

# 2010 ANNUAL REPORT



real communities . real homes . real careers . real learning . real support . real influence





## vision)

The GCDD envisions a state in which all persons are included in all facets of community life, have choices while exercising control over their lives and are encouraged to achieve their full potential.

## mission)

The mission of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities is to collaborate with Georgia citizens, public and private advocacy organizations and policymakers to positively influence public policies that enhance the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities and their families. GCDD provides collaboration through information and advocacy activities, program implementation and funding and public policy analysis and research.



## A Year of Transition)

This annual report covers the period from October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010 – a period of transition for the State of Georgia, people with developmental disabilities and their families, and the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD).

This was the final year of Governor Sonny Perdue's administration. As the year ended we awaited the election of a new governor, constitutional officers and legislators. It was an opportunity to say thank you and goodbye to many of the people who had led this state for the past eight years. It was also an opportunity to ask hard questions of those who were asking voters to entrust them with the leadership of this State. Questions were asked about how they would support implementation of the settlement to a lawsuit between the State and the United States Department of Justice. Others were questioned about their support for funding to address the growing waiting list for home- and community-based services and supports. They were also asked about future directions for programs such as vocational rehabilitation and special education. The answers to these questions will be in future annual reports.

While there was a campaign for a November election, changes were taking place in the service and support systems for individuals with developmental disabilities and their

families. Georgia had two significant victories during this year. First, Georgia became one of the first states in the nation to end the practices of seclusion and restraints in our schools. The State Board of Education adopted some of the most progressive rules that recognized school personnel do not need to use antiquated discipline methods to help children learn. No child should ever be locked in a dark room or have a grown man sitting on their chest. Second, as

**“People with developmental disabilities and those with mental illness will be released from the institutions that kept them from being members of their community.”**

the year ended it became apparent that the State would settle its lawsuit with the United States Department of Justice and begin the process of closing state institutions. What began with the United States Supreme Court Olmstead decision would finally become a reality – 10 years later. People with developmental disabilities and those with

mental illness will be released from the institutions that kept them from being members of their community.

Finally, GCDD underwent its own transition. We began implementing the Real Communities Initiative under the able leadership of Caitlin Childs. Five communities: Fitzgerald, Milton, Gwinnett, the Atlanta Korean community and the Centenary United Methodist Church in Macon became the foundation for this new effort. The purpose of the Real Communities project is to support local communities to improve the lives of everyone, including those with developmental disabilities and their families. In addition, GCDD underwent a colorful change as we adopted a new identity and website to coincide with our name change which replaced the word Governor with Georgia. Both of these efforts will propel GCDD forward as we begin developing a new five year strategic plan.

2009-2010 was a year of transition for many of us and left us all ready to see what the future will bring. This was a year of newly elected officials, positive new policies and directions for services and supports, and a new direction for GCDD. We look forward to helping create a new and better Georgia for all of our citizens.





Asset Based  
Community  
Development  
(ABCD)  
considers local  
assets as the primary  
building blocks of  
sustainable community  
development.

## Real Communities Initiative)

GCDD officially launched the Real Communities Initiative in 2010. The goal is to connect people with developmental disabilities and their organizations to other citizens and their associations to act collectively on community issues while being guided by Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) principles and GCDD values.

There are four desired results: Create real positive changes that improve life in the community for all, those with and without disabilities; build strong bridges to community associations, leaders, and alliances that reach outside the boundaries of disability so that a wider network benefits from the energy and gifts of people with developmental disabilities and their families; create a sustainable model of community-based family support that is based on collaboration and Asset Based Community Development. Lastly, it should appropriately address the needs of un-served or under served families with developmental disabilities inclusive with their non-disabled community partners.

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## Council Supported Projects)

**Fitzgerald** In July 2010, Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald successfully passed a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), which includes \$250,000 specifically earmarked to provide seed funding for community-based transportation models being explored as part of the Real Communities Initiative. The core group is particularly interested in community-based responses to transportation. Models currently being explored include formalized ride share and carpool programs, transportation co-ops, church van co-ops and time banks.

