Project Bridge

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2013

Project Bridge is the periodic newsletter of the Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) within the University of Delaware’s College of Education and Human Development. This issue includes project updates from the past few months and events that will take place in November and December.

Please send news and events for the next issue to Victoria Clark at vinclark@udel.edu by Dec. 13.

CDS IN THE NEWS

The Center’s 20th anniversary extravaganza

October 2nd was a big day for the Center as we marked our 20th anniversary with a celebration at Clayton Hall. Rita Landgraf, Delaware Health and Social Services secretary, served as the event’s honorary chair and noted CDS’s “pivotal role” in matters of inclusion. Featured speaker Keith Jones, who runs the organization SoulTouchin’ Experiences, spoke of the ongoing need to change attitudes held by many individuals concerning people with disabilities.

The event featured interactive displays, and a timeline marking important milestones for CDS and its state and national partners. It also brought together friends and colleagues. Watch the commemorative anniversary video or read more about the event in the UDaily article, “CDS anniversary celebration.”

Delaware celebrates the fifth anniversary of Disability Mentoring Day

Delaware’s fifth annual Disability Mentoring Day was held on Oct. 16. Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) is a national effort coordinated by the American Association of People with Disabilities.
Sponsored by the Center, DMD promotes career development for students and job-seekers with disabilities through job shadowing and hands-on career exploration. Read the UDaily article, “Disability Mentoring Day,” to find out how CDS celebrated this anniversary.

**Delaware’s strategic plan for autism attracts a larger audience**

The *Blueprint for Collective Action*, Delaware’s strategic plan to improve services and supports for people with autism spectrum disorder, has been featured in the *Cape Gazette* and on *WDEL radio*. The *Blueprint* was unveiled on July 15 and represents a two-year collaboration with a number of organizations, professionals and family members, coordinated by CDS staff member Annalisa Ekbladh.

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**PROJECT UPDATES**

**CLSC Open House and Applications for Fall 2014**

- The Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program, a two-year, non-residential postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities, held an open house on Oct. 23. More than 50 students, family members and professionals attended the event, where current CLSC students, alumni and staff shared information and experiences about the program. CLSC alumni Michael Denny and Andie Downes related how their experiences attending undergraduate classes and participating in internships influenced their goals of employment and additional college coursework following their graduation from the CLSC program.

- Applications for Fall 2014 are now available. For more information, please visit the [CLSC web page](#).

**Artfest fosters more community engagement**

On Sep. 28, the Center’s annual Artfest brought together nearly 100 volunteers, people with disabilities and community members to create artwork for the Center’s 2012-2013 annual report, which will double as a 2014 calendar and is being coordinated by graduate student Katie Hoffman. CDS collaborated with several community organizations to create an inclusive and engaging event for everyone who attended, including *Art Therapy Express*, *Art Studio 4:10*, *Barrel of Makers*, and *Delcastle Cooks and Bakers*. In addition to painting with traditional materials, participants also used adaptive tools and technology to create their masterpieces. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for the annual report, contact Sharon Wiegner at swiegner@udel.edu or 302-831-0350.

**ACCESS hosts Delaware Educator Fall Symposium**

ACCESS (Adapting Curriculum & Classroom Environments for Student Success) hosted the Second Annual Delaware
Educator Fall Symposium, titled “Gaining Momentum: Moving From Perceptions to Practice,” on Oct. 4. More than 200 educators attended this all-day event, representing 14 school districts as well as other agencies. The day’s presentations focused on inclusive practices for educators. Michael Remus, director of special education for the Arizona Department of Education, presented on inclusionary practices and what they should look like for all students. Dr. Bree Jimenez, assistant professor at University of North Carolina at Greensboro, discussed practical strategies on how to include all students—including those with significant intellectual disabilities—in the general education curriculum. Symposium materials from both presentations are available on the ACCESS website.

**Extended Learning Opportunities presents fall workshops**

The Center hosted two workshops as part of its Extended Learning Opportunities initiative. Contact Teresita Cuevas at tmejia@udel.edu for further information about the workshops or Extended Learning Opportunities.

- In partnership with the Delaware Department of Education, the Center provided a You for Youth (Y4Y) training for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grantees on Oct. 9. Y4Y is an extension of the federal 21st CCLC program that provides professional development and technical assistance for 21st CCLCs throughout the nation. The 64 participants learned about the potential of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) topics for enhancing 21st CCLC programs. They also learned how to find local help and resources to support STEM programming and how to coordinate with school-day partners.

- On Oct. 15, CDS hosted a workshop on disabilities for a group of 24 teenagers from Ecuador and Colombia, who were visiting the U.S. for three weeks as part of the Youth Ambassadors program sponsored by Delaware 4-H. The goal of the workshop was twofold: raising awareness of disabilities among the teenagers and helping them develop leadership skills to promote awareness in their own countries. The workshop covered people-first language and the 13 disability categories recognized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and involved the students in several engaging activities.

