



**GCDD**  
GEORGIA COUNCIL ON  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



**2013**  
ANNUAL REPORT

GCDD.ORG

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW:

Letter from Executive Director .....	1
Real Learning .....	2
Real Communities Initiative .....	3
Real Communities New Projects .....	4
Real Communities Project Updates .....	5
Accolades for Real Communities .....	7
Real Influence: Social Justice .....	8
2013 Budget & Funded Projects .....	10
GCDD Staff .....	11
GCDD Council & Commissioners .....	12

## THE MISSION

of the Georgia Council on  
Developmental Disabilities (GCDD)  
is to bring about social and policy  
changes that promote opportunities  
for persons with developmental  
disabilities and their families to  
live, learn, work, play and worship  
in Georgia communities. 



**2013**  
ANNUAL REPORT



## ALL MEANS ALL

Federal Fiscal Year 2012-2013 was an exciting year for the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities. Governor Deal made appointments to our Board and while we were excited to have new members, we sadly said “goodbye” and “thank you” to those who previously served.

Last year, I wrote **“People with disabilities are young, old, African-American, Latino or Asian-American. They are male, female, transgender, straight, gay or lesbian. They practice different religions including Christianity, Judaism or Islam; and, they are poor, middle class or affluent. The point is that a person is not just defined by his or her disability and it is time that the disability movement begins working with other movements. We need to make sure our voice is heard in every social justice or civil rights movement taking place because it makes all of us stronger.”**

And this belief continues our great work at GCDD.

We believe in expanding the coalition working on disability related issues. The way to support people better is to make sure that people with disabilities are a “part of” community, not

just living “in” community. We recognize that the label “disability” does not define a person and in Real Communities, people with developmental or other disabilities are known less for their “disability” and more for the gifts they bring and the contributions they make to improving the community where they live, work, play and worship.

In Public Policy, we are reaching out to potential allies, working on similar issues to create a greater advocacy voice. This includes working with organizations such as 9to5 to make sure everyone has a living wage. Or, working with Georgian’s for Alternatives to the Death Penalty to make sure people with intellectual disabilities are not sentenced to death because it is a violation of the US Constitution. It is building a coalition of disability advocates who worked to get new dollars to begin post-secondary educational opportunities for students with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

In Public Relations, GCDD incorporated emerging medias into our work. We revamped our website and social media such as Facebook and Twitter to be more easily accessible to those who want and need information. At the same time, we must continue



reaching out to the traditional news services to make sure they understand and tell the story of the disability community in Georgia.

Finally, it is about Transition of our children into adulthood and ensuring they are prepared for the next phase of life. Every parent asks themselves “what will my child do after high school?” “Will my child go to college or get a job?” For much of the last 50 years, children with developmental disabilities went from high school to the couch or to a day service program without much consideration about jobs or school. We are working though Project Search, Partnerships for Success, Employment First Georgia and ASPIRE to expand the options available for graduating high school students.

Scarce resources and growing needs require us to do things differently because our old ways aren’t working. At GCDD, we believe in reaching out and partnering with those working towards a better Georgia for everyone.



## REAL LEARNING: POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS & ASPIRE

# ASPIRE

### ASPIRE: Active Student Participation Inspires Real Engagement

Upon receiving a grant from Georgia Department of Education, GCDD allotted funds to Partnerships for Success that allowed the expansion of ASPIRE. It is leading the way for improving the education system by having students participate in the outline of their curriculum. The student-led Individual Education Program (IEP) builds self-confidence, self-determination and self-advocacy skills.

Started in 2010, ASPIRE now includes 1,400 parents, students, teachers and administrators in over 90 schools and 22 districts.

This year the Houston County School district became the first to expand the ASPIRE program system-wide and has a plan for all students to be active participants by 2016.

### Post-Secondary Education Dreams Come True in Georgia

During the 2013 legislative session, \$100,000 was added to the budget to expand inclusive post-secondary education programs providing a college experience for students with intellectual disabilities with the goal of preparing them for employment.

Currently, the Academy for Inclusive Learning and Social Growth (AILSG) at Kennesaw State University, which is supported with funds from the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD), is the first post-secondary education program of its kind in Georgia. The additional funds will support expansion of the AILSG program and support the creation of a new program in South Georgia.

The University of Georgia's Fanning Institute and Columbus State University have been awarded to plan and launch inclusive post-secondary education programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

These universities demonstrated their capacity in planning, providing and evaluating inclusive environments, adult learning and participant-direction. These universities also have proven knowledge of formal and informal supports and services for adult learners with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Through GCDD, the universities will have ten months to plan and prepare for implementation of these programs.



