio 4:10, the Delaware community and friends of Easter Seals Delaware. Proceeds from this silent auction will benefit Kay’s Kamp (oncology camp for kids) and the Boys and Girls Christian Home in India. The auction has been organized by Jen Easterday of [Art Studio 4:10](mailto:artstudio410@gmail.com), whose students contributed some of the artwork for the CDS 2011-2012 Annual Report/2013 Calendar. R.S.V.P. to Jen at artstudio410@gmail.com.

June 22

**58th Annual Blue-Gold All Star Game**, University of Delaware Stadium. Parking opens at 2 p.m.; children’s pre-game activities begin at 3; the pre-game celebration begins at 6; and kickoff is set for 7. Delaware Foundation Reaching Citizens (DFRC) sponsors this annual football game, which showcases high school students who participate as football players, cheerleaders, band members and school ambassadors. Throughout the year, these students raise awareness and understanding in their schools about people with intellectual disabilities. Visit the [DFRC Blue-Gold website](http://www.bluegoldgame.com) for information and tickets.

July 29–August 2

**42nd Annual Summer Institute on Substance Abuse & Mental Health**, Embassy Suites, Newark, DE. With the theme, “Addressing Trauma Across the Lifespan,” the conference will feature a keynote address by [Terri Pease](http://www.nationalcenteron.domesticviolence.org), an educator, clinician and consultant with the National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma and Mental Health. Additional information, including registration details, can be found on the [event website](http://www.eventbrite.com).
Restraint and Seclusion: Hear Our Voices film is available online

Dan Habib, filmmaker at the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire, recently released his latest film, Restraint and Seclusion: Hear Our Voices (working title). The 28-minute film is available for downloading at no charge from the “Stop Hurting Kids” campaign website. It includes testimony from students about their experiences in public schools with restraint and seclusion and the devastating emotional and physical injuries they suffered as a result. Parents also speak about the effects of their children’s experiences on them.

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.

Legislative Updates

Throughout the current legislative session, CDS Disabilities Specialist Jamie Wolfe has been meeting with newly elected state legislators. The purpose of the meetings is to educate the legislators on various disability issues that are prominent in Delaware as well as to inform them about the role CDS can play when developing legislation. Senators and representatives have been very interested in several issues, including dental coverage for adults who are receiving Medicaid, fair housing issues, and health care for the disability community. Jamie plans to speak with more of the “legislative freshmen” during June, the final month of this session. If you have any information you would like shared with legislators or questions about the process, please contact Jamie at jlw@udel.edu.

Keeping All Students Safe Act

Representative George Miller (D-CA), ranking minority member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, recently introduced the Keeping All Students Safe Act (H.R. 1893). The act would set federal protections to regulate the use of seclusion and restraint in schools. Currently, no federal laws exist to regulate the use of these interventions in schools, and many states have no laws in place to govern their use. The National Disability Rights Network and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently reported that children have suffered injury, trauma and even death as a result of being secluded or restrained by school personnel. These interventions often are used as punishment for behaviors that do not pose a threat of harm, and often are used as a replacement for positive behavioral interventions. The Keeping All Students Safe Act would prohibit the use of seclusion and the most dangerous types of restraint; require parental notification when restraint is used; and require training and certification of school personnel who implement physical restraint. Its focus on preventive techniques and positive behavioral interventions will help school personnel understand the needs of their students and address the source of challenging behaviors before they become dangerous. Visit the Association of University Centers on Disabilities website for more information about this act.
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. You’ll also find CDS on Facebook at www.facebook.com/UDelCDS.

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Core funding for the Center for Disabilities Studies originates from Grant #90DD0688/01 from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD), which is part of the Administration for Community Living, a branch within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HSS).