**Korean Coalition** The Atlanta area Korean Coalition was organized as part of GCDD's Real Communities Initiative to provide support for individuals living with disabilities and their family members. It was formed by a group of Korean families based on a needs assessment conducted by Pan Asian Community Services, originally funded through a GCDD Innovative Grant. In the purposeful learning process, it has been observed that starting as a family group can be a powerful and empowering first step in building a group to act in the larger community. Once parents have the opportunity to connect with others facing similar barriers, access basic services and build some strength as a smaller group, they are better able to reach out to the larger community. As parents see the limitations of disability-only groups, the appeal of widening the lens to the entire community becomes more clear and apparent.

**Community Action Pioneers of Gwinnett** Gwinnett County graduates of GCDD's Partners in Policymaking program formed the Community Action Pioneers of Gwinnett (or CAP) in 2008. The organization's members are all parents of children with developmental disabilities. Their beginning activities were focused on systems change and advocacy work, as well as a small project reaching out to a local religious congregation around accessibility. In 2010, the group began to explore the use of ABCD as a part of Real Communities. The group is interested in exploring human service co-operatives, life sharing and other alternative co-operative arrangements that allow adults with developmental disabilities to live and participate in integrated settings in their communities.



“Mini-grants support neighborhood improvements, promote neighborhood associations and fund projects that bring community members together and create avenues for inclusion.”

**City of Milton** GCDD worked with the Milton Disability Awareness Committee (MDAC) and the City of Milton to develop a mini-grant program that would be administered by the City of Milton. The mini-grants will provide neighborhood groups and residents with resources to create community-driven projects that enhance and strengthen local community life, build avenues towards civic engagement and create avenues for the full participation of all residents, specifically those typically left out of community life. All projects are initiated, planned and implemented by local residents. Mini-grants support neighborhood improvements, promote neighborhood associations and fund projects that bring community members together and create avenues for inclusion.

**Centenary United Methodist Church** GCDD is exploring collaboration opportunities with Centenary as part of Real Communities; The church is very interested in exploring ways to welcome the people with disabilities and their families into the congregation and offer opportunities for them to contribute. Located in College Hill Corridor in Macon, GA, Centenary Church was founded in 1884. Until the 1980s, the neighborhood and congregation of the church was mostly affluent and Caucasian. By the 1990s, the neighborhood was mostly African American and extremely impoverished. The congregation's numbers dwindled. It became clear that both the church and neighborhood would not survive unless major changes were made. In 2005, the church began to work actively to reach out to and engage the surrounding neighborhood. The congregation is now extremely diverse and dedicated to addressing the concerns of the community in long-term and sustainable ways. This includes becoming more welcoming to all persons, particularly those with disabilities through GCDD's Real Community Initiative, “All means all.”





## Family Support Grant)

In 2010, GCDD was awarded a grant of national significance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. It will infuse \$250,000 into Georgia communities annually for up to five years to enhance family supports in an effort to decrease isolation among people with developmental disabilities.

Year one of the five-year grant will be used for planning. Following that, the grant will provide family support advocacy in both urban and rural settings to culturally diverse and under-served families of individuals with developmental disabilities. It will encourage systems change by calling for collective action from existing community resources.



Chester was honored for her work with the Georgia Job / Family Collaborative, which has been working on discretionary sick leave legislation for several years.

## GCDD Honors Award Winner)

Kim Chester of Cartersville, GA, earned GCDD's prestigious C. Anthony Cunningham Council Member of the Year award in 2010. The award, which recognizes exemplary leadership and service in memory of the former GCDD chair and self-advocate, Carl Anthony Cunningham, was presented to Chester at the 2010 GCDD Awards Program in July.

Chester was honored for her work with the Georgia Job / Family Collaborative, which has been working on discretionary sick leave legislation for several years. In April, Kim traveled with the Georgia 9to5 Delegation to speak at the National Making It Work Conference in Washington, DC. She and her family visited our Senate delegation, and she and her daughter Haley spoke before Hilda Solis, U.S. Secretary of Labor. She was appointed to GCDD in 2007 by Governor Sonny Perdue.