# GCDD'S REAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

The Real Communities Initiative (RCI) is GCDD's award winning signature concept that is receiving national attention for its innovation and diversity. Launched in 2010, Real Communities provides cutting edge, intentionally inclusive activities throughout the State with a focus on projects that create opportunities for all people – with and without disabilities – to work together as full partners in the social life and the civic development of their communities.

Using an intersectional approach within Real Communities means forging new relationships between individuals and groups that may at first appear to have little in common. RCI also uses Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) methods to build on the skills of local residents and draws upon

existing community strengths to build stronger, more sustainable communities for the future.

By building collaborative communities throughout Georgia and connecting people with developmental disabilities and their organizations to other citizens, groups and associations, our partners in the Real Communities Initiative work together to act collectively to achieve common goals.

In the past year, the Real Communities Initiative has grown from six Real Communities projects to nine, expanding its community building activities to make a difference in more lives.

• Using an intersectional approach within  
• Real Communities means forging  
• relationships between new individuals  
• and groups that appear to share very  
• little in common...



WATCH REAL COMMUNITIES SHORT DOCUMENTARIES  
ON RC'S WORK IN GEORGIA COMMUNITIES

## REAL COMMUNITIES EXPANDS WITH NEW PROJECTS

GCDD's Real Communities Initiative works with groups at the grassroots level to facilitate community-centered approaches and by incorporating the concept of intersectionality and ABCD, it has expanded its circle of partnerships.

As with every GCDD grant award, funding is provided to the following Real Communities Initiative (RCI) projects in order to carry out goals and objectives that will bring about social and policy change that promote opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities and their families to live, learn, work, play and worship in Georgia communities.

### **Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (GFADP):**

In late 2012, GCDD joined a coalition of Anti-death penalty and Disability Justice Rights advocates bringing much needed attention to the case of Warren Hill, a 52-year-old man who has an intellectual disability and sits on death row.

Georgia's death penalty statute has the highest burden of proof for evaluating intellectual disabilities in the nation. Hill's case highlights the way people with developmental and intellectual disabilities can be marginalized by the justice system.

This coalition is strengthened through the Real Communities Initiative and plans to create local alliances with the Atlanta, Columbus and Dawson communities. The project will address mass incarceration and the death penalty for people with and without disabilities.

### **Women on the Rise:**

Formerly incarcerated women established Women on the Rise and it is working to create positive space for personal

growth and recognizing self-worth. The group solidified its relationship with GCDD's RCI in August 2013 with the aim to empower everyone, including the most marginalized of individuals, to contribute wholly and confidently to society. Women on the Rise will hold monthly transformative leadership development gatherings to foster relationship building and identify community needs, strategies and solutions.

### **Support for Youth Summit:**

In September 2013, GCDD awarded a \$20,000 grant to Project South for the Support for Youth Summit project. The goal is to intentionally connect youth (ages 14-22) with and without disabilities to create their own community-based solutions and strategies.

⋮ The group solidified its relationship with GCDD's RCI in August 2013 with the aim to empower everyone, including the most marginalized of individuals, to contribute wholly and confidently to society.



Through forging connections and embracing engagement, the RCI project, Mixed Greens, formed to intentionally reach out to communities that are often overlooked — including people with disabilities. ....

## CURRENT REAL COMMUNITIES PROJECTS UPDATE

### Forsyth Farmer’s Market – Mixed Greens – Savannah, GA

Committed to food justice, Savannah’s Forsyth Farmer’s Market works to make healthy, fresh food accessible to all. Through forging connections and embracing engagement, the RCI project, Mixed Greens, formed to intentionally reach out to communities that are often overlooked — including people with disabilities.

This year the Mixed Greens group introduced “green chairs” at the market to invite welcoming conversations. 2013 also saw the successful completion of the Farmer’s Almanac Project, along with an art exhibit and community panel discussion.

### Centenary UMC – “Where All Means All” – Macon, GA Youth Roving Listeners Program

Centenary United Methodist Church in Macon partners with the GCDD’s RCI to bring together young people with and without disabilities to discover their local neighborhoods. The Youth Roving Listening Program creates conversations across generations, abilities, races and socioeconomic classes.

It includes monthly dinners to connect neighbors and the community and also serves as space for residents to engage with local elected officials. Centenary UMC is also involved in an innovative arrangement with the Knight Neighborhood Foundation to employ adults with and without disabilities who repair donated bicycles, which are then given to people without transportation.





