

Making a Difference

FALL 2006

Hiring Beyond Disability

Getting to Work

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A quarterly magazine of the
Governor's Council on
Developmental Disabilities

The Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities collaborates with Georgia's citizens, public and private advocacy organizations and policymakers to positively influence public policies that enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families.

GCDD provides this through education and advocacy activities, program implementation, funding and public policy analysis and research.

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To Georgia's Disability Community,

If you will take a moment and remember back to 2004 with me, a new employment program focusing on customized employment was emerging here in the State of Georgia. That same employment program, that has been successful in Cobb and Douglas counties, is blossoming across our state – allowing people with disabilities to identify the type of work they want and finding ways to carve out just the right position for the individual based on his or her abilities and interests.

This program, called the Employment Institute, broadly integrates the Georgia Departments of Education, Labor, Human Resources, Community Health and other state and community-based organizations into a network of professionals who find and create new job opportunities for those with disabilities. This statewide network blends its funding and will be placing resource specialists in cities around the state to help business and community leaders better understand how they can play an active role in helping people who are able and willing to work to find good employment. Local community, government and business leaders are beginning to see new possibilities for small businesses to bring new, customized job opportunities to reality for their own benefit as well as for the benefit of our own citizens with disabilities.

Customized employment is just one of Georgia's many success stories providing support services on the individual level. A strong focus on the individual improves the quality of life and continues Georgia's progress towards home and community-based services that allow individuals to become independent and successful. In recent years, our community-based programs have added 1,500 Mental Retardation Waivers, 152 slots for Independent Care Waiver Programs, and a \$7.6 million allocation for the Katie Beckett Waiver program that allowed so many of our citizens to enjoy their own communities.

My hope is that we will all continue to work together to offer Georgians with disabilities the educational programs and job opportunities they need to build and manage their own careers. We envision a Georgia that educates and employs all of its citizens who want to work, and this is becoming a new reality.

Cobb and Douglas counties' customized employment program is a model and national leader, and its replication across the state is one way we are moving toward our goal of Employment First – where individuals with disabilities are either employed or on a path to employment, giving them greater control and more choice over their quality of life.

Sonny Perdue
Governor





Real Careers are More Available, but Some Barriers Still Exist

John Kretzman wrote in 1997 that “communities can only be built on the strengths and capacities of the citizens who call that community home. At the center of the map, and of the community building process, lies the ‘gifts’ of individual residents, their knowledge, skills, resources, values and commitments.”



As the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities begins implementing its five-year plan for 2006-2011, we are looking to build communities through the gifts that each member brings. Over the next year, *Making a Difference* magazine will feature individuals, families and communities that make up Georgia. We will tell the stories of “Real Georgians” who are working, living, learning and playing where they call home. Each edition will focus on Real Careers, Real Homes, Real Learning, Real Support and Real Influence. Within each of these “Real Areas” we will attempt to bring to you new and innovative ideas, some that are happening in Georgia and

some in other places.

This edition focuses on “Real Careers.” On September 21, 2006 over 100 people, representing over 20 companies attended Discovery Day, held at The Home Depot’s headquarters and hosted by The Home Depot, Southern Company and InterContinental Hotels Group. The purpose was for businesses and employers to understand the many ways employees with disabilities can contribute to the bottom line. It was about creating a diverse employee base, which in turn helps businesses be more productive and make greater profits. It was also about understanding that there are resources and supports to help businesses that are interested in hiring people with disabilities.

I have heard many say that the attitude of the business community is that they do not want to hire people with disabilities. Yet the message I hear from those in the business community is that they are interested in hiring you if you have the skills and talents necessary to be a good

employee. We must remember that our society has never guaranteed a job for every person. GCDD promotes access to opportunity for individuals who desire to go to work and offer their skills and talents to potential employers. Leadership provided by the Jobs for All program and companies such as Briggs and Associates are helping many people with disabilities find jobs, establish new businesses and remain employed. We need more efforts such as these that recognize everyone’s potential and provide the supports for individuals to work.

However, in many cases the support systems that are needed for individuals to succeed in the work place have failed. If transportation is not available, people can’t get to work. If people are told they can’t work and are not given opportunities to learn new skills, they can’t be hired. If job

“The American way is to work, and yet we have created lots of barriers to keep people from getting a job.”

coaches are not available to assist in building supportive job sites, people may not succeed at a job. If people have jobs, but can’t get health care, people may find it difficult to remain employed. If people can’t get jobs, then they will find it more difficult to be productive members of their community. The American way is to work, and yet we have created lots of barriers to keep people from getting a job.

This edition of *Making a Difference* focuses on powerful stories of those who have gone to work while it exposes the problems that exist. While the first thing to do is focus on the talents, skills, resources and values that individuals bring to our communities, we cannot forget the commitments made by our society to forge a clear path for individuals to realize their goals and dreams.

We want to hear from you. Let us know about your experiences trying to find a job or employing someone with a disability. You can reach me at 1-888-275-4233 or you can e-mail me at eejacobson@hr.state.ga.us.

Eric E. Jacobson
Executive Director, GCDD



Letters to the Editor

Letters should include the writer's full name, address, phone number, and may be edited for purpose of clarity and space.

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**GOVERNOR'S
COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES**

Disability Day at the Capitol February 22, 2007

Join the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities at the Georgia Capitol to:

- Rally on the Capitol steps
- Celebrate community, advocacy and friendship
- Enjoy breakfast or lunch with advocates and legislators from across Georgia
- Show legislators **WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

For more information, visit www.gcdd.org or call 404-657-2126.

ATTENDEE RSVP FORM

Disability Day at the Capitol • February 22, 2007

Please register to attend the breakfast OR luncheon.

RSVP: 404-657-2126, Toll Free 888-ASK-GCDD, FAX 404-657-2132, TTY 404-657-2133, or www.gcdd.org

Name: _____

Organization: _____ Total # attending: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

E-mail: _____ Telephone: _____

I plan to attend _____ Breakfast _____ Lunch

Optional \$10.00 donation per person to support breakfast or luncheon is appreciated, but not required.

Total payment amount: _____ Total amount enclosed: _____

Please make check payable and return to:

Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities • Disability Day Registration
2 Peachtree St. NW, Suite 26-246, Atlanta, GA 30303.

Please note special accommodations we should be aware of: _____



Seasoned Self-Advocate Kate Gainer Joins GCDD

By Valerie Meadows Suber

Gainer has been on the forefront of Georgia advocacy.



“Unemployable.”

That was the label ascribed to Kate Gainer by a rather unimaginative state vocational rehabilitation counselor who declared her case closed almost 35 years ago.

Gainer’s journey began before there was system-wide impact of the Developmental Disabilities Act of 1970, which offered the first legal definition of developmental disabilities and established state Developmental Disabilities Councils; before passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which prohibited federally-funded programs from discriminating against people with disabilities; and before the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act established the right of children with disabilities to a public school education in an integrated environment.

Even though Gainer had graduated near the top of her high school class, the counselor saw little promise. At that time, many counselors typically lacked the imagination to envision greater possibilities than the two cents per hour workshop job Gainer refused.

The counselor’s lack of imagination and low expectations may have been “the best thing that could have happened,” recalls Gainer. She eventually caught the wave of the disability rights movement. And, she caught fire as well.

The steady encouragement of a loving family, supportive community and the emerging impact of disability rights laws on the American landscape ignited in Gainer a determination and sense of advocacy which brought new opportunities that she was rightly positioned to explore.