**National Core Indicators**

CDS is collaborating with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) to conduct the National Core Indicators (NCI) survey, which assessed services provided to individuals with developmental disabilities throughout the state. The surveys will be conducted by UD graduate and undergraduate students and people with developmental disabilities. NCI was developed by the Human Services Research Institute and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services. Currently, 36 states participate in the survey. All survey responses are entered into a national database, which allows states to compare data and establish national benchmarks for services for people with developmental disabilities. For more information, contact Brian Freedman at brianf@udel.edu.

**Needs assessment and training for supported employment agencies**

Chris Barthold and Brian Freedman were awarded funding from the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to create a needs assessment and training to facilitate best practices in working with adults with intellectual disabilities and behavioral challenges. The
needs assessment was developed in consultation with DVR to identify the knowledge, skills and barriers in serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**STAFF UPDATES**

**Staff arrivals and departures**

- The Center warmly welcomes **Victor Schaffner**, the new unit director for Communications & Advocacy. Victor comes to CDS from Florida, where he was vice president for policy and outreach with the FloridaNEXT Foundation, and a senior editorial writer with the Orlando Sentinel. Before that, Victor was editorial page editor of The Ann Arbor News, an editor at The Courier-Journal in Louisville and the editor of Empire State Report magazine in Albany. Victor grew up in Chicago, and says (seriously) that he’s looking forward to some “serious snow” this winter, though he adds his longing and fondness for the season could change after one or two exceedingly slow drives to the office from his home in Pennsylvania. Victor says he’s thrilled to join the CDS team.

- **Steve Smith** joined the ACCESS project as an instructional coach. He is working on W.R.I.T.E.S. (Writing Rigorous IEPs to Educational Standards), which will provide professional development to create and implement standards-based IEP goals. A psychology major at Washington College, Steve received his master’s in special education from Wilmington University and is pursuing a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Delaware.

- **Mallory Johnston** is a senior majoring in exercise science with a concentration in biomechanics and motor control and minoring in disabilities studies. She joined the Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities project in September.

- Many thanks to **Michele Sands**, former unit director of Dissemination & Advocacy, for her leadership with the planning and execution of CDS’s 20th anniversary event.

**Jamie Wolfe appointed chair of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities**

On October 21, the Center’s Disabilities Specialist **Jamie Wolfe** was elected vice chair of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities. Their mission is to unite, in one Council, disability advocates and State agency policy makers to ensure that individuals with disabilities are empowered to become fully integrated within the community.

**Disability Disclosure Conference**

The University of Delaware’s Center for the Study of Diversity (CSD) hosted the Disability Disclosure in/and Higher Education Conference from Oct. 25–27. The Center co-sponsored the conference along with the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council, American Psychological Association and several other sponsors.

**Laura Eisenman** and **Brian Freedman** presented a roundtable titled “Intellectual Disability in the University: Expanding the Conversation about Diversity and Belonging.” In this roundtable, Eisenman and Freedman facilitated conversations about intellectual disability in higher education.
education, student perspectives on belonging in the university community and designing research that illuminates multiple facets of the experience. Several students joined the conversation, including Mary Culnane, doctoral student in urban affairs and public policy; Jillian Fader, UD undergraduate in health sciences with a minor in disabilities studies; and Michael Denny and Matt Kuliszewski, alumni of the CLSC program.

**Autism research highlighted**

Brian Freedman, director of the Center’s Transition, Education and Employment Model (TEEM) unit, is featured in UD’s most recent issue of *Research*. The article, ”Helping families affected by autism to thrive,” describes his research on how autism and related disorders affect relationships for parents and siblings. Freedman was also featured in Autism Brainstorm’s “Guy Talk” on Sunday, Nov. 10. Visit the Autism Brainstorm website for a recording of the Google Hangout session.

**EVENTS**

Also visit the **CDS calendar** for more information about upcoming events.

**Save the date for 2014 conferences**

- **LIFE Conference**: January 16, 8 a.m.–3:45 p.m., Dover Downs Conference Center. For more information, visit [www.lifeconferencecede.org](http://www.lifeconferencecede.org).
- **Inclusion Conference**, March 12, 8 a.m.–4 p.m., Dover downs Conference Center.
- Dates have not been set for the **Transition Conference**. Visit the **CDS website** in December for an update.

**November 14**

**Autism Delaware’s Adult Issues Committee Meeting**, Autism Delaware, 924 Old Harmony Rd., Suite 201, Newark, 6:30–8 p.m. Connie Hughes, executive director of the Delaware Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (DelARF) will discuss vocational, day and residential programs for Delawareans with disabilities, and how state and federal policies may affect them. All family members and interested community members are welcome. RSVPs are requested but not required, and can be made to Teresa Avery at 302-224-6020, ext. 203 or teresa.avery@delautism.org.

**November 16**

**The Better Living with Arthritis Expo**, Lewes Yacht Club, 2701 Cedar Ave., Lewes, 1–5 p.m. In partnership with Beebe Medical Center, the Arthritis Foundation is hosting “The Better Living with Arthritis Expo,” including guest speakers, exhibits, health screenings and more. This event is free to the public and lunch will be provided, but registration is required. For more information or to register, visit the [registration website](#) or call 302-332-0047.

