MAY 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 May and June.

Please send news and events for the next issue to Katie Hoffman at khoffman@udel.edu by June 6.

CDS IN THE NEWS

This is major: Disabilities Studies is now UD’s top minor

Disabilities Studies just surpassed Spanish as the University of Delaware’s largest minor. More than 450 undergraduates currently are pursuing the Disabilities Studies minor through the College of Education and Human Development.

Associate Professor Laura Eisenman, coordinator of the minor, notes that the growth of the program “is exciting because students from across colleges, who have a variety of majors and will have a wide range of careers, are engaged in learning about disability. In turn, they will have opportunities to extend the impact of the minor as they share and apply their knowledge about disability issues with a broad range of people in their communities.”

Fulfilling a core CDS mission to provide training to those who are interested in disabilities, several staff members of CDS have taught course in Disabilities Studies at UD, including, this year, the Center’s director, Dr. Beth Mineo, Dr. Eisenman, Dr. Brian Freedman and Jamie Wolfe. The disabilities minor was approved by the university in 1997, and has since graduated 575 students. At UD’s Spring Convocation on May 30, another 102 students will graduate with a minor in Disabilities Studies.
If you’re among the growing numbers of people who like CDS on Facebook, you read earlier this month how the nonprofit Specialisterne is helping link employers with potential employees living with autism out of an office it opened in Wilmington. You got word of Family SHADE’s Amazing Race at Christiana Mall, designed especially for families with children with disabilities and chronic health conditions. You learned how business opportunities for people with disabilities could expand, thanks to changes in Delaware’s Directory of Diverse Suppliers. And you heard about a new, accessible playground in Milford that markedly contrasts with the poor showing Delaware recently had in an NPR study of accessible playgrounds.

If you haven’t yet liked CDS on Facebook, what’s keeping you? Please connect with us now.

CDS on Twitter

In May, followers of CDS on Twitter got alerted to an NBC Nightly News report on GoBabyGo; the Down Syndrome Association’s Buddy Walk at UD; an effort to end cyberbullying; and a 15-year anniversary celebration of the landmark Olmstead decision.

Get social, and follow CDS on Twitter!

PROJECT UPDATES

Lunchtime Learning series will shine a light on bullying and prevention

On May 28, CDS’s Lunchtime Learning session will take a closer look at school climate and bullying as reported by students, parents and faculty.

Results of the 2014 Delaware School Climate surveys of students, educators and families will be shared, with particular emphasis on data related to bullying and implications for bullying prevention and intervention. Among other important findings from the survey, families reported a higher prevalence of bullying experiences for students with disabilities compared to students without disabilities.

The surveys are administered annually across the state by the Center for Disabilities Studies’ Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project (DE-PBS), with funding from the Delaware Department of Education. Debby Boyer, director of the School Age unit at the Center for Disabilities Studies, will present the surveys’ findings. She has served as co-director of the DE-PBS Project since 2001.
The Lunchtime Learning event will be held from noon to 1 p.m. in room 132 at the Center for Disabilities Studies, 461 Wyoming Road, in Newark.

To register please complete the [online registration form](#). Requested accommodations will be provided if you notify us of your needs by May 27. You are welcome to bring a bag lunch; snacks and water will be provided.

**Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project hosts annual celebration**

On April 29, the Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project (DE-PBS) celebrated another successful year with a conference focused on bullying prevention. The event, themed “Keep Calm and Shine On,” drew more than 100 attendees from 45 schools and 13 Delaware districts. Keynote speaker Chad A. Rose, assistant professor at the University of Missouri, presented research related to bullying interventions within a multi-tiered system of support. Dr. Rose explored the characteristics of bullying, participant roles in bullying situations, and current bullying myths.

UD Professor George Bear and DE-PBS project member Lindsey Mantz reported on bullying-related data from the 2013 Delaware School Climate survey, sharing results about which groups of Delaware students with disabilities report the highest incidences of bullying behaviors and victimization. School districts and school personnel also made special presentations on programming specific to anti-bullying and student social and emotional development. The annual celebration also recognized schools that are successfully implementing positive behavior supports in their schools.

