PROJECT BRIDGE

JANUARY 2014

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 January.

Please send news and events for the next issue to Katie Hoffman at khoffman@udel.edu by Jan. 20.

CDS IN THE NEWS

The Center’s Community Advisory Council Comments on Proposed Paratransit Changes

Delaware’s paratransit service has proposed numerous changes that will affect people with disabilities who depend on the service for transport to their chosen destinations. An op-ed piece by Bob Valihura, chairperson of the Center’s Community Advisory Council (CAC), was published in the News Journal on December 24. In the article, Bob called for a moratorium on the proposed changes. He also made the suggestion to charge a representative task force with studying Delaware’s paratransit system and making recommendations about how the system can run better while meeting the needs of the people it serves. A digital copy of the piece can be viewed on delawareonline.

PROJECT UPDATES

CDS Annual Report Published as a Calendar

The CDS 2012-2013 Annual Report was published as a calendar in December. The calendar features contributions from 2013 Artfest participants, including the cover illustration (right), which was created using a variety of adaptive art tools including rollers, stampers, footprints and tire tracks.

If you did not receive the calendar or would like additional copies, please contact Katie Hoffman at khoffman@udel.edu. A version of the report is also available for view on the CDS website.
The 2013 Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) Conference was held in Washington, D.C. on Nov. 17-20. With the theme “Promoting Inclusion in an Increasingly Diverse World,” this year’s conference brought together leaders from University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). CDS is one of 67 UCEDDS across America. Many members of CDS staff traveled to the conference, including Center Director Beth Mineo.

- Brian Freedman, director of the Transition, Education and Employment Model (TEEM) unit, presented “Engaging Families of Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Postsecondary Education.” During the presentation, Brian shared information about ways in which CDS engages with the families of Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) students.

- Annalisa Ekbladh, CDS program coordinator for the Autism Planning Initiative, was a co-presenter of a session titled “Including Stakeholders in Statewide Autism Planning: Lessons learned in Delaware, Tennessee and Georgia.” Annalisa described ways in which Delaware stakeholders were included in the creation of a strategic plan to improve services for individuals with autism in Delaware. Annalisa was also a co-presenter during a session titled “Training and Advocacy for Latinos with Disabilities and their Families.”

- Eileen Sparling, Project Coordinator for Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities, was a panelist at a presentation titled “Low Cost/No Cost Solutions for Health Activities in your UCEDD.” The presentation provided an overview of health status and health needs of individuals with disabilities. And it highlighted various low cost/no cost strategies that UCEDDs can use to increase awareness about health needs of individuals with disabilities and impact policies that will increase access to health care and healthy lifestyles.

- Former CDS graduate assistant Katie Borras was a panelist during a presentation titled “Supporting the Social Lives of Adolescents with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities.” The panel focused on evidence-based approaches for improving the social competence and connections of youth with disabilities. Katie presented research that she completed while earning her Masters of Science degree through UD’s College of Human Development and Family Studies.

- Delaware Positive Behavior Support (DE-PBS) project members Debby Boyer, Sarah Hearn and Lindsey Mantz presented information about the importance of examining the victimization of students with disabilities. Their poster, “Differences in Bullying Victimization Between Students With and Without Disabilities,” examined reported differences in the prevalence of bullying in students with disabilities and those without in the Delaware School Climate Survey (DSCS).

- The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) and the Center for Disabilities Studies co-sponsored a poster presentation about the Junior Partners in Policymaking youth advocacy program. The poster, “My Life Changed After Junior Partners in Policymaking: Personal Perspectives From Graduates of Youth Disability Advocacy,” was accepted through AUCD’s peer review process as one of three advocacy posters at the annual meeting. The poster outlined major components of the Junior Partners in
Policymaking program, general information regarding youth participants in the program and post-program activities of program graduates. CDS’s Megan Pell and Brian Freedman co-presented the poster with Junior Partners in Policymaking graduates Andrew Netta (’11) and Lael Houston (’11). During the poster presentation, Andrew and Lael shared their exciting post-program disability advocacy work, which included speaking engagements at national disability advocacy events. They both attributed their interest in disability-related issues to their participation in the Junior Partners in Policymaking program.

