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 April and May.

Please send news and events for the next issue to Katie Hoffman at khoffman@udel.edu by May 2.

CDS IN THE NEWS

News Journal highlights CMS Town Hall

The new CMS rule that will bring about more integrated community living and better employment opportunities for people with disabilities drew more than 120 people to CDS’s Town Hall in Newark on April 21. 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, addressed the principles and implications of the rule, and facilitated a discussion. The News Journal covered the event. View the town hall article here.

News Radio interviews Beth Mineo about CMS rule

CDS Director Beth Mineo brought clarity to the complex new federal rule April 24 on News Radio 1410 WDOV and 1450 WILM. Among other things, Beth noted how Medicaid funding that used to go to paying for institutional care “can now go to supporting people to live and work in the settings of their choice.” Hear Beth’s radio interview, here. Or read the text version of the interview.
CDS has nearly tripled its LIKES on Facebook in the past few months. If you haven’t already done so, please LIKE CDS on Facebook. Recent posts have addressed the new CMS rule, whether it’s appropriate to call certain people “autistic” or “people with autism,” a consent decree in Rhode Island that could lay the groundwork for better-paying and more meaningful jobs for persons with disabilities nationwide, wheelchair ballroom dancing, and the U.S. Senate’s reluctance to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Follow CDS on Twitter! Now you can follow many of the goings-on at CDS and in the disability community on CDS’s new Twitter page, which we launched this month to help inform people about the CMS rule. On Twitter we’ve also promoted Go Baby Go! and a webinar on inexpensive software for users with disabilities. We invite you to follow us on Twitter for updates on CDS projects and community programs, and to tweet along with us!

AUCD executive director, Bazelon programs director visit CDS

Following CDS’s April 21 Town Hall, event headliners Andy Imparato and Jennifer Mathis visited the Center, where they received updates from directors and staff on initiatives underway in Health and Wellness, the School Age unit, TEEM, Assistive Technology and Communications and Advocacy.

Self advocates share experiences with CLSC students

On April 10, two self-advocates, Ikea Glover and Reese Eskridge, shared leadership and advocacy-related experiences with first year students in the Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) program, UD’s college program for students with intellectual disabilities. CDS staff member Megan Pell facilitated the panel.
Ikea shared her experience as a speaker at the 21st Annual Best Buddies Leadership Conference in 2012, and also spoke about her on-going leadership activities as a Best Buddies Ambassador. Reese, an undergraduate at the University of Delaware, shared his “Ten Principles for Leadership & Self- Advocacy” with the group. He also emphasized the importance of social media and networking for young disability advocates. Megan shared the University of Minnesota’s wiki project “Leadership in the History of the Developmental Disabilities Movement” to show different types of leadership in disability advocacy. Both Ikea and Reese are past graduates of Junior Partners in Policymaking.

For more information on the Career & Life Studies Certificate program, please contact Mary Thomas at clsc-info@udel.edu.

For more information on Junior Partners in Policymaking, please contact Kristen Cosden at Kristen.Cosden@state.de.us.

Community Connectors to hold annual fundraiser

Community Connectors, a CDS program that offers adults with disabilities opportunities to build leadership skills, will hold its annual car wash on May 6 at the Sunoco Station, 287 Elkton Road, Newark. Members of the University of Delaware community, including several undergraduate organizations, will join the Community Connectors in this fundraising effort. Tickets can be purchased in advance at the Center for Disabilities Studies for $5 or for $7 on the day of the event. For more information about Community Connectors or this event, contact Debby Bain at dbain@udel.edu.

