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 August and September.

Please send news and events for the next issue to Ben Szmidt at bszmidt@udel.edu by October 15.

CDS IN THE NEWS

Delaware State Citizen Corps Council wins national award

The Delaware Citizen Corps Council, of which CDS is a member, received the Outstanding State Citizen Corps Council Initiatives prize at the 2014 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards presented at the White House. The Council collaborated with CDS to develop allreadyde.org, a website which addresses emergency planning for families with members who have disabilities. CDS also developed delawaretips.org, a mobile app to help professional responders and caregivers better interact with people with disabilities during an emergency. For more information about the award, visit ready.gov.

Emergency preparedness at CDS

CDS also focused its latest installment of Lunchtime Learning on the new allreadyde.org website and the new delawaretips.org app. Phyllis Guinivan from CDS and Rochelle Brittingham, who worked with CDS to develop the new website, walked the audience through the new online resources. David Young, an adjunct professor with UD’s Department of Computer and Electrical Engineering, demonstrated how to create an individualized emergency preparedness kit. For those who couldn’t attend, CDS will repeat the workshop on Oct. 22, 6:30 p.m., at 15 Innovation Way, Newark, Del. Click here for more information.
If you’re among the growing numbers of people who like CDS on Facebook, you learned this month how the marketplace is being transformed by entrepreneurs and innovative companies whose products increasingly are being designed with disability in mind; you heard that the Capital School District and Kent General Hospital collaborated to start a year-long internship program for students with disabilities; you read how Delawareans are benefitting from a new federal CMS rule that helps people with disabilities live and work in settings of their choice; and you got caught up on recent struggles people with disabilities are facing while trying to enter the workforce.

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

CDS on Twitter

In August, followers of CDS on Twitter learned about a local woman who was recognized for her work with Easter Seals; they were able to watch live as the Delaware Citizen Corps was honored at the White House; and they got wind of community events for people with disabilities in Wilmington, Georgetown and New Castle.

Get social, and follow CDS on Twitter!

PROJECT UPDATES

PBS-DE and State collaboration awarded federal grant

A collaboration between CDS’s Positive Behavior Support Project (PBS-DE) and the Delaware Department of Education’s (DDOE) Exceptional Children Resources and School Support Services has been selected as one of 12 state projects nationwide to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education’s School Climate Transformation Grant Program (SCTG). The grant allows PBS-DE and DDOE to continue to create positive learning environments for all students. Specifically, the five-year, $2.3 million grant will go towards helping the state provide more professional development and technical assistance to school districts so they can implement a multi-tiered system of behavioral support. This multi-tiered system includes both school-wide programs and individual interventions designed to positively support student behavior. The grant will also provide intensive coaching and support to approximately nine schools that face greater challenges in supporting the success of students.

Aiming for better care in Delaware

CDS’s Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities Project (HDWD) has been offering training to health professionals to improve their ability to care for individuals with disabilities in the past two months. In August, HDWD offered four sessions of “Overcoming Obstacles to Oral Health: A training program for caregivers of people with disabilities and frail elders.” Forty-one health professionals attended these sessions, learning about the causes of oral health problems, daily mouth care and strategies for maintaining a healthy mouth in people with disabilities. In September, HDWD visited the Henrietta Johnson Medical Center in Wilmington
to train 16 of the center’s clinical staff in "Using Sign Language Interpreters in Medical Settings: What is a Provider’s Responsibility?" The session addressed ADA compliance, disability etiquette and information about professional standards for interpreters.

**Bringing PEERS to the First State**

Fifty-six people from eight school districts and other state agencies attended a three-day training course on the Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS) Curriculum, hosted by CDS’s Delaware Positive Behavior Support (DE-PBS) Project. This is the first time that the PEERS curriculum has been brought to Delaware. Guest speaker Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson from UCLA presented the curriculum, which focuses on skills related to making and keeping friends and managing peer conflict and rejection. Dr. Laugeson also shared a research overview of the PEERS curriculum that shows student progress immediately and five years after being involved in the curriculum. All who attended the training session are now certified to use the curriculum.

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**STAFF UPDATES**

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**A departure**

**Jane Donovan** came to CDS in 2012 from the NCC Vo-Tech School District to work as project coordinator for the Domestic Violence Disability Project, which helped to provide meaningful and effective technical assistance to domestic violence, disabilities, and mental health service providers throughout Delaware. Jane will continue her advocacy work through her involvement with the Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens and organizations that work to better the lives of people experiencing trauma and abuse.