ACCESS presents at TASH Conference

CDS staff member Judi MacBride represented the Adapting Curriculum and Classroom Environments for Student Success (ACCESS) Project at the 2013 TASH conference in Chicago, IL. TASH is an international leader in disability advocacy, focusing on equity, opportunity and inclusion for people with disabilities. Judi’s session, “Empowering Parents: Gaining Access to the General Education Curriculum,” was included as part of a number of presentations on inclusive education. The session shared information about the parent opportunities that ACCESS provides related to Common Core Standards and Grade Band Extensions, and how they are impacting parent involvement in the state of Delaware.

Domestic Violence Prevention and Response Needs Assessment / First State Equal Access to Safety Project

Individuals with disabilities are disproportionately represented in the population of those who have been victims of crime. The Domestic Violence Prevention project, coordinated by CDS’ Jane Donovan, focuses on access to services for people at the intersection of domestic violence, disability and/or mental illness. The project is currently exploring the responsiveness of systems in Delaware to effectively meet needs. CDS partners with the National Alliance on Mental Illness Delaware (NAMI Delaware) and the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCADV), with funding from the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice.

The first phase of the work resulted in the development of the Needs Assessment Report, which informed the development of the First State Equal Access to Safety Strategic Plan. As the project enters the implementation phase, partners will continue to build their capacity to provide technical assistance to agencies providing services to people with disabilities and/or mental illness who are victims of intimate partner violence.

For more information on this project, contact Jane at janedono@udel.edu.

CLSC Applications for Fall 2014

CDS’ Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program, a two-year, non-residential postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities, is accepting applications for students interested in enrolling for Fall 2014. For more information, please visit the CLSC webpage. Applications are due Jan. 31.
Arrivals

- **Jae Chul Lee** is the new unit director for Health and Wellness. Originally from South Korea, Jae Chul completed his doctoral studies in Rehabilitation Counselor Education at Michigan State University, and then spent two years in Chicago for a post-doctoral fellowship in Health Services Research at Northwestern University. He has worked on federally-funded projects on disparities in health and healthcare among working-age people with disabilities. Jae Chul has primarily focused on adults with chronic health care needs and has created a longitudinal data file using the National Health Interview Survey and the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey. His training and research interests center on employment and health disparities for individuals with disabilities. He is excited to join CDS and welcomes the opportunity to impact health-care issues for individuals with disabilities through interdisciplinary collaboration.

- **Karen Jones** comes to CDS through retirement from Exceptional Children Resources with the Delaware Department of Education. She is working to support various projects, including Accessible Instructional Materials, Accessing the General Education Curriculum and Environments, and linking unique student needs from Behavior Support Plans to the writing of an Individual Educational Program. She has a BSED and a M.Ed. in special education and thirty-two years of providing services to students and teachers throughout the state. Karen has worked collaboratively on projects with various staff at CDS throughout her career. She is thrilled to continue her passion for providing students with access to educational opportunities to enhance their achievement.

- **Karen Latimer** joined CDS in December as an assistive technology (AT) specialist at the New Castle County Delaware Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC), located at CDS. Karen brings with her a wealth of assistive technology knowledge, and she is excited to join the CDS staff.

Departures

- **Chris Barthold** worked with the TEEM and Assistive Technology units since 2010, when she moved from Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) to CDS. She will be an Assistant Professor of Special Education in the Applied Behavior Analysis program at George Mason University.

- **Gary Mears** worked as a research associate in the Health and Wellness unit for three years. He will continue to be an advocate for people with disabilities in Delaware, and will be spending more time at home with his family.

