The March 2012 issue of Project Bridge includes project updates from recent months and events that will take place in the next few months. The next issue will be sent in April. Please send news and events for the April issue to mercooke@udel.edu by March 13.

PROJECT UPDATES

- After more than 12 years at the Center for Disabilities Studies, Ilka Riddle is leaving CDS to serve as the new associate director at the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center in Ohio. Her last day will be March 16. Ilka began her career at CDS as a graduate student, and most recently has served as the director of the Health and Wellness unit. She looks forward to continuing to advocate for the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in accessible health care opportunities that will help them achieve healthy lifestyles. Her colleagues and friends at CDS and in Delaware wish Ilka all the best as she pursues this wonderful opportunity in Ohio.

- The next session in the CDS Lunchtime Learning series will be Tuesday, March 13. Roberta Gealt, associate scientist at the Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies at the University of Delaware, will present research findings from the Delaware School Survey and the Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey about the high incidence of tobacco use and binge drinking among students with learning and physical disabilities. Her talk, “Examining data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey regarding high-risk behaviors of students with and without disabilities,” will also examine how the data are used by Delaware government agencies, professionals and community groups to access resources, plan prevention and intervention efforts, and evaluate policies, practices and programs. This free workshop will be held from 12 noon to 1 p.m. at the Center for Disabilities Studies. Attendees are welcome to bring a bag lunch. Water and snacks will be provided. Please register with Meredith Cooke at mercooke@udel.edu and indicate if you need an accommodation.

- The Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI) is moving its central office and New Castle County Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC) from A.I. duPont/Nemours Hospital for
Children to the Center for Disabilities Studies. The ATRC will be closed from March 19–March 23 for the relocation process, and will reopen on March 26 at CDS. DATI staff members Marvin Williams and Joann McCafferty will have offices at CDS beginning March 26.

- CDS staff members Beth Mineo, Jamie Wolfe and Terri Hancharick, along with Pat Maichle of the Developmental Disabilities Council (and a member of the CDS Community Advisory Council), Jane Gallivan of the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, Lisa Furber of the Disabilities Law Program, and self-advocates Brigitte Hancharick, Drew Netta, Staci Forrest, Nancy Teel, Bill Monaghan and Barbie Monaghan, are Delaware’s delegation to the Allies in Self-Advocacy Summit in Baltimore in March. According to Administration on Developmental Disabilities Commissioner Sharon Lewis, delegates from each state will develop a plan for promoting self-advocacy for people with disabilities that will be implemented in their state. She wrote in a statement, “Our hope is that these summits will bring together the leadership of the developmental disabilities field to energize and guide our efforts to support the self-advocacy movement at both a state and national level.” More summit information is available online.

- Staff members from the Delaware Positive Behavior Support (DE-PBS) project presented at the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Annual Convention in Philadelphia in February. The presentation, titled “School Climate and School-wide PBS: Assessing Needs and Outcomes,” provided an overview of the Delaware School Climate Survey, the Delaware Assessment of Strengths and Needs for PBS, and the project’s new DE-PBS Key Features Evaluation. The presentation team included CDS staff members Debby Boyer, Sarah Hearn, Eileen Baker and George Bear, with Linda Smith (Department of Education). DE-PBS graduate student Megan Pell presented a poster session titled “A Longitudinal Investigation of School-wide Positive Behavior Support” with George Bear and former CDS graduate assistants Chunyan Yang and Jessica Blank.

- Mary Ann Mieczkowski, Director of Exceptional Children Resources in the Teaching and Learning Branch of the Delaware Department of Education and a member of the CDS Community Advisory Council, received the 2012 Government and Professional Relations Outstanding Advocate Award at the NASP Annual Convention. She was recognized for the overall leadership and advocacy she has shown on behalf of children and school psychologists. NASP noted Mary Ann’s efforts to fully include students with disabilities, advance the use of functional behavioral assessment and related programming, support social skill interventions, and also emphasize the importance of evidenced based school mental health programming. Congratulations, Mary Ann!

- Health and Wellness unit staff members Eileen Sparling and Terri Hancharick presented at the Delaware Recreation and Parks Society’s Trail Conference in Rehoboth on February 22. Their session, “Achieving Accessibility in Outdoor Recreation Settings: Resources, Tools and Tips for ADA Compliance,” gave attendees an overview of the elements of accessibility in facilities, equipment and communication. Eileen and Terri also provided resources for planners and administrators to assist with making recreation settings attractive and accessible to all Delawareans.
Brian Freedman, director of the Transition, Education and Employment Model (TEEM) unit, and Dan Fendler, assistive technology specialist with the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI) at CDS, presented at the 2012 Conference on Volunteerism: Creating Connections on March 1. Brian’s presentation, “Inclusion of People with Disabilities: Benefits and Strategies for Success,” highlighted the impact of opportunities for inclusion in volunteer organizations and general strategies for identifying and implementing basic accommodations in order to support the success of individuals with a variety of disabilities. Dan spoke about “Disability Inclusion Technologies,” providing information about different assistive technologies that can improve an individual’s access to his or her job.