## Disability Day 2010)

GCDD hosted its 12th annual Disability Day in February 2010 at the Capitol in downtown Atlanta. Nearly 2,000 demonstrators came together to create one united voice to speak out for disability rights. They expressed their desire to Unlock The Waiting Lists!, get funding for more accessible housing and be recognized as valuable employees within a number of industries.

Two keynote speakers led the session. Kathleen Martinez, the assistant secretary for the U.S. Department of Labor, implored individuals with disabilities to demand more employment opportunities, saying, "We get what we are willing to accept." The other keynote speaker, Julie Petty of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE), encouraged young adults and children to become more involved in the issues. In her speech, she explained that young people "have totally different perspectives, which is great."

This year's Self Advocate of the Year award was presented to Rebecca Ramage-Tuttle; she was recognized for her role in bringing 400 advocates to Atlanta for the October ADAPT rally.



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# REAL

HOMES  
CAREERS  
LEARNING  
SUPPORT  
INFLUENCE  
COMMUNITIES

## Safe Schools Initiative)

A coalition of organizations and families, including the GCDD, Georgia Advocacy Office (GAO), Center for Leadership in Disability at Georgia State University, Institute on Human Development and Disability at the University of Georgia and Parent to Parent of Georgia organized advocates to testify at a public hearing and press event on June 9, 2010 to urge the State Board of Education to pass and strengthen the proposed Rule 160-5-1-.35 that limited the dangerous practices of restraint and seclusion in public schools. GCDD organized a press event and united with concerned parents to successfully persuade the Board of Education to revise the rule to include more accountability and training for positive approaches to dealing with challenging behaviors.

These efforts were a response to 13-year-old Jonathan King's suicide after he was placed in seclusion at his Gainesville school. A 2009 report by the National Disability Rights Network stated that 41 percent of states and territories have no laws, policies or guidelines concerning restraint or seclusion use in schools. Had there been regulations or safeguards in place, King's death may have been prevented.

## Academy for Adult Inclusive Education)

In 2010, GCDD sponsored a pilot program at Kennesaw State University that offers high school graduates with intellectual disabilities a post-secondary on-campus college experience. They were given the opportunity to take freshman orientation seminars and to audit classes of their choice. The program was designed to act as "bridge" between high school and the "real world" so that they can improve their social skills and become better prepared for employment.



“The program was designed to act as “bridge” between high school and the “real world” so that they can improve their social skills and become better prepared for employment.”







**“I make sure the information matches with the patients I’m working with.”**

Joanna Abundes  
Atlanta Medical Center • Atlanta, GA



**“I like cleaning the instruments and working with the people.”**

Jared Caruso  
Georgia Skin & Cancer Clinic • Savannah, GA



**“Making pizzas is my favorite job.”**

Marty Cromartie  
Coffee Regional Medical Center • Douglas, GA



**“I like working with the patients, and making them feel like they are being treated very well.”**

Wendy Cruz  
NE Georgia Medical Center • Gainesville, GA



**“I am a housekeeper. I go around and clean the floors and rooms. I get all the germs out of there.”**

Bradley Schipper  
Environmental Services at  
NE Georgia Health System • Gainesville, GA



**“I change diapers, I play with the babies, feed them. I sing to them, read to them, and I even dance with them sometimes.”**