Today among many firsts, Gainer distinguishes herself as the only person to serve the Georgia Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities twice. Gainer was a council member from 1983-1993. Now she joins the staff of GCDD as its new Advocacy Director, effective October 1.

“It is recognition that people with disabilities

can guide, lead and achieve, in spite of limitations imposed upon us by the unimaginative expectations of many in the general society,” Gainer explains.

“When I was hired, I did not intend it as a statement of disability recognition. It was recognition of talent, perseverance and hard work.”

For Gainer doing well in school was important early on. Born with athetoid cerebral palsy, she was partially mainstreamed into regular elementary education classes which helped prepare her for success in high school.

“The teacher told us that we could do anything we wanted to do, but she always insisted that whatever we did, we do it well, whether it was a class project, a school play or our homework every day.

“As kids will do, as you get to know your environment, you begin to test your limitations to see how far you can test the rules. So social studies and science turned into going to music and having lunch with my friends,” Gainer recalls.

“The kids took over.”

The football team and band members organized themselves to meet her at every class to escort her... carrying her books and typewriter to her next class. This was managed without prompting by teachers, counselors or the principal. “Kids are wonderful if only adults will leave them alone,” she insists.

School was one matter. Finding a real job with real pay was another.

“I would go into interviews and all of a sudden there would be no jobs. So I ended up sitting home.

“You might lick your wounds for a minute but you pick yourself up and start all over again,” says Gainer.

A lengthy hiatus ended when a supervisor she sought out agreed that Vocational Rehabilitation would pay her tuition if she could get accepted to college. She did. “I think I surprised him by doing exactly what he asked me to do,” she said. Gainer attended Atlanta Junior College (now Atlanta Metropolitan College) and continued her college career at Georgia State University, majoring in marketing and advertising. At Georgia State, she was the founding president of the Disabled Students Association and president of the creative writing club.

Gainer believes her activism is naturally linked to the civil rights movement as she witnessed her parents’ stand against Jim Crow attitudes. That spirit for social change found Gainer joining up with ADAPT in protests for civil rights for people with disabilities. At one such protest in Orlando, Fla. she was among 74 people arrested as they demonstrated to call attention to Medicaid funding needs.

“Kate is still on a mission, and that’s good for all of us.”



Gainer participates in the Long Road Home march.

“Kate is still on a mission, and that’s good for all of us. She is the consummate advocate, and her knowledge of GCDD has prepared her well for her duties as advocacy director,” said Eric Jacobson, GCDD Executive Director.

Gainer will expand grassroots advocacy networks and coordinate GCDD’s leadership and advocacy skills development initiatives. She will also help review and analyze policy proposals, proposed regulations and legislation and position papers, as well as manage special projects and new programs.

According to Jacobson, “It’s the kind of work Kate has been doing for 25 years, and we look forward to her contributions.”

Gainer has served as Disability Affairs Coordinator for the City of Atlanta, Information Specialist for the ADA Resource Center and Assistant Coordinator for Georgia Voices That Count.

She is chair of the Long Road Home steering committee, a member of Atlanta ADAPT and Atlanta People First. Among numerous awards, she is a recent recipient of the Community Advocate of the Year by All Children Are Special, an organization for parents of children with developmental disabilities.

As a GCDD council member, Gainer chaired the committee responsible for the creation of Partners In Policymaking in Georgia. She is a former partner of Georgia Disability Advocates, a for-profit consulting organization that dealt with disability sensitivity and awareness.

Kate Gainer is the advocate’s advocate with many life lessons to share, “No matter what task I am taking on, I can reach back through my history and realize I did that before. It may not have been called that, it may not have been as complicated, but the essential parts of the problem are the same. You just have to figure it out, and you have to have enough confidence in yourself to hang in there.” 1

Mackey Helps GCDD Run More Efficiently

Drelda Mackey has joined the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities as the new administrative program associate. She will provide programmatic and advanced administrative support to the fiscal and executive directors by composing proposals for contracts and consulting agreements.

Additionally, Mackey will coordinate and facilitate contract reimbursement with accounts payable for basic expenditures as well as partial payments from contracts; assist staff and council with grant and project development and implementation; conduct research for policy analysis; and provide technical



assistance to contractors.

Mackey previously worked as an administrative assistant to the general manager for the Houston Rockets basketball team in Houston, Texas. She assisted with player contracts, relocation packages, agents, fans and the NBA draft. Mackey can be reached by calling (404) 657-2119 or through email at drmackey@dhr.state.ga.us.

memoriam

Disability Community Loses Advocate

Former Georgia State Director of Special Education and member of the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities Phil Pickens died September 23. After 26 years of service in the Georgia Department of Education, Pickens retired and was working part time consulting with the Alabama Department of Education and the Southeast Regional Resource Center in Montgomery, Ala.

In 2001, Pickens founded the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership, in which parents of students with disabilities are hired by local school systems to develop collaboration between parents and educators, leading to improved student achievement.

“Phil helped Georgia improve its efforts to provide education to students with disabilities in the least restricted environment. His leadership will be missed,” said GCDD Executive Director Eric Jacobson.

Getting to Work

Employment Institute Expands Successful Jobs Program

Todd Register has a passion for cars. With the help from a grant called Jobs for All, a job was carved out for him at a Hyundai dealership in Douglas county.

“Todd had worked in service industry jobs bagging groceries. In this job, he gets to work around other men and develop relationships,” explained Director of Customized Employment for the Cobb-Douglas Community Services Board (CSB) Doug Crandell.

Register’s job coach at the Cobb-Douglas CSB helped Register find the job by going to the dealership and discussing its needs with management. Through this process, called job carving, Register’s job coach, Gail Harris, determined the dealership needed help keeping the cars in the showroom clean, and someone who would peel the coating off new cars and put the dealer plates on them.

“The salespeople were doing these tasks. We helped the employer solve a problem by hiring Todd,” Crandell said.

Job carving is just one of the methods of an innovative approach to finding jobs for people with cognitive disabilities, called customized employment. In all methods, the first step is simple – start with the individual.

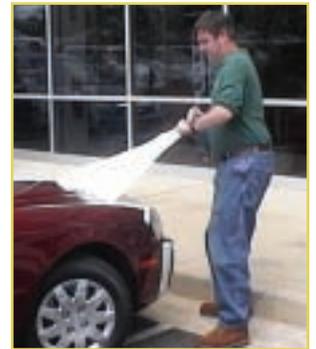
Once a person’s abilities and desires are identified, the customized employment team tries to find a job to match those abilities through job carving, or three other methods:

- **RESOURCE OWNERSHIP** – a resource (such as equipment or a computer) is purchased that the employee brings to his or her job to perform tasks more productively.
- **BUSINESS WITHIN A BUSINESS** – a job seeker starts a small business that complements an existing business.
- **MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT** – the job seeker starts his or her own small business after developing a business plan and identifying funding sources.

The customized employment process started at the Cobb-Douglas CSB five years ago as a result of a grant. The grant provided funds for the organization to purchase equipment, provide business training or hire support personnel as necessary to help its clients find meaningful employment. Since then, the Cobb-Douglas CSB has found other ways to fund these supports to ensure clients continue to find meaningful careers, even without grant funds.

The result was procuring employment for people with significant cognitive disabilities who were thought to be unemployable by more traditional job placement agencies.

In the last year, the remaining funds of the grant will be used to create an Employment Institute that will help Georgia replicate the successful customized employment program; sustain and create innovations at local levels; collect and disseminate data; provide organizational structure and training; transform viewpoints and attitudes; build networks and train leaders; and work with the state to help form policies, find funding, create regulations and overcome obstacles.