CDS welcomes Kira Moses, who is completing a 400-hour internship with the Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program in the TEEM unit. Kira is a senior human services major at the University of Delaware. She will be providing programmatic, administrative, research and coaching support to the TEEM unit throughout the spring semester.

Six undergraduate students from the University of Delaware will be completing independent study projects with CDS in the spring. All six students will be assisting with Steppingstones, the research project led by Beth Mineo and Chris Barthold that examines customized language representations and response styles of students.

CDS staff members and students enrolled in the CLSC program will be participating in Spread the Word to End the Word Day on March 7 on the UD campus (see Events section for more information). This annual event is part of an ongoing effort by Special Olympics and Best Buddies to raise awareness about the demeaning and hurtful effects of the “r-word” and to encourage people to pledge to stop using it. It is held in March, which was declared Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in 1987 by President Ronald Reagan. His proclamation called for people to provide understanding, encouragement and opportunities to help persons with developmental disabilities to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

U.S. News and World Report published an article about programs for students with intellectual disabilities that are funded by the Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grant. The University of Delaware is mentioned as a recipient of the grant, which funds the CLSC program at CDS.

The annual Community of Practice Delaware Transition Conference 2012 will be held April 3 at the Sheraton Dover Hotel. The conference is for students ages 14–21 receiving special education services, their parents, educators and professionals. LeDerick Horne, a poet, disability advocate and entrepreneur, is the keynote speaker. He is the board chair of Project Eye-to-Eye, a national nonprofit that provides mentoring programs for students labeled with a learning disability or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. CLSC students are conducting a workshop, titled “Maximizing Access to Higher Education for Students with Intellectual
Disabilities,” in which they will summarize the program and describe their experiences participating in campus activities.

HIGHLIGHTED PROJECT OF THE MONTH

Project FOCUS Provides Career Exploration Opportunities

- In the summer of 2011, four young adults were offered the opportunity to explore a variety of career options with the support of intensive one-on-one coaching and person-centered planning. These young adults, ages 16–21, were selected to participate in Project FOCUS—Focusing on Opportunities to Create Unlimited Success. The program was designed specifically for the Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) by the Center for Disabilities Studies.

As project coordinator, CDS staff member Debbie Bain met with each student individually to develop a profile of interests, strengths and future goals. The students selected individual target areas, including automobile repair services, sound engineering, counseling and occupational or physical therapy. Over the course of several months, each student participated in four or more externships related to his or her individual area of interest.

The student interested in auto body repair participated in job shadowing experiences at car dealerships, a combination auto repair and auto parts store, and a shop specializing in collision repair. Each of these experiences took place in the student’s home community to encourage continued participation and long-term benefit. As a result of these experiences, this student is currently exploring adult education classes in collision repair.

Following the externships, the students were encouraged to share what they learned from these experiences: whether the area appeared to be a good match as a future career or the experiences made them realize they should pursue a different career. When the program concluded early in 2012, the participants worked with Karin Elterich, DVI case manager for transition-aged clients, to develop a presentation summarizing their experiences. The presentations were made at the end of February to the participants’ parents and other family members, coaches, and other guests.

With new insights and experiences, and the support of their parents, coaches and DVI case managers, the participants are now identifying possible next steps to bring them closer to a meaningful career that fits their individual interests and goals.
RESOURCES

- The Newark Free Library recently acquired a low vision reading device called the Smartview Synergy SI, manufactured by Humanware. It is available for anyone to use during the library's regular hours. The device is located near the Reference section and is self-service, although library staff members are always available to help people with the controls if necessary. More information about the device, its uses and features is available in an online brochure.

- The Center on Victimization and Safety at the Vera Institute of Justice launched a new web conference series in November 2011, called “Serving Survivors with Disabilities and Deaf Survivors: Practical Guidance and Information for Advocates and Others Working to End Sexual and Domestic Violence.” This series is designed to build individual and organizational capacity to improve services for survivors with disabilities and deaf survivors. Topics include the Americans with Disabilities Act, mandatory reporting and confidentiality, requests for accommodations, American Sign Language interpreters, among many others. The free web conferences will occur once a month through March 2013, with the next one scheduled for March 13. To receive announcements and information about the series, contact jhoward@vera.org. Visit the Vera website to register for upcoming web conferences.

