PROJECT BRIDGE

MARCH 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 taking place in March and April.

Please send news and events for the next issue to Katie Hoffman at khoffman@udel.edu by April 11.

CDS IN THE NEWS

Brian Freedman spreads the word in News Journal

A letter to the editor, written by Brian Freedman, director of the Transition, Education and Employment Model (TEEM) unit, was published in the News Journal on March 5. Brian highlighted "Spread the Word to End the Word" (http://www.r-word.org/), a campaign designed to deter the use of language that denigrates people with intellectual disabilities. He also promoted the Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program, a CDS initiative that offers young adults with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to experience post-secondary education at UD. View Brian’s letter on delawareonline.

News Journal taps Brian Freedman to speak about Down syndrome

In an informative and compelling story on Down syndrome by Kelly Bothum in the News Journal on March 12, CDS’s Brian Freedman spoke of challenges encountered by people with the condition, and opportunities that await them, particularly in their teen and early adult years. Noting the CLSC program administered by CDS, Brian said, "Whether we are working with young adults with Down syndrome through the college experience or early in their career, we want them to have … opportunities. We emphasize internships. We help them develop their network, and that can lead to jobs." View the story, “Group dispels Down syndrome myths,” on delawareonline.

SOCIAL MEDIA

CDS on Facebook

CDS has more than doubled its LIKES on Facebook in the past two months. People following CDS on Facebook in March heard about the tremendous
success of this month’s Inclusion Conference, received reminders of DATI’s open houses, learned about the increased risk for domestic violence that women with disabilities face, and got updates about the planned changes to paratransit in Delaware. If you haven’t already done so, please LIKE CDS on Facebook.

**PROJECT UPDATES**

**DE-PBS presents at National Association of School Psychology Conference**

CDS' Delaware Positive Behavior Support (DE-PBS) project presented a number of its findings at the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) annual conference, held Feb. 18-21 in Washington, D.C.

- CDS’ School Age Unit Director Debby Boyer and Research Associate Sarah Hearn, along with UD doctoral student Chunyan Yang and UD professor George Bear, presented “Bullying Victimization and School-wide Discipline: Their Relations to School Climate.” The presenters highlighted the connection between bullying victimization, school climate, and the use of specific school discipline techniques. Using multi-level statistical analyses, positive teacher-student relationships and student-to-student relationships were associated with less victimization and greater respect for diversity and school safety. The study also found that the use of social-emotional learning techniques (e.g. teaching responsibility and empathy) was a protective factor in preventing bullying.

- DE-PBS Project Coach Megan Pell, along with UD professor Kathleen Minke, presented “Utilizing Secondary Student Voices to Address School Climate.” Megan and Kathy presented a case study on conducting focus groups with high school students using the school's Delaware School Climate Survey results as a starting point. Presenters shared how concerns from the survey were used to design questions to gain deeper insight into students’ perspectives and students’ ideas for solutions. Recommendations regarding how to conduct focus groups with diverse groups of adolescents and share results with multiple stakeholders were provided.

- Debby Boyer, George Bear, CDS graduate assistant Lindsey Mantz and Delaware Department of Education’s Linda Smith presented “Differences in Bullying Victimization Between Students With and Without Disabilities.” Based on a survey completed by more than 11,000 parents, including almost 1,000 with children with disabilities, results showed that students with disabilities, in general, were at greater risk than other students for being bullied, but children with emotional disturbances and other health impairments (including ADHD), were at greatest risk. Implications for bullying programming and bullying prevention strategies for children with disabilities were also presented. Consideration of
additional interventions for students with disabilities were discussed, such as teaching social skills, and it was recommended that increased emphasis be given to targeting interventions for those students who experience bullying frequently and repetitively.

- Lindsey Mantz, George Bear and UD professor Joe Glutting presented a poster, “Effects of Validity Screening Items on School Climate Survey Results.” Visitors to the display learned about the Delaware School Climate Survey and its role in evaluating Delaware schools.

**STAFF UPDATES**

**Brian Freedman co-authors new article on experiences of families with a child with a disability**

The article, “Health care experiences and perceived financial impact among families of children with an autism spectrum disorder,” compared the care experiences of families raising a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), intellectual disability disorder (IDD) and/or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Families of children with ASD and at least one other diagnosis were the most dissatisfied with their health care quality and experienced the greatest financial stress. The researchers concluded that their findings underscore the need for a comprehensive health care service system for individuals with ASD. An abstract of this article is available on the [Psychiatric Services website](#).

**EVENTS**

**March 31**

**Delaware Community of Practice 2014 Transition Conference**, Dover Downs Conference Center, 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. The conference is for youth ages 14-21 receiving special education services, as well as parents, educators and professionals. Session topics will include employment, post-secondary education and independent living. CDS’s Brian Freedman and Debbie Bain, along with Career & Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program students, will present, “College Opportunities for Students with Intellectual Disabilities: What are My Options?” For more information on this year’s event, contact Dale Matusievich at dale.matusievich@doe.k12.de.us. Registration can be completed using the [online registration form](#).

**April 21**

**A CDS town hall on the new CMS rule**, see below.

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

**RESOURCES**

Text4baby celebrates four years of impact
Text4baby, a free service that delivers health and safety information to more than 675,000 expecting and new mothers through text messages, celebrated its fourth birthday in February. The program helps moms nationwide connect to low-cost or free health care, remember appointments and immunizations, and talk to their doctors about health topics.

There are approximately 3,000 Delaware moms who have enrolled in text4baby since the program was initiated in Delaware. CDS is the lead organization in Delaware for text4baby, and Delaware has continuously been in the top five states in terms of percentage of eligible moms enrolled since the program began in 2010. Delaware’s text4baby program is coordinated by CDS’ Karen Zalewski. Interested mothers can enroll in the service on the text4baby website.

ADVOCAACY CORNER

Jamie Wolfe testifies regarding paratransit

At a joint finance committee hearing on March 19, CDS Disabilities Specialist Jamie Wolfe suggested that state leaders consider a moratorium on DelDOT’s plan that will force many paratransit users to negotiate trips and pay far more than what other users pay. She also suggested they convene a task force to study the issue. View her testimony.

A CDS town hall April 21 on the new CMS rule

The tremendously consequential new CMS rule that will encourage integrated community living and employment will be front and center at a regional town hall hosted by CDS on April 21 at the Embassy Suites in Newark, DE. Andy Imparato, executive director of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, and Jennifer Mathis, deputy legal director and director of programs with the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, will address the principles and implications of the CMS rule, and facilitate a discussion. For information about attending, contact Victor Schaffner at vschaff@udel.edu.

CONTACT US

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