In all methods, the first step is simple – start with the individual.

EERS.



Through job carving, a Douglasville car dealership created a job suited to Register's talents.



funds in an Individual Training Account for the job seeker.

The institute will help bring the state one step closer to its Employment First goal of ensuring all people with disabilities are employed or on the path to employment instead of being placed in day programs.

Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities Deputy Director Patricia Nobbie, D.P.A., said, "The new MRDD waiver rate structure change requires providers to change day services to a more community setting. A lot of providers are already getting people out."

Now providers and other members of the community will be able to turn to the Employment Institute as a valuable resource.

"The Employment Institute will help stakeholders learn how they can have an active role in helping people find employment," explained Rich Toscano, a part time public service faculty member at the Institute on Human Development and Disability at the University of Georgia in Athens.

The institute plans to put resource specialists in several areas of the state, potentially including Columbus, Macon, Savannah, Rome, Valdosta and the north mountain area near Athens.

"Resource specialists will connect individuals and their families/providers to supports available in their local area," Toscano explained.

Ideally, the specialists would work with transitioning high schoolers, bringing together counselors from the Department of Labor's Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR), employers, benefits navigators and others to develop an employment plan that would identify the supports the student would need for successful employment.

"It's important to involve VR early because it gives students the opportunity to try jobs," advised Nobbie. "Students can request VR support when they turn 18."

As part of this process, funding sources would be identified that would pay for the supports the person would need, from purchasing resources, to job coaching, to transportation and assistive technology. Once the institute is operational, the Statewide Independent Living Council will hold these

already allocated dollars or be a virtual account - the identified amount of money that could become available on behalf of the individual," Toscano said.

This will also help protect the job seeker's Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Medicaid benefits in the early stages of formalizing a customized employment approach because the money wouldn't be in their own bank account until the business or employment venture becomes viable and self-sustaining.

Potential funding sources might include money from the family, VR, Medicaid, etc. Resource specialists might also find alternate ways to achieve supports. For example, if no money is available for a job coach, a potential employer might already have someone employed who would be qualified to help show the job seeker how to do the job.

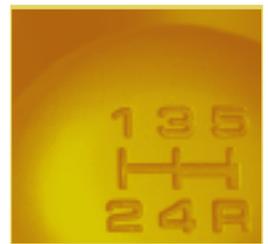
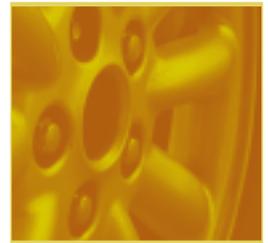
Because the Employment Institute will be interdisciplinary, working with the Departments of Education, Labor, Human Resources, Community Health and others, one of the goals is to develop a common language across the systems to make the process easier.

The end goal of the institute is to help communities across the state create Customized Strategic Action Plans for people with disabilities that identify type of work, specific employers, how equipment will be funded, etc.

Currently, the Employment Institute is being funded through a Workforce Action grant, the Georgia Department of Labor's Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the Department of Human Resources' Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases, the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Georgia Advocacy Office.

Toscano said if enough local and state funds are raised for the institute, it could receive up to four times the amount in matching federal funds.

"Blending funding sources can help us get more resources to people," he said.





Federal Research Shows Positive Impact of Customized Employment

Georgia's revolutionary customized employment project would not have been possible without a grant the Cobb-Douglas Community Services Board (CSB) received from the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) to implement the strategy.

"ODEP is now identifying very promising practices from its experimental projects, such as customized employment, located in Career OneStop Centers, such as the program in Cobb county," revealed Susan Parker, director of the Office of Policy and Research for ODEP. "Our job is to identify ways to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities. We do it through evidence-based research. We are not a regulatory nor an adjudicatory agency."

The department funds grants that are used at local levels, then measures the impact the grant had on finding jobs for people with disabilities.

"The Department of Labor is interested in taking on various practices that serve to increase employment for people who want to work and don't," Parker said. When ODEP finds a program that works well, it shares information about the success of the program during workforce development conferences, briefing sessions and workshops. Georgia's customized

employment program is one of those.

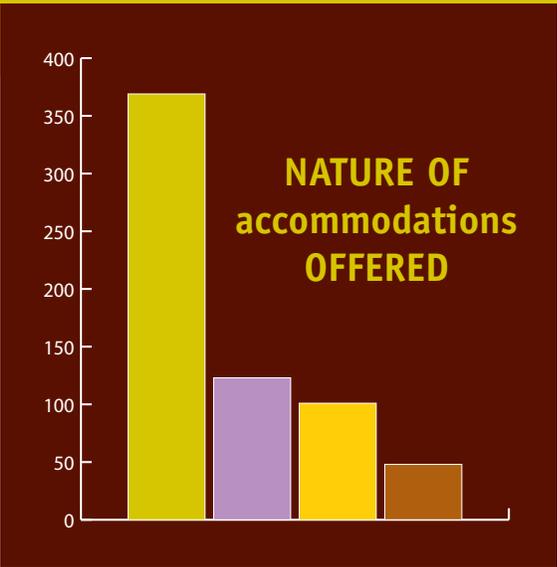
"Montgomery (a county in Maryland) Works and Cobb county are absolutely the most promising," Parker said.

In June, 2006, ODEP released research results of a study of 536 people who received customized employment services as a result of ODEP grants.

"All the people we've worked with in customized employment have severe

"Our job is to identify ways to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities."

Hours Worked Per Week:



- 69% Flexible Scheduling
- 23% Job Coaching & Natural Supports
- 19% Special Equipment
- 9% Assistive Technology

disabilities," she said. The research revealed some positive trends.

"Of the 536 people surveyed, only a very tiny percent worked in jobs that are traditionally reserved for people with disabilities," Parker revealed.

Other key findings included:

- The average salary was \$8.60, and only one respondent earned below minimum wage
- 63% had a position with career advancement potential
- 33% had been in their jobs more than 12 months, while 23% had been in their jobs for six – 11 months
- 60% didn't make application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, and 2% went completely off the SSI roles
- 68% did not apply for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits, and five people went off SSDI rolls

ODEP continues to monitor the progress of people who receive customized employment services and is planning to release more results in January. "These results show the positive effect customized employment has to help people with disabilities enter and stay in the labor force," Parker said. "These are people who had done little or no work before and had been previously bypassed for jobs because they have significant disabilities." 1

Teenager Goes from Volunteer to Employee

By Valerie Smith Buxton

After seeing many students with cognitive disabilities have a difficult time finding meaningful employment, parent and former member of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, Sharon O'Prey, wasn't taking any chances with her daughter, Adrienne.

By age 16, Sharon O'Prey had her daughter volunteering at three different places: her dentist's office, her orthodontist's office and her church.

"Since Adrienne was in 7th or 8th grade she wanted to work in the medical profession," her mom said.

One day, Sharon O'Prey had an insight at the dentist's office. "Our dentist always gives patients a bag with a toothbrush, toothpaste and floss in it to take home. I asked, 'Who makes those bags?' I found out the hygienists do. I asked if Adrienne could do it, and they said yes," she explained.

Similarly, their orthodontist, Dr. Michael Williams, handed out bottles of candy to patients who had their braces removed. Adrienne O'Prey started filling the candy bottles in January 2005.

Sharon O'Prey invited members of the staff at William Orthodontics to participate on her daughter's person-centered planning team, and as a result, discovered they thought she could perform other tasks around the office, if she could learn to properly put on surgical gloves. After learning to do that, the staff taught her how to sterilize equipment, stock wax and mouthwash and clean exam areas after patients

leave.