Jessica Sell  
Children’s House at St. Joseph • Candler, GA

## Project SEARCH Graduates)

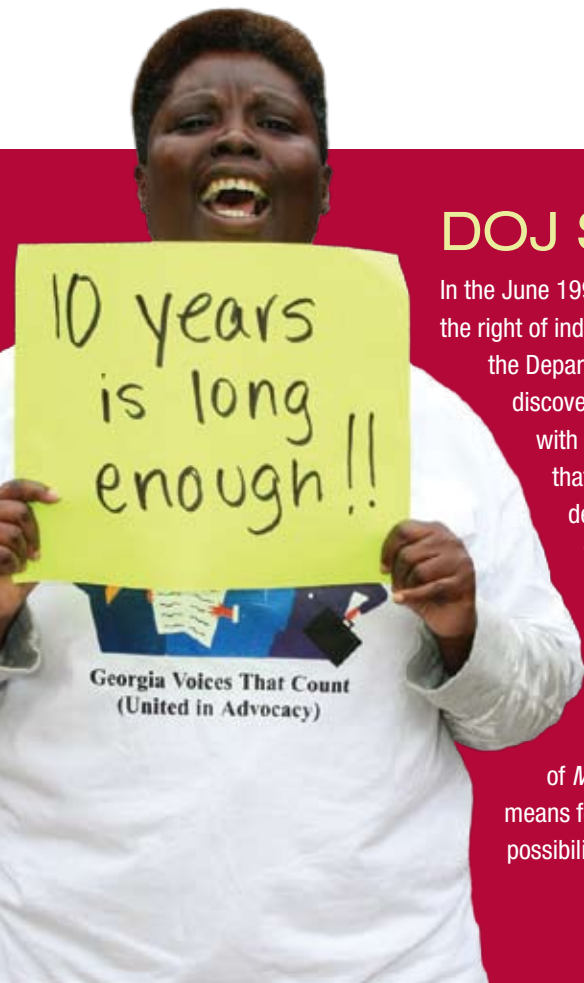
Project SEARCH, funded in Georgia by GCDD, in collaboration with community organizations and state agencies, is a one-year high school transition program providing training and education skills leading to employment for individuals with disabilities. Interns participate in three-to-four 10-week internships in community businesses, putting their employability skills to practice. Often, the internships lead to part-time and full-time positions. The individuals shown to the left not only graduated from Project SEARCH, but they were hired as permanent employees.





## New GCDD Identity & Website)

In November of 2010, GCDD revealed its new look and website. Based on the results of GCDD commissioned focus groups and a survey that explored the public's perceptions, attitudes and awareness of disabilities as a guide, it was determined that an image that more clearly communicated GCDD's mission and goals was needed. The survey revealed that while the majority of respondents outside the developmental disabilities community had heard of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), knowledge of GCDD activities needed to become more widely known and easily recognizable. This led GCDD to reevaluate its approach and make adjustments to its outreach strategy, which culminated in a new logo, messaging and website redesign. See the new GCDD look and interactive website at [www.gcdd.org](http://www.gcdd.org).



## DOJ Settlement)

In the June 1999 *Olmstead v. L.C. and E.W.* case, the Supreme Court affirmed the right of individuals with disabilities to live in their communities. However, the Department of Justice (DOJ) conducted an investigation in 2007 and discovered that preventable deaths, suicides and assaults occurred with alarming frequency in the State hospitals. Further investigation found that the state also failed to serve individuals with mental illness and developmental disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs, in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the *Olmstead* decision. This led to extensive settlement negotiations that resulted in 25 specific deliverables including implementation and quality assurance safeguards so that Georgians with disabilities can live their lives in the community like everyone else. In the Winter 2011 issue of *Making a Difference*, GCDD reported what the settlement means for Georgians with disabilities, both the possibilities and the pitfalls.



## Two Innovative Grants Awarded)

**SciTrain at Georgia Tech** Georgia Institute of Technology was awarded a grant to develop a series of webinars to encourage teachers to take advantage of developed materials called SciTrain. These materials help teachers learn how to integrate students with developmental disabilities into mainstream science, math and computer science classes. The webinars are located on the university's website and can be accessed at no charge.