- **Victoria Clark** worked for Communications & Advocacy for nearly a year. While at the Center, Victoria dedicated her time to improving the accessibility of promotional materials, as well as providing technical assistance on digital accessibility matters throughout the University. Tori is looking forward to working as an accessibility consultant and accessible print and web designer.
EVENTS

Save these dates for 2014 conferences

- **LIFE Conference**, Jan. 16, 8 a.m.–3:45 p.m., Dover Downs Conference Center. The LIFE (Legislation, Independence through Assistive Technology, Families, and Education) Conference is an annual information exchange for people with disabilities and their families, and focuses on legislation, independence through assistive technology, family and education. For more information or to register, visit the [LIFE Conference website](#).

- **Inclusion Conference**, March 12, 8 a.m.–4 p.m., Dover Downs Conference Center. The Inclusion Conference is designed for educators, parents, policymakers and service providers who are interested in promoting inclusion for all from birth to age 21. For more information on this year’s event, visit the [DATI website](#).

- **Transition Conference**, March 30, 8 a.m.–4 p.m., Dover Downs Conference Center. Information will be posted to the CDS website as it becomes available.

January 14

**Medicaid Managed Care Panel Call**, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. The Panel Call addresses questions regarding children’s mental health and behavioral needs. Participants can join other families for the parent-run Medicaid Managed Care Panel Call. Representatives from Medicaid, Delaware Physicians Care, the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services, and other agencies will attend, providing an opportunity to ask questions, air grievances, or just listen and learn. For information about joining the Call, visit the [Delaware Family Voices website](#).

January 15

**IEP Basics**, Absalom Jones Center, Parent Room, 310 Kiamensi Road, Wilmington, 10 a.m. – 12 noon. Sponsored by the Parent Information Center (PIC) of Delaware, this session will provide an introduction to the individualized education program (IEP). Topics will include components of an IEP, use of data, arriving at appropriate goals and monitoring implementation. More information can be found at the [event page](#) on the PIC website. This session is free of charge, but registration is required through PIC’s [event registration website](#).

January 16

**LIFE Conference**, see above.

January 23

**IEP Basics**, Elbert-Palmer Elementary School, 1210 Lobdell Street, Wilmington, 10 a.m. – 12 noon. This is another offering of the Jan. 15 session. More information can be found at the [event page](#) on the PIC website. This session is free of charge, but registration is required through PIC’s [event registration website](#).
February 2

**Polar Bear Plunge for Special Olympics**, Rehoboth Beach, 1 p.m. Individuals and teams, alongside Special Olympics athletes, will plunge into the icy Atlantic Ocean to raise funds for Special Olympics Delaware. More information, including registration, is available on the [Polar Bear Plunge website](#).

Visit the [CDS calendar](#) for more information about upcoming events.

### RESOURCES

**Nemours releases video series on navigating the transition to adulthood**

There are many changes that occur as a child with a disability or with special health-care needs becomes a legal adult. The “**Becoming an Adult**” video series, published by Nemours, explores various topics in short films that provide families with information that can help individuals with disabilities and special health care needs successfully navigate this transition.

In interviews with members of the disability advocacy community, including CAC member Cory Nourie and former CDS staff member Terri Hancharick, viewers are provided information and advice that can be used to start conversations about this transition.

Topics include:

- What can I do after high school?
- Legal and Financial Planning
- Deciding where to live
- Taking responsibility for your medical care

### 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.

**House Bill 196 aims to decrease housing discrimination**

According to many self-advocates, individuals with disabilities continue to encounter obstacles in relation to housing. Some landlords and rental agents refuse to accept non-traditional sources of income, such as vouchers or Social Security disability income. In an effort to end this discrimination, Rep. S. Quinton Johnson introduced House Bill 196, which provides for the investigation of landlords or rental agents who discriminate by refusing nontraditional sources of income. The bill also allows for the possibility of further action by the State Human Relations Commission. For more information on this legislation, visit the [State of Delaware Legislation website](#).
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.

Notice of Non-discrimination, Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

The University of Delaware is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. For the University’s complete non-discrimination statement, visit the UD Legal Notices website page at http://www.udel.edu/aboutus/legalnotices.html.

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.