The garden has grown to include 50 families, from 26 and has five sub-groups...



The program has helped six people form and build new friendships that have opened opportunities both socially and economically...

### The Clarkston International Garden

The Clarkston International Garden partners with GCDD's RCI through its Community Garden to facilitate continued outreach to people with and without disabilities including refugees from various countries. The garden has grown to include 50 families, from 26 and has five sub-groups that focus on common interests: Tactile Growers, GED Women's Group, Kids Group, Walking/Exercise Group and Flower Group.

### The Korean Coalition — Atlanta

Through the GCDD's RCI the Korean Coalition has been a leading resource for people with developmental disabilities and their families — who are also first generation immigrants — through the use of Personal Futures Plans. To date, this approach has helped six families form and build new friendships that have opened opportunities both socially and economically for their loved ones with developmental disabilities as well as their neighbors and the community-at-large.





# ACCOLADES FOR REAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

At the 14th Annual Atlanta NAACP Jondelle Johnson Freedom Fund Dinner on November 3, 2012, the Atlanta Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) recognized and honored GCDD for its signature concept, the Real Communities Initiative.

Executive Director Eric Jacobson accepted the award on behalf of GCDD and shared, "Together, we can build places all over this city and State, where the barriers come down and people want to stay and raise their children. At GCDD we strive to make our Real Communities create bridges, a place where everybody can contribute to the community."



At GCDD we strive to make our Real Communities create bridges, a place where everybody can contribute to the community.

.....

Photo Credit:  
Eduardo Ramirez  
Sanchez  
Shutterstock.com



Dr. King's famous "I Have A Dream" speech still stirs our souls. His words remind us that we can build a more perfect democracy and expand the meaning of justice and equality. When we unite as one, believe in our dreams and make our voices heard, we too can change the course of history.

- Senator Nan Orrock



## REAL INFLUENCE: INTERSECTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS

Whether it is voting, education or accessibility, the progress of social justice has a significant impact on our hopes and dreams for the future and the way we all live, work and play in our communities.

2013 marked the 50th anniversary of the Developmental Disabilities Bill of Rights and Assistance Act as well as the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. GCDD gave tribute to these two social justice milestones in the Fall Edition of *Making a Difference*, presenting an important conversation about policy and politics.

Civil rights leader Congressman John Lewis and Senator Nan Orrock, along with other compelling voices on social justice, contributed their insight on the intersection of social justice movements and their

continued impact on civil rights, voting rights, community engagement and disability rights.

Congressman John Lewis, the renowned civil rights leader, reflected on the March on Washington he helped organize as a young man in his twenties and emphasized the importance of voting and being involved in the political process — especially for people with disabilities. He emphasized that people with disabilities, along with advocates, need to speak up, speak out and become part of the ongoing movement for civil rights and human rights so that they can receive the benefits of society as a whole.

Georgia Senator Nan Orrock shared her experience in joining the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom at age 19. She knew that her family would



We wanted to build “The Beloved Community,” what we called a society based on simple justice that values the dignity and the worth of every human being.

– Congressman John Lewis

.....

Warner Robins Rehabilitation Center, which to her family and her seemed like a wonderful idea. Askew grew unhappy due to limitations, and with the help of Georgia Advocacy Office (GAO), Askew was able to move into a group home closer to her parents and where she is now much happier and independent.

Similarly, a traumatic incident left Sean Person paralyzed and after months of hospitalization at the Shepherd Center, Person’s family moved him to Heritage Healthcare. The facility was quite a distance from his family, and being separated lowered Person’s morale and energy. Through GAO, Person now lives at home with his family and is pursuing his GED.

disapprove, but regardless, she decided to join a national movement that forever changed the course of history to build an integrated society and began a progression towards equal rights for all.

Doug Shippman, CEO of the National Center for Civil and Human Rights (NCCHR), which will open in May 2014 in Atlanta, called for broader commitments to civic and social engagement by building in accessibility and inclusion as natural components within communities. NCCHR is the first institution to embody the totality of rights movements nationally and internationally.

Talley Wells, Director of the Disability Integration Project of the Atlanta Legal Aid Society began a four-part series of guest columns as a lead up to the 15th anniversary commemoration of the US Supreme Court *Olmstead* Decision that, in 1999, declared “isolating individuals with disabilities in facilities and institutions without justification is unlawful discrimination.”

The *Olmstead* Decision, or *Olmstead v. L.C. case*, is a victory in its own right,

and although the disability movement has turned many stones, there is a lot of work to be done.