### BlazeSports America: TrailBlazers Leadership Training Program

Launched initially in 2008, the TrailBlazers Leadership Training Program gives young adults with disabilities the chance to hone leadership skills and gain career experiences. With the help of GCDD's support, participants have the opportunity to achieve greater success in high school, college and future employment. The training curriculum covers topics such as interpersonal communication, leadership style assessment, goal setting and an array of healthy lifestyle issues. The material is offered through interactive group discussion and facilitated by young leaders (peer-to-peer approach) with the guidance and support of a trained adult facilitator and BlazeSports staff. Graduates of the program also have the opportunity to participate in prevocational experiences by working at the BlazeSports head office and at various BlazeSports programs such as BlazeCamp. For more information, visit [www.blazesports.org](http://www.blazesports.org).



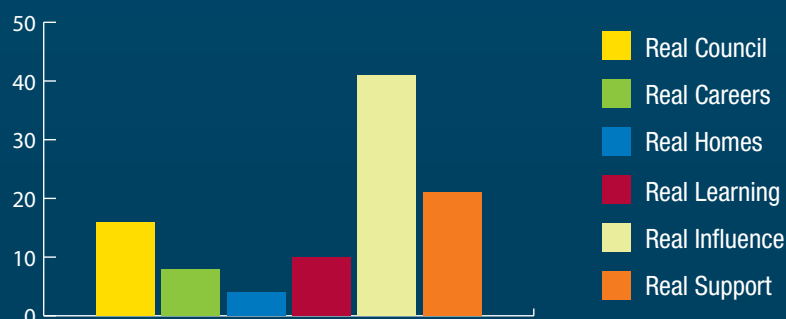
With the help of GCDD's support, participants have the opportunity to achieve greater success in high school, college and future employment.

## DD Grant: FY 2010)

### Budget – Expenditures

Period Covered October 1, 2009 – September 30, 2010

EXPENDITURES.....	EXPENDED
<b>COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION</b>	
Real Council .....	\$431,118
<b>Total Council Administration .....</b>	<b>\$431,118</b>
<b>PRIORITY AREAS</b>	
Real Careers .....	\$212,789
Real Homes .....	\$112,191
Real Learning .....	\$278,418
Real Influence.....	\$1,090,135
Real Support.....	\$568,332
<b>Total Priority.....</b>	<b>\$2,261,865</b>
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$2,692,983</b>





## GCDD Staff FY10

Eric Jacobson,  
Executive Director

Patricia Nobbie, PhD,  
Deputy 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

Drelda Mackey,  
Grants Manager

Gary Childers,  
Fiscal Director

Kim Person,  
Executive Assistant/  
Meeting Planner

Dee Spearman,  
Project Associate

Eric Foss,  
Front Receptionist

Ajeenah El-Amin,  
Americorp Intern



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Scott Crain

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Georgia State University  
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Carl Flair

Tameeka Hunter

Julie Lee

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Georgia Advocacy Office  
\* Jenny Holland

Meg Nichols

Nancy O'Hara,  
Dept. of Education –  
Special Education Services

Ron Pounds,  
Dept. of Community Affairs

James Risher

Tom Seegmueller

Randolph Denny Spear

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Dept. of Behavioral  
Health and  
Developmental Disabilities  
\* Beverly Rollins

Commissioner  
Michael Thurmond,  
Dept. of Labor  
\* Susan Sherman

Commissioner B.J. Walker,  
Dept. of Human Services  
\* Jonathan Duttweiler  
\* Allan Goldman

Ken Whiddon

Zolinda Stoneman,  
Institute of Human  
Development and Disability  
University of Georgia

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Tiffany Nash

Madeline Ponder

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Pat Nobbie, Glen Friedman,  
Caitlin Childs, Drelda Mackey

Middle Row, left to right:  
Valerie Meadows Suber,  
Kim Chester, Allan Goldman,  
Jill Alexander, Tom Connelly,  
Dottie Adams, Kim Person

Back Row, left to right:  
Carl Flair, Randolph Denny  
Spear, Gary Childers,  
Rhonda Page, David Glass,  
Eric Jacobson, Ron Pounds,  
Randall Grayson, Tom  
Seegmueller, Eric Foss,  
Dee Spearman,  
Ajeenah El-Amin

\* designee