She performed these tasks on a volunteer basis, under the supervision of office staff, for one hour a week.

Last spring, Williams was invited to attend Adrienne O'Prey's person-centered planning session where team member Jenny Keller gave a presentation about customized employment. Williams shared that he often hired teenagers during the summer to help around the office.

Keller prepared a presentation about Adrienne O'Prey's strengths and presented it to Williams. "She said, 'here's what Adrienne can bring to your business. What can you give to her?'" Sharon O'Prey said.

"It's easy for me to ask people to allow Adrienne to volunteer. As a parent, I couldn't be that straightforward and ask for her to be paid," she said.

Williams increased her hours to 7.5 and agreed to begin paying her in June, if she had a job coach to support her. Jobs for All currently pays for her job coach, and eventually, Sharon O'Prey hopes the Georgia Department of Labor's Vocational Rehabilitation Program takes over the



Adrienne O'Prey readies sterilized tools for use.



Dr. Michael Williams began paying O'Prey in June.

Adrienne O'Prey says she enjoys her job and has become friends with other members of the staff.

payment of a coach, until her daughter no longer needs one.

The O'Preys homeschool their daughter, allowing her to work three days a week. "Adrienne works Mondays 10 - 12:30; Wednesdays 7 - 9:30; and Thursdays 2:30 - 5," her mom said.

Adrienne O'Prey says she enjoys her job and has become friends with other members of the staff. She knows exactly what she wants to save her paychecks for, her favorite car, "a slug bug - cream," she said. 1





Photo courtesy of disability LINK.



Friedman at his graduation from Georgia Voices that Count - an advocacy training and support project in Atlanta in February 2004. Photograph by George Andl.

Jobs for All, VR Team to Find Man Second Job

By Valerie Smith Buxton

Last year, Glen Friedman found a job he enjoyed, helping plan and run activities for the residents at EdenBrook Nursing Home in Dunwoody.

Now Friedman, who is only working four hours per week, is looking for a second job with the help of an employment specialist, Mary LaLiberty, from the Jobs for All program. Jobs for All uses the principles of customized employment – starting with clients’

dreams, then finding a job that fits those dreams using a number of different methods (see page 8).

Friedman has some specific ideas in mind for what type of job he’s looking for. “Office work,” he said, “Receptionist, I guess you’d say.”

When a potential job opened at a bakery, LaLiberty and Friedman met with Kara Whitney, a

counselor who works with the Georgia Department of Labor’s Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR), to see if the agency could provide a job coach and transportation to the job.

“It’s not unusual for us to work with other community organizations,” said Jennifer Hudson, regional director for Region 3A of VR.

Unfortunately, the job at the bakery did not materialize, so now both VR and LaLiberty are looking for a job for Friedman.

Hudson said, “We will blend his needs and wants with his physical capabilities,” she said.

Friedman has since had a vocational evaluation, and will also undergo a psychological evaluation. “Once the information is in, we’ll develop a plan of what his vocational goal will be,” Hudson said.

“They’re finding out what my weaknesses and strongnesses are,” Friedman said.

LaLiberty hopes working together with VR will help lead to system change. “VR looks at the regular labor market and plugs a person into a job, according to their skills and abilities,” she said. This process can eliminate the potential for a job for some people, who may not possess the skills to do every part of a job.

“We go in and carve a job – take parts of the job description that the client can do,” she explained. “We want Glen to find a career, not just a job,” LaLiberty said.

Assistant Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services Peggy Rosser said the department is starting to use the customized employment model more often after using the method successfully with Cobb Works in Cobb county. “One of our counselors said that customized employment enabled people the opportunity to work at something closer to their interests in dreams. We recently secured the services of Dr. Michael Callahan, considered the premier expert in the field of customized employment, to provide training to VR teams to increase their expertise, competence and utilization of a customized approach,” she revealed. ¹

“We want Glen to find a career, not just a job.”

In the past year, VR has found jobs for 4,477 people, 2,606 of whom it has identified as having a cognitive disability. The department has codified 1,893 of them as having the following cognitive disabilities:



1,893 COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

Hiring

By Christina Rosell

Beyond Disability

Discovery Day Appeals to Hearts and Bottom Line

After the general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers signed Jackie Robinson, the first African-American Major League Baseball player, Robinson and his teammates experienced discrimination, especially during spring training in Florida. The community kept the talented player from participating with his teammates socially, and management saw this as a problem – they didn't want him to quit because they valued him. So they built Dodgertown, a complex including restaurants, bowling alleys, golf courses and more so that the Dodgers were truly inclusive of all their players.

Neil Romano, member of the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities and founder of America's Strength Foundation, used Robinson's situation to illustrate how business effects social change during the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities Making a Difference Discovery Day on September 21.

"Business heals its own problems until society catches up," Romano said, comparing what the Dodgers did for African-Americans with what business could do for people with disabilities.

Romano believes business can be more effective

than the government at giving people with disabilities opportunities for real jobs, and naturally, for all of the things that follow – real homes, education, transportation and more. But, he said, organizations first need to be convinced that hiring people with disabilities is good for business.

"For too long, the model for employment that has been used for people with disabilities has been what I call the 'day old bread' model. 'Please take this loaf of bread – we'll give you a discount on it'... Does that sound like a sale to somebody? Does that sound like you're trying to move goods that nobody wants? And isn't that a mindset that the employer then hears and thinks, 'Why, why should I be the one?' It's the wrong statement. And by the way, it doesn't work."

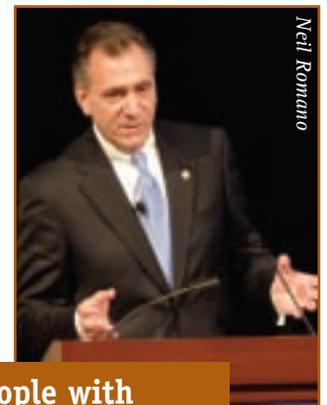
Romano's company, America's Strength Foundation, The Gallup Poll and businesses across the country teamed up to survey Americans on how they felt about businesses that employ people with disabilities.

They found that 87% of consumers would prefer to give their business to companies who hire people with disabilities. They also found that 71% of Americans work with someone with a disability and consider the value of their work equal or better than that of their colleagues without disabilities. The survey also found that after several years, people forget their co-workers even have disabilities.

"People with disabilities have value. They have talents," Romano said. "Business wants a good solid bottom line, and they want a good solid base of employees to help them get that."

Discovery Day

At the sixth annual Discovery Day, sponsored by The Home Depot, the Southern Company and the InterContinental Hotels Group, Georgia professionals were introduced to business leaders who spoke on why hiring people with disabilities is good for business, and heard from employed people with disabilities about their contributions to their companies.



Neil Romano

"People with disabilities have value. They have talents."



Eric Jacobson

“One of our main purposes here today is to have a dialogue about creating a diverse employee base, which helps you as businesses be more productive in having employees with disabilities that can help you build your businesses,” GCDD Executive Director Eric Jacobson explained.

He pointed out that 49+ million people with disabilities and their family members make up a \$3 trillion market, something that should catch the attention of any good businessperson.

Dave Altman, vice president of corporate communications at the Southern Company, one of the sponsors, challenged business leaders saying, “It’s most important that we

create action coming out of here...how do we get people engaged and act and create opportunities and jobs?”