**Dreams Take Flight 5K Run/Walk/Roll and Fall Festival**, Smyrna Municipal Park, North Main St., Smyrna, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. The Krysti Bingham Cerebral Palsy Foundation is hosting a
5K for running, walking and rolling participants, followed by a fall festival complete with vendors, food and fun activities. Register online for the 5K or at 8 a.m. on the day of event. Participants and volunteers will receive complimentary t-shirts, and there will be awards for different categories of winners. All proceeds benefit the Krysti Bingham Cerebral Palsy Foundation. Call Amber Bush at 302-359-8327 with any questions regarding the event.

**November 20**

**Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Autism and Related Disorders (Newark)**, Center for Disabilities Studies, 461 Wyoming Rd., Newark, 6–8 p.m. In partnership with Autism Delaware, CDS and the Delaware Citizen Corps are sponsoring a free workshop for parents, caregivers, service providers, educators, and people with autism and related disorders. This workshop is presented by Dennis Debbaudt, who has authored several books about safety and risk situations for people with autism spectrum disorders. Debbaudt will help identify safety and risk issues, as well as provide strategies to help manage these risks at home, at school and in the community. Space is limited, so online registration is required. If you have any questions, please contact Phyllis Guinivan at pguiniva@udel.edu or 302-831-7464.

**November 21**

**Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Autism and Related Disorders (Dover)**, Delaware State Fire School, 1461 Chestnut Grove Rd., Dover, 1–3 p.m. Please refer to the description above for details about this workshop. Space is limited, so online registration is required. If you have any questions, please contact Phyllis Guinivan at pguiniva@udel.edu or 302-831-7464.

**Future of Your Child with a Disability**, John G. Leach School, 10 Landers Ln., New Castle, 6:30–8:30 p.m. The John G. Leach School PTA is sponsoring an evening for parents of children with cerebral palsy and/or other disabilities to share dreams for their child's future. There will be several presenters from disability organizations and state agencies, and a light dinner and refreshments will be served. RSVP for this event by Nov. 15 by emailing the following information to leverlinghier@comcast.net: parent/guardian name(s), child’s school/district, email address, phone number and number of people attending.

**December 1**

**11th Annual Sea Colony 5K Turkey Trot**, Sea Colony Freeman Fitness Center, 38994 Westway Dr., Bethany Beach, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. Special Olympics Delaware is sponsoring a 5K Turkey Trot for runners or walkers. An award ceremony with refreshments will follow the race at the Freeman Fitness Center. Visit the registration website for more information or contact Tim Bamforth, the race director, at 302-644-8952 or runningandracing@seashorestriders.com.

**December 9 and 12**

**Parent to Parent Workshop**, Delaware Family Voices, 222 Philadelphia Pike, Suite 11, Wilmington, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. (Dec. 9) and 9 a.m.–noon (Dec. 12). Delaware Family Voices is the only organization in Delaware approved by Parent to Parent USA to participate in the national Parent to Parent program. The Parent to Parent Workshop is a two-part training session for parents of children with disabilities to become a Support Parent. Support Parents share their knowledge, experience and support with parents of children with similar disabilities, special health care needs or mental health issues. RSVP by Dec. 2 to Erica Schetter at 877-235-3588.
or p2p@defv.org. A light lunch will be provided, and child care reimbursement is available upon request.

RESOURCES

ChooseHealthDE.org

The Choose Health Delaware website was created to help Delawareans understand health insurance reform and the Health Insurance Marketplace. In addition to comprehensive FAQ and help sections, this website includes a calendar of events with workshops and information sessions for people to learn more about the Affordable Care Act and Health Insurance Marketplace.

Family SHADE Facebook page

Family SHADE has recently launched a Facebook page to keep families of children with disabilities and special health care needs informed about relevant news, events and other useful information.

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.

Proposed changes to Delaware’s paratransit system

The Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC), a division of the Delaware Department of Transportation, proposes two major changes to Paratransit Services that would affect people with disabilities and those who are 65 years or older:

 First, the proposal suggests limiting paratransit services to destinations within 3/4 miles of a fixed bus route as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. For those outside of this limit, DART First State would work with other transportation providers to attempt to secure rides. However, if the transportation provider does not have a bus in the area where you live or want to be dropped off, the reservationist would have the right to negotiate an alternative trip later in the day or even the following week. The only two types of trips that would be prioritized are those for work and medical appointments.

 Second, the current practice of providing transportation to those 65 and over through paratransit would be eliminated unless the person has a verified disability as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

DTC is taking comments until mid-November on the proposal. You can submit a public comment on the proposal or join the conversation on Facebook to share your thoughts on the proposal.
If you have questions about the process or any information you would like shared with legislators, please contact the Center’s disabilities specialist, Jamie Wolfe, at jlw@udel.edu.

Applications open for Partners in Policymaking

The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) is accepting applications through Dec. 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.

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. 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 # 90DD0688-02-00 from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD). AIDD is part of the Administration for Community Living, a branch within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.