- It has been three years since CDS hosted a screening of “Darius Goes West” (DGW), with appearances by Darius Weems, who has Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), and his friends. They were on the road creating awareness about DMD and the importance of inclusion for people with disabilities. Today, Darius is 22 and doing great, according to a recent email from the DGW folks. Since the movie came out, he's lost nearly 100 pounds by watching his diet. He is participating in a clinical trial at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and will have his last visit there in June. He continues to raise awareness of DMD and funds for research by visiting schools near his home and using Skype to “video chat” with middle school, high school and college students several times a week. The big news is that Darius (aka "Big Daddy Weems") has signed a record deal to release his first album. For more information, visit www.dariusgoeswest.org.

EVENTS

Visit the CDS website calendar for more events.

- March 7. Spread the Word to End the Word Day at the University of Delaware, The Scrounge at the Perkins Student Center, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.; Food Court at the Trabant University, 1:30–3:30 p.m. UD Best Buddies students will staff tables at these two locations to call attention to the hurt caused to people with intellectual disabilities by the use of the word “retard(ed).” They will ask fellow UD students to sign a pledge to refrain from using the “r-word” and they will promote “respect” as the new “r-word.”
March 8. **Kids Inspiring Kids**, Concord High School, 2501 Ebright Road, Wilmington, 7–8:45 p.m. In this program sponsored by the Brandywine Special Needs PTA, students who participated in 10 hours of self-determination training will show other students, parents and teachers leadership skills and how to prepare for their own IEP meetings. This interactive workshop is for parents, their transition age children and school IEP teams. Registration is limited. Contact Ellen Coulston at 302-798-4641 or ellen@comcast.net. See event flyer for more information.

March 13. **CDS Lunchtime Learning**, Center for Disabilities Studies, 12 noon–1 p.m. This session will be led by Roberta Gealt, associate scientist with the University’s Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies. She will share the data she has collected from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, conducted in middle schools and high schools, which shows that students with disabilities are engaged in high-risk behaviors at rates that consistently exceed those of students without disabilities. See “Project Updates” or event flyer for registration information.

March 15. 18th Annual Inclusion Conference, Sheraton Dover Hotel, Dover, 8 a.m.–3:15 p.m. With the theme, “Inclusion: It Should Just Be How We Roll,” the conference features Jonathan Mooney as the keynote speaker. Registration for this event is currently closed. For more information, contact Roseann Ferri at rferri@udel.edu or 302-739-6885 or Sonja Rathel at rathel@udel.edu or 302-856-1081.

March 16. **CDS Community Advisory Council meeting**, 9:30–11:30 a.m., Department of Transportation, Farmington/Felton Room, 800 Bay Road, Dover.

March 21. 21st Annual Conference of the Brain Injury Association of Delaware, Dover Downs. The conference theme is “Beyond Rehabilitation: Reclaim & Rejuvenate.” The keynote speaker is Doug Markgraf, a self-advocate who experienced a traumatic brain injury as an undergraduate at Drexel University. Doug will share his experience of riding his bicycle across the country, meeting fellow brain injury survivors along the way. Visit the newly-redesigned Brain Injury Association of Delaware website for more information or to register for the conference.

March 21. Delaware’s Still Listening Conference—5th Conference on Hearing Loss, Sheraton Dover Hotel, 8 a.m.–4 p.m. With the theme, “Raising Expectations,” this conference, sponsored by the Division of Public Health, is for families of a child with hearing loss and the medical, social and education professionals who attend to children with hearing loss. The featured speaker is Howard Rosenblum, chief executive officer for the National Association of the Deaf. Two members of CDS’s Community Advisory Council, MaryAnn Mieczkowski and Della Thomas (Director, Statewide Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Delaware School for the Deaf, and Deaf-Blind Programs), are presenting at the event. The registration deadline for this event is March 12. Visit the conference website for more information or to register.
April 3. Transition Conference, Sheraton Dover Hotel, 8 a.m. –3:15 p.m. The conference is sponsored by the Delaware Department of Education and the Delaware Department of Labor's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. General information about the conference can be found on the DATI website. The full agenda is included in the conference brochure. Register with the online form by March 20. See “Project Updates” for more information about the conference.

April 4. 5th Annual Disability Day at Legislative Hall, Dover, 11 a.m.–3:30 p.m. CDS is a sponsor of this event, along with the Developmental Disabilities Council, State Council for Persons with Disabilities, Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens and other partners. Participants will have the opportunity to meet with legislators to discuss disability issues that are of importance to them.