Another sponsor, The Home Depot, is a good example of just how to do that. “For many years, we’ve understood the importance of hiring people with disabilities,” said Gloria Johnson Goins, vice president of diversity and inclusion. She explained that the do-it-yourself giant has an Olympic Job Program, where athletes are paid a full salary with benefits, but only work 20 hours a week so they can train for the Olympics and Paralympics. She pointed out that if The Home Depot was a country, it would have taken 16th place in the last Paralympics.

Ralph Green, a member of the U.S. Paralympics 2006 Alpine Ski Team, is one such employee. His left leg was amputated as a teenager, before he discovered his interest in competitive skiing. Now he works 20 hours a week as a Home Depot paint specialist in Colorado and trains for competitions the rest of his time. “Without that, I wouldn’t be able to ski race,” he said.

The Home Depot started working with another work adjustment program called Deaf-2-Work in Atlanta in 2000. “There was a high turnover rate for deaf associates,” said Layne Thome, director of associates services. “We wanted to see if we could overcome the barriers.” The turnover rate for employ-

ees hired through this program is only 20%, a drastic reduction for people with hearing disabilities, who normally have a substantially higher turnover rate.

A freight team associate, Curtis Coggins, communicates with co-workers and supervisors on paper and with pagers. “I did have my concerns in the beginning because of safety issues,” said Operations Manager Steven Kouvaris. “But Curtis is one of my hardest workers; he puts in 150%.”

Supported Employment

“What jobs are people getting? Food and cleaning,” said Jennifer Briggs, president and founder of Briggs & Associates. “That’s not choice!”

An employment service for people with developmental disabilities, Briggs’ company matches jobs and seekers based on the applicants’ interests and companies’ needs. Nearly two years ago, she partnered with Al Blackwelder, chief operating officer at Emory Crawford Long Hospital, to do just that. She found that nurses and other medically trained health care staff also had the responsibilities of stocking carts, cleaning equipment and escorting patients and their families throughout the hospital. But the staff was needed by patients, carts were empty, machinery needed repair and patients and families were often lost in the halls.

“It involved taking job descriptions and taking things out and combining them,” Blackwelder said. He praised Briggs for doing most of the work and helping him reorganize without expense.

One resulting job was IV pump maintenance. And a year later, Blackwelder



Ralph Green

is saving significant dollars on pump maintenance. “I’m doing nothing more than what’s good for business,” he said.

Briggs’ program is expanding to other hospitals including Piedmont Hospital, as well as to other businesses in completely different industries such as SunTrust and Atlanta Public Schools.

According to Katherine McCary, SunTrust Banks vice president of human resources, it was the diversity of the bank’s customers that caused the bank to consider hiring a more diverse workforce. She claimed that if the bank staff doesn’t reflect the



Gloria Johnson Goins

“For many years, we’ve understood the importance of hiring people with disabilities.”



diversity of the population, people will find other places to bank.

Job Carving

Another employment agency for people with disabilities focuses on customized employment, or job carving. Kate Brady, Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD) program associate at the University of Georgia and project coordinator for Cobb Works said, “We are always looking to individualize the opportunity so it positively affects the employer’s business.” She explained that the right job fit relates to job satisfaction, leading to low turnover. “Any HR person knows that’s good business practice,” she said.

One example of a customized job fit is one between Takeiya Bell and her employer, Royalty Children’s Wear.

Ella Scott, a job coach at the Cobb-Douglas Community Services Board learned Bell’s dream was to become a fashion designer. Bell and Scott searched for a job where she could cultivate her passion for clothing.

In discussions with Cylynda Nesmith-Mahari, owner of Royalty Children’s Wear, it was discovered that the shop owner was losing time on projects because she had to outsource embroidery work. Bell negotiated a position where she could learn, but also provide skills and a resource – an embroidery machine – that would help the shop save money and time while completing a higher volume of projects.

“Almost any job can be developed and carved in a way that is a win-win,” said Rich Toscano, IHDD public service faculty at UGA, and Jobs for All director of employment projects.



Takeiya Bell

Education and Disability Career Services

According to Sarah Helm, coordinator for career opportunities for students with disabilities at the University of Tennessee, the unemployment rate for college graduates with disabilities is about 40%, compared with only 4% for graduates without disabilities. She also discovered that students with disabilities were far less likely to utilize career services on campus.

“These students are really falling through the cracks,” Helm said, adding that students are more likely to get jobs if they have had internship experience, but students with disabilities often lack that as well.

After these startling statistics were discovered, the university realized a better link was needed between UT Career Services and the Office of Disability Services. So the Disability-Careers office was created as a liaison between the two existing departments. As a result, students with disabilities are receiving career path assessments, counseling and interview preparation as any student would, but they are also learning about self-advocacy, self-disclosure and requesting reasonable accommodations in the workplace. The office also communicates the importance of internships and helps students find them.

Michael Boyce, a student with a disability at the Georgia Institute of Technology is in his fourth year and recognized the importance of work experience early on. He recently completed a 12-week internship with IBM.

Boyce realizes that people in the workplace may be uncomfortable with him at first, but he sees that as a challenge to show them he’s capable.

“I never say I can’t do something,” he said. “I say ‘How will I do this?’”

Booz Allen Hamilton, a global consulting firm, founded Emerging Leaders, a program that places college students with disabilities in summer internships. For more information, visit <http://emerging-leaders.com>. A national organization that helps qualified college graduates with disabilities find jobs is Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) with over 450 employers in the network at www.cosdonline.org.

GCDD chairperson Tom Seegmueller reminded the crowd, “People with disabilities are part of our community and if given the chance, they can share with you the many gifts and talents they have.”

At the end of the day, at least one participant had made a true discovery. Al Vivian, president and CEO of Basic Diversity in Fayetteville plans to expand his diversity counseling to include training on the value of people with disabilities in the workplace. “We’re about to have a mass shortage of people in the workforce – 10 million fewer. There’s going to be a need, yet we’re still overlooking people with disabilities.”

Jacobson ended the day by daring business leaders to think differently about their workforce, “I want to challenge you to hire one or two people with disabilities over the next six months.” 1

“People with disabilities ARE PART OF OUR community and if given the chance, they can share with you the many GIFTS and TALENTS they have.”

PERSPECTIVES

Man Starts Nonprofit with Customized Employment

By Christopher Coleman



Christopher Coleman believes that his disability is a gift from God, and he wants to use it to motivate, encourage and challenge individuals to live a life beyond where they're living today. He has spoken to people at Coca-Cola, Atlanta City Hall, Harry Norman Realtors and more, spreading his belief that when a person reaches beyond the challenges, adversities, circumstances and misfortunate situations of life, he will have joy in the palms of his hands.

I was pronounced dead at birth. After 15 minutes of no oxygen, through the power of God I was brought back to life. Why do I open up an article about employment with a sentence like that? It is simple! My career path has always been my destiny. Everyone has what I would call a Vocational DNA. This DNA is what makes them come alive, energetic and excited to work in a certain profession. What I like about the term DNA is it does not matter if you are black or white, fat or skinny, disabled or not, we all have it. We all have a Vocational DNA. When this is found, Customized Employment becomes a reality. To find my Vocational DNA I had to answer the question: "What do I want to do physically as well as emotionally for a lifetime?"

Today, I am a keynote speaker and evangelist. I use my life to challenge, motivate and encourage people to a triumphant lifestyle. I share my ups and down, victories and defeats, and life lessons with

"I use my life to challenge, motivate and encourage people to a triumphant lifestyle."

churches, schools, disability groups, corporations and civic groups across the country. My profession not only calls me to be integrated, involved and included in my community; I am responsible for influencing the community as well. This is all accomplished through a nonprofit organization called Empowered Ministries Inc., of which I am the founder, program director and chairman of the board of directors. Try selling that to your Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor.