**Jae Chul Lee co-authors article on usual sources of care**

Jae Chul Lee, director of the Health and Wellness unit at CDS, co-authored a study on the prevalence of having a usual source of care (USC), such as a primary doctor or other health care provider. The study found that working-age adults with disabilities are more likely to have a USC than those without disabilities. However, the study found significant differences within the population of people with disabilities. Working-age adults with physical, hearing, or multiple disabilities were more likely to have a USC than adults without disabilities. Those with visual or cognitive limitations did not differ significantly from those without disabilities. The study also found that race, socioeconomic status and other disparities impacted the likelihood of having a USC for people with and without disabilities.

**George Bear confirms validity of an educational tool**

In an article published in the *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment (JPA)*, Dr. George Bear and colleagues share results of a study that confirms the validation of the Home Version
of the Delaware School Climate Survey (DSCS). The article, *Assessing School Climate: Validation of a Brief Measure of Perceptions of Parents*, confirms that the Home Version of the DSCS is a valid and reliable tool in assessing parent/guardian perspectives on a school’s climate. This allows schools to have confidence in using their DSCS Home Survey data to determine annual improvement activities. This study was based on the DSCS scores of 16,173 parents/guardians across 99 Delaware schools. The Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project (DE-PBS), with the support of the Delaware Department of Education, administers the Home, Student and Staff DSCS surveys across the state every year. The DSCS results are shared with participating schools in the spring. Dr. Bear worked with UD doctoral candidate Chunyan Yang and UD graduate student Elizabeth Pasipanodya to complete this article.

**EVENTS**

**October 2**

Effective Communication Strategies - 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Dover Downs Conference Center in Dover. CDS’s ACCESS Project will host a presentation highlighting the Systematic Processes for Enhancing and Assessing Communication (SPEACS) initiative, a collaboration among CDS, the University of Kentucky and the Delaware Department of Education. For more information and to register visit the event's website.

**October 18**

**Delaware Self-Advocacy Conference** – 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Delaware National Guard Smyrna Readiness Center. Join self-advocates to discuss topics such as "Self Advocacy 101", moving into the community, living in the community and more. For more information visit the conference's website.

**October 31**

**Delaware Community of Practice Transition Conference** – 8 a.m. to 3:15 p.m at the Dover Downs Conference Center in Dover. This conference is designed for youth ages 14-21 receiving special education services, their parents and families, and the educators and professionals who serve them. Students from UD’s Career and Life Studies Certificate program (CLSC) will present with CDS staff an interactive program describing what life is like as a CLSC student.

**November 11**

**CLSC Open House** – 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the 461 Wyoming Road in Newark. Join Career and Life Studies Certificate program (CLSC) students as they present a typical day in their lives at UD. They will share personal experiences, moments of success and the challenges they face. The event is an exploratory opportunity for students and families to consider if this postsecondary option is a good fit for them. RSVP to clsc-info@udel.edu.

Visit the CDS calendar for more upcoming events.
SAMHSA app helps to prevent bullying

KnowBullying, a free smartphone app created by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), provides parents, caretakers, educators, and others with information and communication support to help prevent bullying and build resilience in children. For more information about the app, visit the SAMHSA website.

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.

U.S. Rep. John Carney (D-Del.) implored constituents in a town hall meeting Sept. 8 at Brandywine Hundred Library in Wilmington to ask the National Institute on Health to make Alzheimer’s research and long-term services a greater priority. If the NIH did so, Carney suggested that Congress might follow the Institute’s lead and allocate more funding to the fight against Alzheimer’s. Approximately 51,000 people in Delaware provided 58 million hours of unpaid care in 2012 to those afflicted with Alzheimer’s, causing caregivers to shoulder what amounted to $37 million in healthcare costs, according to state data.

Carney addresses challenges with Alzheimer’s

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Accommodations at the voting booth

In the days leading up to the election on Nov. 4, Delawareans with disabilities may want to do more than simply bone up on the candidates’ positions on issues. They may also wish to increase their understanding of accommodations available to them as voters. Under such federal laws as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Helping Americans Vote Act, polling places must have accessible entrances and people with disabilities must be able to cast absentee ballots if they’re unable to get to a polling place because of an illness or an inability to travel. In Delaware, they also can request and will receive accommodations if they need help using a voting machine. They must be registered to vote before they can request an accommodation, however.

To vote in the upcoming election, a person must be registered by Oct. 31. Absentee ballots can be requested as late as Election Day, but must be completed and filed by 8 p.m. that same day. For more information, please read VOTING IN DELAWARE – A Guide for Citizens 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.

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