**Family SHADE holds an amazing race for families of children with special needs**

On May 17, families of children with disabilities or chronic health conditions competed in a version of CBS’ hit show “The Amazing Race” at Christiana Mall. Family SHADE, an alliance of organizations, agencies and families working to improve the quality of life for children and youth with special healthcare needs, hosted the event. Fourteen families participated, and each team member received a Family SHADE t-shirt and cup as prizes for their participation. One participant noted that he “greatly enjoyed spending time with my family during a fun and accessible event.”
A family snaps a photo with a familiar face during “The Amazing Race”

The event also aimed to raise awareness of disability and disability services in Delaware. Family SHADE member organizations, including Mid-Atlantic Behavioral Health, Help Me Grow, Parent Information Center, Family Voices, Rockford Center, New Directions Early Head Start, Bayada Pediatrics, and Delaware (DE) Stars, had information tables throughout the mall. In addition to interacting with the Race participants, these organizations also had the opportunity to speak with many people visiting the mall who may not have previously known about their organization.

**Early Childhood Assistive Technology program expands inventory**

The Delaware Early Childhood Assistive Technology Demonstration (DECATD), a cooperative agreement awarded to CDS by the U.S. Department of Education, aims to assist families and clinicians in making assistive technology decisions for very young children. Collaborating with the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI), DECATD recently purchased items to expand the inventory of assistive technology available for loan to children between birth and age 5.

So far, approximately $30,000 has been spent on the purchase of assistive technology items available for loan to Delaware residents. For example, the DATI inventory now includes sound boxes, easy grip balls, talking photo albums, Bumbo floor seats and small trampolines. DECATD has also purchased several iPads and is collaborating with DATI to design a system for loaning a variety of developmentally appropriate and relevant applications (apps) to support children’s communication and learning opportunities. Additional funds are earmarked for a two-year expansion of the DATI inventory as the DECATD continues to engage clinicians and families in the Delaware community to inform the purchasing decisions.

**EVENTS**

**May 28**

**Healthmeet Webinar: Environmental Factors for Persons with Disabilities**, 2 p.m. Andy Imparato, executive director of AUCD, will moderate this webinar, which includes several panelists who will share findings from research on the connection between one’s environment and disabilities. Participants can participate via webinar or through audio conference. Register on the [ARC website’s event page](#).
May 30

College of Education and Human Development Convocation, Bob Carpenter Center, Newark, 11:30 a.m. Undergraduate and graduate degree candidates and certificate recipients—including five graduates of CDS’s Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program—will be recognized for their achievements during the Convocation ceremony. More information about the event can be found on the CEHD website.

June 6-7

UD Alumni Weekend. Graduates of UD are invited to return to campus and join the “De-la-bration.” The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) will host several events to help alumni reconnect, including a CEHD reception on June 6, and lunch with the UD Mascots, as well as a technology workshop, on June 7. Visit the CEHD Alumni Weekend website for more information, or head to the UD Alumni Weekend website to register.

June 17

Caregiver Education Series, Easter Seals Building, 61 Corporate Circle, Newcastle, 6 – 8 p.m. Join Easter Seals of Delaware to learn about preparing siblings to become caregivers. Financial service representatives Peggy Wright and Chuck Paff will provide information and answer your questions. For more information, contact Caitlin Gruber at 302-221-2087 or cgruber@esdel.org.

June 21

59th Annual DFRC Blue-Gold All Star Football Game, University of Delaware Stadium, Newark. 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 for information and tickets.

Visit the CDS calendar for more upcoming events.

RESOURCES

Search for accessible buildings on new database

AXS Map is a searchable database of accessible buildings and establishments. Users can search by type of activity and by address, neighborhood, city or state. Delawareans can review locations and add to the database on the AXS website.

ADVOCACY CORNER

Bill seeks to establish Family Caregiving Task Force

Democratic Representatives Longhurst, Barbieri, Heffernan, Jacques, and Kimberly Williams, along with Republican Representatives Dukes, Ramone, Smyk, and Gray introduced House
Concurrent Resolution 57 on May 15. If it passes both chambers, the resolution would establish the Family Caregiving Task Force, which would suggest changes to better support caregivers who are assisting family members with disabilities or who are elderly. Democratic Senators Hall-Long, Poore, Townsend and Venables, and Republican Senators Lavelle and Lopez, are expected to introduce the resolution in the Senate. For more information, please visit the website for this resolution.

**Paratransit meeting updates**

Representatives from the Legislature and disability community have attended meetings with representatives from the Department of Transportation on a weekly basis since March to discuss the DART redesign plan. Although some progress has been made on fare increases and the use of technology to enhance services, many issues are still unresolved. For example, funding for new projects, such as private transit carriers and accessible pedestrian walkways, has not been identified. In addition, specific start dates for significant portions of the redesign plan have not been established.

**CONTACT US**

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