### Olmstead Legacy Prevails...

Patricia Nobbie PhD, former GCDD Deputy Director and *Making a Difference* “Mia’s Space,” feature columnist shared the story of 29 year-old Jenny Hatch from Newport News, Virginia who has Down syndrome and a legal win under her belt. In 2013, Hatch benefitted from the landmark *Olmstead* Decision and received a favorable court ruling that allowed her to live in a home in the community of her choice, with the roommates she wanted.

Similarly, in the spirit of *Olmstead*, a coalition of advocates who make up the Children’s Freedom Initiative updated readers on the progress it has made to make it possible for all Georgia children to be raised in a loving home, ensuring that no child ever has to live in an institution.

June Askew, 24, was diagnosed with spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy and moved into

# DD GRANT: FFY 2013 BUDGET - EXPENDITURES

PERIOD COVERED THIS REPORT:  
OCTOBER 1, 2012 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

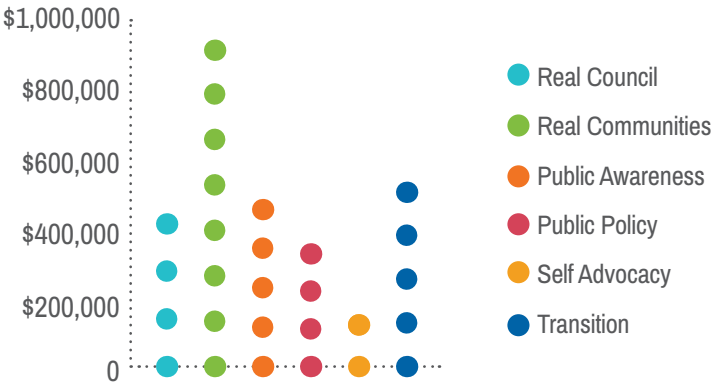
EXPENDITURES..... EXPENDED

## COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

Real Council.....	\$437,975
Total Council Administration.....	\$437,975

## PRIORITY AREAS

Real Communities.....	\$933,120
Public Awareness.....	\$481,884
Public Policy.....	\$396,875
Self Advocacy.....	\$183,063
Transition.....	\$564,752
<b>Total Funds.....</b>	<b>\$2,997,669</b>



## FUNDED AND SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES FY 2013

- Conference Sponsorships
- Disability Day at the Capitol
- Employment First Georgia
- Georgia Microboards Association
- GCDD Website
- “Voices Beyond the Mirror” 10-part video series
- “Getting Real:” Six Real Communities Initiative project mini-docs
- Kennesaw State University *Academy for Adult Inclusive Education and Social Growth*
- Post Secondary Consortium
- Making A Difference Magazine
- Moving Forward Legislative Newsletter
- Partnerships Funds
- Partnerships for Success
- People First Georgia
- Project SEARCH
- Real Communities Initiatives:
  - Korean Coalition
  - Clarkston Global Growers
  - Centenary UMC, Macon
  - Forsyth Farmer’s Market, Savannah
- Unlock the Waiting Lists! Campaign
- SOPOS Housing Coalition
- ASPIRE



## GCDD STAFF

Eric Jacobson, Executive Director • Dottie Adams, Individual and Family Supports Director  
• Valerie Meadows Suber, Public Information Director and *Making a Difference* Magazine  
Editor-in-Chief • Caitlin Childs, Organizing Director – Real Communities Initiative • Gary Childers,  
Chief Financial Officer • Cheri Pace, Organizing Coordinator – Real Communities Initiative  
• Kim Person-Hudson, Executive Assistant/Meeting Planner • Dee Spearman, Public Information  
Assistant • Sharon Strandberg, Grants Manager • Dawn Alford, Public Policy Planning Specialist  
• Eric Foss, Front Receptionist