I have been fortunate over the past year to work with a VR counselor and supervisor who believe everyone has a dream and a contribution. Therefore; I

was given an opportunity to achieve my full potential. I still hit a brick wall with Vocational Rehab. Their policies and procedures consisted of a traditional outlook on microenterprise. I needed a program that had a non-traditional outlook and believes in individualization. Sally Atwell, at the Shepherd Center, encouraged me to apply for a grant administered by CobbWorks/Project Exceed. Frankly, I did not think it would be beneficial. I was surprised when I did not run into another brick wall.

The grant has been wonderful. One thing needed was a career coach in my area of expertise. One who understood the speaking profession and could visualize the contribution I can bring to this industry. Through the grant, I was given the opportunity to work with the best in my industry. I had the opportunity to work with Juanell Teague, a freelance speaking coach who was on the forefront of Zig Ziglar's career and was instrumental to where he is today.

I also have been given the privilege of working with two other coaches. One who specializes in business plans for nonprofit, and another who specializes in nonprofit boards and the role of the CEO. When you have a disability, you often wonder if anyone will give you a real shot at becoming all that you can be. This grant has done just that for me. 1

Two People Make the Most of their Talents at Jobs they Enjoy

My Road to Employment

By Tameeka L. Hunter

Growing up as an African-American woman with a congenital disability, my status as a “triple-minority” made me acutely aware that my road to employment would be a bumpy one or at least, the road less traveled. While in school, I was “mainstreamed,” and I distinctly remember attending a career counseling program in high school where the presenter said, “You can always work as a server to make extra money while you are in school to make ends meet.” Since I have a cerebral palsy and use crutches to walk, working as a server would not be an option for me - even as a temporary solution when money was tight. Although the presenter’s comment was harmless, it was obvious that he had not considered the possibility of there being a person with a physical disability in the audience. This experience (along with many others) reinforced my desire to obtain an education and also to work in a capacity where I would be able to advocate for increased awareness and sensitivity about disability-related issues.

When I graduated with my first degree, I found it difficult to find work. Based on some of the comments I received during interviews, I began to realize that in many cases the reason I was not extended the job offer was because I had disability. My painful and unsuccessful job search efforts only served to strengthen my resolve to educate myself about disability laws and issues. In one of many efforts to get more disability-related training, I attended a Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities-supported program, Partners in Policymaking. This experience proved invaluable for many reasons. While participating in this program, I became acquainted with the program coordinator. She knew that I had been working in the field of disability for some time by then and was interested in working with students with disabilities, specifically. She mentioned that there was a job that sounded perfect for me on the Georgia Tech Web site. While exploring their Web site, I noticed that there was a position as Disability Services Specialist for

the Access Disabled Assistance Programs for Tech Students (A.D.A.P.T.S.) Office. I applied, went through two rounds of interviews, and was ultimately offered the job, which is in the Division of Student Affairs.

The A.D.A.P.T.S. office has over 213 students registered. The majority of A.D.A.P.T.S. students have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder, learning disabilities, and/or chronic health conditions. My experiences at Georgia Tech have helped me to further develop as a professional. I have been working in this role full-time for five years, and in my current role, I provide disability-related accommodations for

“...the biggest piece of advice I can offer to people searching for work is to network, network, network.”

students with disabilities. Some of my essential functions include: reviewing neuropsychological evaluations, providing counseling to students and supervising one full-time administrative assistant and four undergraduate assistants who work in the A.D.A.P.T.S. Testing Center as proctors. I meet with students and their families, provide disability sensitivity and awareness training and co-chair the Disability and Diversity Week committee. Early in my career, my primary focus was on the plight of people with physical disabilities; however, I have realized people with hidden disabilities, (i.e. learning disabilities) face a challenge that people with physical disabilities do not: I am never asked to legitimize my disability.

According to the Center for Career Strategies (1989), 63.3% of people find work informally, like I did, through networking. Given this, the biggest piece of advice I can offer to people searching for work is to network, network, network – tell everyone you know about your career goals because you never know which conversation could lead to your next great opportunity. ¹



Tameeka L. Hunter is pursuing a Masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling at Georgia State University, and is currently employed as the Disability Services Specialist for Georgia Institute of Technology. Hunter was recently reappointed to the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities. Prior to serving at Georgia Tech, Ms. Hunter was employed as the Disability Affairs Coordinator the City of Atlanta, Mayor’s Office.

Ms. Hunter has a congenital disability, cerebral palsy, and has dedicated her life to serving the disability community. She is a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and enjoys cooking and reading in her spare time.

GCDD awards

By Christina Rosell

legislators, media professionals, advocates

with developmental disabilities and their families.



Lisa Crane, reporter/weekend anchor at WAGA Fox 5 with Vallorie Butler, GCDD Vice Chairperson

"It is a good feeling knowing that you, in some small way, have been able to help improve one's quality of life."

Cheryl Laurendeau receiving the C. Anthony Cunningham Council Member of the Year award



The year 2006 was a landmark for disability advocacy and legislative success. The single largest addition to the Independent Care Waiver Program (ICWP) funding was approved during the 2006 legislative session. An unprecedented approval of millions of dollars from the FY'06 supplemental budget was awarded to recipients of the Deeming or Katie Beckett Waiver to reinstate their supports that had been cut off without warning. And 1,500 new supports were budgeted for individuals with disabilities through the Mental Retardation Waiver Program (MRWP).

These landmarks were celebrated at the annual Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) 2006 Making A Difference Awards Ceremony at the Renaissance Atlanta Hotel on July 20. GCDD Chair Tom Seegmueller welcomed advocates, media professionals and legislators to the award ceremony, including Fox 5 reporter Lisa Crane, civil rights activist Kate Gainer and gubernatorial candidate Mark Taylor. "Tonight we celebrate our successes and hard work toward achieving a common vision of including all people in all parts of our communities, neighborhoods, cities and state," Seegmueller said.

Legislative Awards

After a moving performance of "You Raise Me Up" by GCDD's own Scott Crain with Vanessa Oxley, Sen. Greg Goggans (R-Douglas) was presented with the Legislative Leader of the Year award. As the chair of the Health Appropriations Subcommittee, Goggans supported the ICWP funding which amounted to \$3.3 million. "Sen. Goggans came through on his commitment to provide funding for 152 ICWP slots, virtually eliminating the known waiting list for this waiver, which was extraordinary considering that the budget contained no funds for these waiver services at the beginning of the legislative session," said award presenter Rita Spivey, president of ARC of Satilla.

Goggans responded, "It is a good feeling knowing that you, in some small way, have been able to help improve one's quality of life."

Next, Sen. Regina Thomas (D-Savannah) was also recognized for being an invaluable legislative leader

in 2006, when she sponsored a floor amendment to the FY'06 supplemental budget to add \$3.6 million for families who had been denied access to Medicaid through the Katie Beckett Waiver Program. The funds were later matched by the House of Representatives, totaling \$7.6 million for families who had been denied services. GCDD council member Lynnette Bragg presented the award, saying, "Thank you Sen. Thomas, for taking a stand for families who need a little help in raising their children with special needs."