STAFF UPDATES

Bhavana Viswanathan recently joined the Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities Project as a project coordinator. She will be managing the day-to-day training and technical assistance activities for the project. Bhavana has more than 15 years of experience in health and social services and public health, and possesses a Masters in Public Health (Maternal and Child Health), a Masters in Business Administration (Health Management) and a Masters in Science (Audiology). Most recently, she served as director for the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program within the Delaware Division of Public Health.
EVENTS

May 7

**Family SHADE Membership Meeting**, Buena Vista Conference Center, 661 S Dupont Hwy, New Castle, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. UD’s Pediatric Mobility Lab and Design Studio will discuss their project, Go Baby Go! The lab, which is part of the University’s Department of Physical Therapy, designs novel devices that will help children who are born with neurological or muscular deficiencies that prevent or limit early movement. Read more about Go Baby Go! on the [UD Messenger website](#).

During the membership meeting, staff members will discuss design and production of commercial and do-it-yourself technology for children and adults. For more information on this event, visit the [Family SHADE website](#). The event is free and open to the public. Please RSVP by emailing Annalisa Ekbladh at Annalisa@udel.edu.

May 7

**Community Connectors Car Wash Fundraiser**, see above.

May 17

**Family SHADE Day at Christiana Mall**, 132 Christiana Mall, Newark, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Family SHADE member organizations, including the Center for Disabilities Studies, will have tables in the mall to meet and greet the public there. Representatives will answer questions and provide information about their services for children and youth with disabilities and chronic health conditions. Additionally, interested families can register online to be part of the event’s “Amazing Race” component. This aspect of the event is open to teams of families of children with special healthcare needs.

Contact Annalisa Ekbladh at Annalisa@udel.edu or visit the [Family SHADE website](#) for more information about this event.

**Visit the CDS calendar for more upcoming events.**

RESOURCES

**Delaware Family Voices releases a camp selection guide for children with special needs**

For parents of special needs children, finding a summer camp can be challenging, but often worth the effort. In a three-part series, Delaware Family Voices provides a step-by-step guide to aid families in identifying options and narrowing down to a choice that best suits their child’s needs. In [Part 1 of the series](#), a list of various camps for children with special needs is presented. [Part 2](#) looks at camps for individuals with specific medical issues. Culminating the series is [Part 3](#), which lists a series of steps and questions to consider when making the choice to enroll your child in a Delaware camp. CDS featured the camp selection guide on [Facebook](#).
NPR releases guide to local accessible playgrounds

NPR has released a guide to finding accessible playgrounds across the U.S., and is encouraging families to evaluate local playgrounds and add to its database. Currently, Delaware is not well-represented. NPR notes that new federal requirements define playground accessibility as a civil right. Learn more about the initiative, search for local playgrounds, and add to the searchable database on the NPR website. CDS also featured the playgrounds guide on Facebook.

ADVOCACY CORNER

New bill introduced to protect individuals from employment discrimination

On April 3, Democratic Sens. Townsend, Henry, Poore and Peterson, as well as Democratic Reps. Smith, Heffernan, (Quinton) Johnson and Longhurst, introduced SB185, designed to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination from employers who have four or more employees. Currently, an employee with a disability is protected from discrimination when an employer has 15 or more employees. The bill is currently with the Senate executive committee. For more information, please review the bill at the Delaware Legislative website.

Service Employees International Union considering legislation

Representatives from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) met recently with the State Council for Persons with Disabilities, DHSS Secretary Landgraf and legislators to discuss the possibility of legislation that would unionize attendants who are currently hired, trained and supervised by individuals with disabilities. Many people with disabilities, fearing their loss of control over their own care, oppose the possible legislation. Discussions are continuing, but officials say it’s unlikely a bill will be introduced this session.

An update on the proposed changes to paratransit

In the wake of the March 19 Joint Finance Committee budget hearing on transportation, two changes have occurred. Proposed fare changes for paratransit would have gone from $2 to $4 by 2016 for travel within ¾ of a mile of a fixed route stop and up to $7 for a longer ride. But now, beginning on July 1, fares will be $3 no matter how distant the ride is from a fixed route stop. Also, there will be weekly meetings, on Thursdays, until the end of June, among legislators, representatives from the disability community and the Department of Transportation, including Secretary Bhatt. Advocates hope the meetings will make any changes to paratransit more responsive to the needs of people with disabilities.
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.