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

**GCDD Chair:** Mitzi Proffitt, *Parent Advocate, Brooklet*  
**GCDD Vice Chair:** Thomas Connelly, *Self Advocate, Albany*  
Josette Akhras, *Parent Advocate, Eatonton*  
Jason Bearden, *Local Nonprofit/Provider, Canton*  
Teresa Brenner, *Self Advocate/Advisory member, Byron*  
Esma Campbell, *Parent Advocate/Advisory Member, Savannah*  
Farah Chapes, *Local Nonprofit/Provider, Atlanta*  
Dr. Daniel Crimmins, *Center for Leadership in Disability – Georgia State University, Atlanta*  
Deborah Gay, *Georgia Department of Education, Atlanta*  
Dorothy Harris, *Self Advocate/Advisory Member, Fitzgerald*  
Renorta Heard, *Georgia Department of Human Services, Atlanta*  
Teresa Ann Heard, *Parent Advocate, Albany*  
Deborah C. Hibben, *Parent Advocate, McDonough*  
Teresa Johnson, *Parent Advocate/Advisory Member, Monroe*  
Geneice McCoy, *Parent Advocate, Augusta*  
Kylie Moore, *Self Advocate/Advisory Member, Roswell*  
Ruby Moore, *Georgia Advocacy Office, Decatur*  
Lisa Newbern, *Parent Advocate/Advisory Member, Atlanta*  
Evan H. Nodvin, *Self Advocate, Atlanta*  
Colleen Pirkle, *Local Nonprofit/Advisory Member, Gainesville*  
Dr. Zolinda Stoneman, *Institute of Human Development and Disability – University of Georgia, Athens*

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

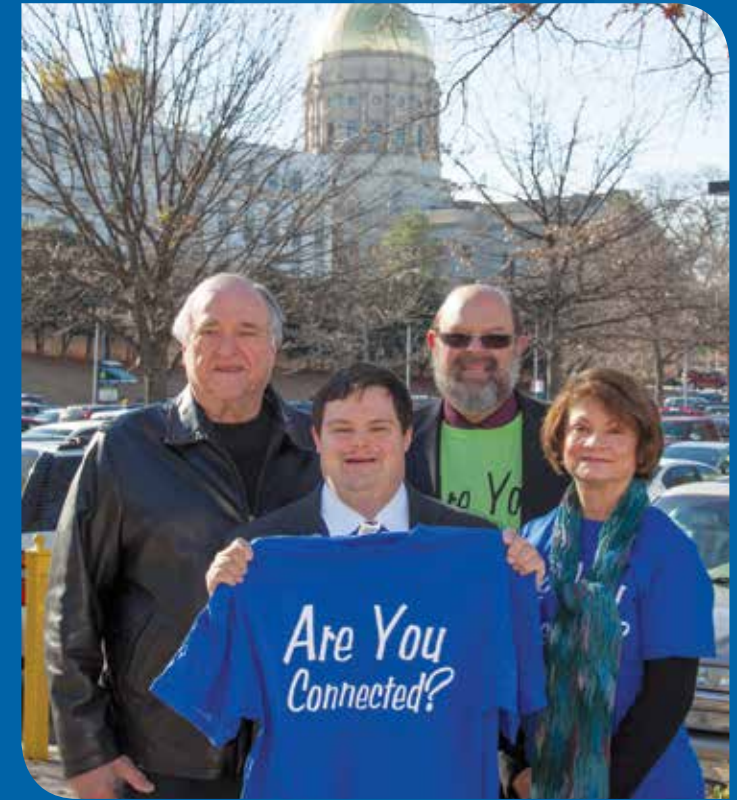
Mitzi Proffitt,  
*Parent Advocate, Brooklet*  
Thomas Connelly,  
*Self Advocate, Albany*  
Josette Akhras,  
*Parent Advocate, Eatonton*  
Geneice McCoy,  
*Parent Advocate, Augusta*  
Lisa Newbern,  
*Parent Advocate/  
Advisory Member, Atlanta*

## COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Mike Beatty, *Department of Community Affairs*  
Commissioner Frank Berry, *Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities*  
Commissioner David Cook, *Georgia Department of Community Health*  
Commissioner Peggy Fitzgerald, *Georgia Department of Public Health*  
Commissioner Clyde L. Reese, III Esq., *Georgia Department of Human Services*  
Commissioner Greg Schmeig, *Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency*

The 23 years since our country passed the American with Disabilities Act, the disability rights community can look back and see how far the road has risen. [But], the road forward is long and the path is steep. Still, we must keep striving forward and upward.

- Talley Wells, director of the Disability Integration Project at Atlanta Legal Aid Society. In 2014, Wells will write a four-part series covering The Olmstead Decision for *Making a Difference*.



AN INTERACTIVE TIMELINE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS ACROSS THE DECADES

We have to make a commitment to try and try again. Each of us, no matter our background or perspective, should commit ourselves to making the first move.

- Doug Shippman, CEO of National Center for Civil and Human Rights, on building community engagement.





2 Peachtree St. NW, Suite 26-246 • Atlanta, GA 30303  
404-657-2126 main • 888-275-4233 toll free • [gcdd.org](http://gcdd.org)