Thomas said that when she found out she would be honored with the award, she wondered what she had done that was out of the ordinary. "Naturally I was humbled and pleasantly surprised," she said. "I just know that helping those who need it the most is something that I enjoy doing,"

A third legislative leader was honored for his work as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and the extraordinary time and interest he invested in meeting with Unlock the Waiting Lists!, ICWP and Katie Beckett Waiver advocates. GCDD member Dr. Lee Tian said Rep. Ben Harbin (R-Evans), "...always made time to hear from advocates, even if we just popped in to the Appropriations offices."

Media Awards

"We started a Media Professional of the Year award several years ago because we recognized the role that the media plays in informing people about the issues and providing us with information on what is taking place," Eric Jacobson, GCDD executive director, explained.

Gracie Bonds Staples, a reporter for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and Lisa Crane, reporter and weekend anchor at WAGA Fox 5 News were named Outstanding Media Professionals of the year in 2006.

"As a journalist, my goal every day is to make a difference," said Crane. "In the stories I did on the Katie Beckett Waiver issue, I knew it was an important issue that needed to be explored."

Crane received the award for accurately and responsibly presenting the Katie Beckett Medicaid issue.

Vallorie Butler, GCDD vice chairperson, presented the media professional award of the year, saying,



Sen. Greg Goggans with Eric Jacobson

Al Duvall

“The media attention created by Fox 5... helped to create the pressure that led to the legislature’s appropriation of \$7.6 million to begin to address the needs of families who would no longer be eligible for Medicaid under Katie Beckett.”

Kate Gainer, advocacy coordinator for disABILITY LINK, presented the award to Bonds Staples for being the “lone journalist” to spend an entire day on the road with GCDD, delving into the issues of unemployment of people with disabilities. “She is a prolific columnist and news writer whose distinctive style of story telling has made a significant impact on the way the newspaper covers the matter of race and the lives of every day people, including persons with disabilities and their families,” Gainer said. “I’m told Gracie even spent considerable time working through ‘people first language’ to get it exactly right.”

Advocate Awards

Next, Charles Hopkins with the Georgia Department of Human Resources’ Office of Developmental Disabilities presented the Advocate of the Year award to Al Duvall for his personal testimony on HB 633 known as the Children’s Freedom Initiative and his work as a motivational speaker for independent living. “Children should be free,” Duvall said. “No one should have to live in an institution.”

Partners in Policymaking graduate Linda Wilson was also honored as an Advocate of the Year for her work on Unlock the Waiting Lists! and her work as a parent advocate in the Coweta School System. “Receiving the Advocate of the Year award was such an honor. The recognition helped me to realize that people are taking notice of these advocacy efforts. And, it is encouragement for working even harder,” she said.

The last honor of the evening, the C. Anthony Cunningham Council Member of the Year award, was bestowed upon Cheryl Laurendeau. Appointed to GCDD in 1998, she has chaired the Program Implementation and Funding committee, served on the Executive Committee and always volunteers whenever and wherever she is needed.

“The difference we all make, one by one, is creating positive changes for everyone with a disability in Georgia,”

Laurendeau said. 1



Sen. Regina Thomas and Lt. Gov. Mark Taylor

“The difference we all make,
one by one,
is creating positive changes
for everyone with a disability
in Georgia.”

Georgia advocate and poet Gail Bottoms read a few of her poems at GCDD’s Making A Difference Awards Ceremony in July. Eric Jacobson, GCDD executive director, also read one of her poems about the MRWP waiting list.

unlock the waiting list

Unlock the waiting list,

what’s it about?

Why do we talk and why do we shout?

Why do people work into the night?

And get up early at morning light?

Why do we go to the State Capitol steps?

What is our reason?

Why do we do it?

I will tell you why.

People with disabilities are the reason why.

So they can live in the community is why we try.

Institutions are not places to be.

People with disabilities want to be free.

Free to live, work, and play where they choose.

To try their hand at many things.

To risk, win or lose.

To unlock the waiting list is the way this
can be done.

Therefore, we will work until civil rights

for all people will be won!

Transit Options Vary ACROSS GEORGIA

Lack of transportation is one of the biggest obstacles to employment for people with disabilities. Even in cities with mass transit, people find themselves unable to get to work, the grocery store or social engagements. Rural areas without transit can be even worse.

In Georgia, local governments are in charge of finding transportation for their citizens. The state Department of Transportation only plays a limited role, according to spokesperson David Spear.

Georgia's gas tax, which pays for transportation projects, is structured so that it can only be spent on road and bridge construction and maintenance. With this limitation, the DOT is installing audible walk/don't walk signals so people with visual impairments can more safely cross the street. In addition, some walk/don't walk signals are equipped with a timing device.

"This helps people in wheelchairs know how much time they have to safely cross the street."

These pedestrian improvements are installed at the request of local governments and sometimes individuals, as funding allows.

However, the DOT does receive some federal funds that can help. "We provide funds for local governments to buy rolling stock that is ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant," Spear said. Under this program, the DOT has purchased buses for MARTA as well as rural transit systems, but "the operating cost and maintenance falls to the local government. We can't give sustained operational support," he said.

While the state doesn't have an overall plan for transportation, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is in the beginning stages of a comprehensive plan for the 18-county metro Atlanta area, according to Senior Planner David Schilling of the ARC Transportation Planning Division.

A Human Services Transportation Plan Steering Committee had its first meeting September 26 to discuss the issue, which encompasses transportation for people with disabilities, the elderly and people with lower incomes. The committee was formed as a result of the federal Safe, Affordable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) passed in August 2005.

"We need to find out what's out there now, do an inventory of services and where they're funded," Schilling said. ARC hopes to coordinate the services they find to save money for the affected counties and time for people with disabilities.

"No one has looked at this as regional or thought about how to have counties coordinate travel from Douglas to Fayette."

**Atlanta Regional
Commission
Counties**

**Fulton DeKalb Cobb Gwinnett Coweta Cherokee Douglas
Fayette Clayton Henry Rockdale Paulding Bartow Spalding
Walton Forsyth Newton Barrow**



“No one has looked at this as regional or thought about how to have counties coordinate travel from Douglas to Fayette,” he said.

While many rural counties in Georgia struggle with providing transportation to residents with disabilities, Talbot county in central Georgia has overcome the challenge. While the county only has about 6,500 residents, it also has four accessible vans to help those who are transportation challenged get where they need to go.

The system has been in place for nearly 20 years and has worked well for the residents who use it. “We have four drivers and two substitutes,” explained Sandra Higginbotham, the program manager for the project.

Paid for with county funds and a matching

grant from the Federal Transit Administration, the small, but effective transit system covers a county that is over 393 square miles big. Last year, 40,585 one-way trips were made on the system. Rates for the trips vary based on how many miles are traveled.

“Talbot has one of the best systems in the state,” Spear said.

As part of its five-year plan, the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities wants to research and propose solutions to the transportation problems in the state. Readers are invited to submit their problems and/or solutions to GCDD on its Web log (blog) www.gatransportationadvocates.blogspot.com or by calling (404) 657-2126, TDD (404) 657-2133, or 888-ASK-GCDD (1-888-275-4233). ¹

“Talbot has one of the best systems in the state.”

Consumer Group Advocates for Better Paratransit

A growing frustration with late trips and safety issues led Sandra Owen, a Georgia State University faculty member and paratransit rider, to form Concerned Paratransit Riders to address the problem with MARTA.

Soon, 61 other riders joined the organization, and the Disability Law and Policy Center became involved.

“We’re not out to sue. We’re out to monitor change where there’s been an impingement of ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) law,” Owen said.

Owen, who uses a wheelchair, has had issues with seatbelts and wheelchair lifts not working properly, as well as vans not operating on time.