April 11. Marc Elliot’s What Makes You Tic? A presentation about tolerance, Willard Hall 007, 7 p.m. Marc Elliot is a self-advocate who shares his experiences as an individual with Tourette’s syndrome. This event is sponsored by the Center for Disabilities Studies, Hillel Student Life, U*SAID, Episcopal Campus Ministry, Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity, Kesher, Office of Equity and Inclusion, STAND, SGA and the Jewish Studies Department. See the event flyer for more information. To learn more about Marc Elliot, visit his website.

April 20. 7th Annual Diamond Dinner, Cranston Heights Fire House, Wilmington, 6–9 p.m. Hosted by United Cerebral Palsy of Delaware, Inc., this annual dinner honors athletes with disabilities who participate in sports. Guest speaker is Sonal Cercena, Special Olympics gold medalist. To purchase tickets to the dinner, contact the UCP office at 302-764-2400 or ucpde@ucpde.org.

April 21-22. 2012 Walk for Autism. This annual event will take place at Bellevue State Park in Wilmington on April 21 and Cape Henlopen State Park in Lewes on April 22. Please visit the Autism Delaware website for more information.

April 28. Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) Seminar for People with Parkinson’s and Other Movement Disorders, Cape Henlopen High School, Lewes, 8:15 a.m.—3:45 p.m. This seminar explores complementary and alternative medicine, including health-related products and practices that are not generally considered part of conventional medicine. It is sponsored by the Sussex County Parkinson Education and Support Group, Beebe Medical Center and the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services. The program brochure includes a complete list of presenters and registration 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. If you would like to suggest information to share in upcoming editions of Project Bridge, contact mercooke@udel.edu.
Senator Charles E. Schumer (D-NY) announced in February that he was introducing legislation that will mandate that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) post passenger advocates at every airport in the country. These passenger advocates would be available to hear passengers’ concerns if they feel they have been inappropriately treated by transportation security officers. Schumer’s announcement followed reports from three elderly women who alleged inappropriate behavior by TSA officers. The legislation, called the Restoring Integrity and Good-Heartedness in Traveler Screening Act, the RIGHTS Act, would specifically require the TSA to establish an “Office for Passenger Support” within the agency that would solicit and record complaints from the general public regarding screening practices at TSA. It would also mandate that airports where TSA operates have clearly visible signage at each gate explaining that a TSA passenger advocate can be summoned if a passenger believes he/she has been mistreated by a TSA employee on the basis of a medical condition, disability, age, race, color, religion, sex or national origin. More information about the act and the rationale behind it is available online.

Representative Brian Higgins (D-NY) and five co-sponsors introduced H.R. 4082, the Social Security Administration Accountability Act of 2012. The bill would require the Social Security Administration (SSA) to submit an annual budget estimate directly to the president and Congress. The bill also halts any pending closures or consolidations of SSA field and hearing offices and establishes a public process for SSA to follow in considering any future office closures. Pending closures or consolidations may only resume after SSA reports to Congress on the process for selecting field or hearing offices to close or consolidate. The bill was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

At the end of January, Governor Jack Markell announced his plan for the Fiscal Year 2013 budget, which includes significant investments in public education and classroom resources, responsibly funds the demand for increased services, and targets resources toward jobs and infrastructure. Governor Markell also indicated that the budget reflects the state’s commitment to public safety, health care and K–12 and higher education. More information is available through the state’s press release regarding the budget proposal.

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.
The University of Delaware does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation in its programs and activities as required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable statutes and University policies. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and related statutes and regulations: Tom Webb, Director, Office of Disabilities Support Services, 240 Academy Street, Alison Hall Suite 119, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716, 302-831-4643. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies and to serve as the overall campus coordinator for purposes of Title IX compliance: Bindu Kolli, Chief Policy Advisor, Office of Equity and Inclusion, 305 Hullihen Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716, 302-831-8063. The following individuals have been designated as deputy Title IX coordinators: for Athletics, Jennifer W. Davis, Vice President for Finance and Administration, 220 Hullihen Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716, 302-831-2769; and for Student Life, Dawn Thompson, Dean of Students/AVP for Student Life, 101 Hullihen Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716, 302-831-8939. Inquiries concerning the application of anti-discrimination laws may be referred to the Title IX coordinator or to the Office for Civil Rights, United States Department of Education. For further information on notice of nondiscrimination, visit http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm for the address and phone number of the U.S. Department of Education office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

Core funding for the Center for Disabilities Studies originates from Grant #90DD0631/05 from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.