Currently, the group has a good working relationship with MARTA. At a recent meeting, the group was invited to see a van

MARTA was planning to buy, and they pointed out the van was not ADA compliant.

Paratransit riders who are experiencing problems with the system, should report the problem directly to MARTA Customer Service at 404-848-4800.

In the event MARTA is unresponsive to problems experienced by paratransit riders, the group also works closely with the Federal Transit Administration’s Office of Civil Rights that monitors organizations that receive federal funds to ensure they are in compliance with ADA regulations.

Paratransit riders who have had unresolved problems with MARTA are urged to document the problems by mailing or faxing written summaries of the complaint, including date and time of incident, MARTA complaint number and the follow up to the Federal Transit Administration: ¹

“We’re not out to sue. We’re out to monitor change where there’s been an impingement of ADA law.”

Mr. Akira Sano
Chief, Internal Operations
Office of Civil Rights
Federal Transit Administration
400 - 7th Street, SW, Room 9102
Washington, D.C. 20590
Fax: 202-366-3475

However, with the new group, Owen hopes most issues can be resolved locally, and said it has already had some success as a result of its advocacy efforts. “Things are beginning to change – the vans are in better shape. We just want safer, better service for children, adults and senior citizens. It’s been an excellent experience in advocacy.” ¹

Who will you Vote for?

2006 CANDIDATES SHARE POSITIONS ON DISABILITY

VOTE!

Some candidates have learned a lot about disability. And others have a lot to learn. But the goal of the Georgia Disability Vote Project (GDVP) is not to educate the candidates. Instead, they educate voters about the candidates.

In 2004, a coalition of individuals and organizations in the disability community formed the GDVP, committed to expanding the participation of people with disabilities and disability advocates in the election process. "All of us expressed an interest in voting and getting people with disabilities out to vote," said Gretl Glick with the GDVP.

The group compiled a database of 53,000 people with disabilities and their families and service providers in Georgia and has been encouraging voter registration all summer long.

Now, the main focus has turned to educating registered voters on the candidates' positions on disability inclusion, employment, education and more. GDVP mailed a Candidate Survey and Voter Guide to the registered voters in its database this October. The candidates' abbreviated answers are printed in this issue. Neither of the gubernatorial candidates responded to the survey by the time this issue was published. More information and complete candidates' answers are available on www.gdvp.org.

AND DON'T FORGET TO VOTE ON NOVEMBER 7!

Georgia Disability Vote Project

Rehabilitation cooperative agreements with local school systems to provide intensive transition services to more students with disabilities.

Brent Brown (R): A 50% unemployment rate is unacceptable. It's time to transform the Department of Labor from a reactive office, dealing with unemployment, into a proactive one. I will: 1) Use surpluses from Vocational Rehabilitation services to pilot innovative services, 2) Leverage purchasing power of the state government to create employment opportunities for people with disabilities and 3) Build a team with broad aspirations that cuts across governmental departments.

Real Learning: A Question for State School Superintendent Candidates

Q The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has shown significant results in assisting students with disabilities take and pass standardized state tests. However, Georgia requires that all students must take and pass a graduation test, which may not recognize the different learning styles of students with disabilities and may result in a significant number of students not receiving any kind of exit document from high school, particularly those with disabilities. A special education diploma prevents students from entering college, most tech schools and limits employment options. As State School Superintendent, would you support and implement policies that allow students with disabilities to achieve a diploma through alternative or multiple routes?

Incumbent Kathy Cox (R): As we become more sophisticated and advanced in our state testing program, it is very important that we use performance assessments that allow students to demonstrate proficiency in, and knowledge of, the standards in ways other than multiple choice or written assessments. This diversity of assessment

Real Careers: A Question for Department of Labor Candidates

Q People with disabilities face a 50% unemployment rate, and those who have severe disabilities are faced with a staggering 70% rate of unemployment. As DOL Commissioner, what plans, steps or initiatives do you propose to assist people with disabilities find and retain employment?

Incumbent Michael Thurmond (D): I will: 1) Enhance current relationships and build new bridges with businesses to meet workforce needs, 2) Improve Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation facilities and infrastructure, including the new Blanchard Hall for therapies and a new dorm to house VR students and 3) Develop more Vocational



“...the goal of the Georgia Disability Vote Project (GDVP) is not to educate the candidates. Instead, they educate voters about the candidates.”

options will address the many ways in which students in our state learn, and will help our students with disabilities graduate with a meaningful diploma.

Denise Majette (D): Yes, students with disabilities should be able to earn a diploma under circumstances within their physical/mental limitations. Different standards and measures may be appropriate. Every child does not learn the same way, but each is entitled to a high quality educational experience. We must work together to make the concept of “reasonable accommodation” a reality in education and employment.

David Chastain (L): Yes. I believe the entire system needs to be adjusted to allow all students, disabled, special needs, gifted, etc., to have available alternative paths to the same objective.

Transportation: Questions for Lieutenant Governor Candidates

Q Considering the transportation barriers facing Georgians with disabilities, the elderly and those in rural areas, what steps will you take to ensure that transportation funds are delegated appropriately?

Jim Martin (D): I have a long record of support and advocacy for greater transportation choice, and I have always fought for greater access for people with disabilities. As an early advocate for MARTA, I fought for disability access on all of the system’s buses and trains and against fare increases. As Lieutenant Governor, I will work to provide funding to meet our transportation needs all over the state, and to ensure greater mobility for people with disabilities.

Allen Buckley (L): I would take any and all steps within my power to ensure that transportation funds are delegated appropriately.

Candidate Casey Cagle (R) had not responded to the survey by the time this issue of Making a Difference magazine was published.

Community Inclusion

Q In light of the 1999 US Supreme Court Olmstead decision providing that individuals should not be segregated by placing them in institutions if they are willing (and able) to receive community based services, how will you work to ensure that Georgians with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of community life?

Jim Martin (D): As Commissioner of the Department of Human Resources, I led the state’s efforts to implement the Olmstead decision and devised a plan to do so that met federal requirements. This plan must be revised to provide for the complete implementation of the Olmstead decision in the next four years, and the state should provide the funds necessary to achieve that result. As Lieutenant Governor, I will continue to fight for programs that allow people with disabilities to live independent lives in their communities.

Allen Buckley (L): I would need to consider this issue more thoroughly, which I will do if I am elected.

Incumbent Michael Thurmond (D): I will continue to: 1) Support the State Independent Living Council and other programs that address quality of life issues, 2) Advocate for transportation solutions, 3) Provide vocational rehab assessments and individualized plans for customized employment, job carving, training and supports and 4) Collaborate with other state entities and community partners to network and coordinate services that will enable more individuals to live in the community.

Brent Brown (R): I support the 2005 recommendation of the Governor’s Council for Developmental Disabilities to convene a work group composed of the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases to review the state’s waiting list policy and also support making sure that we are leveraging our Federal match dollars. The Department of Human Resources is the lead division in this matter. The Department of Labor has short-term funds that can be used more effectively.

Incumbent Kathy Cox (R): I am a strong believer in the inclusion model and have visited many classrooms around the state where this is working wonderfully. When a regular program teacher and a special education teacher work collaboratively and effectively, all students benefit.

Denise Majette (D): As a lawyer and former judge, I am fully committed to implementing the Olmstead decision. As the new State School Superintendent, I will help school systems provide a supportive educational environment for children with mental and physical disabilities. We will provide greater access to adaptive devices and other assistance, such as connecting hearing impaired students with court reporting students who will use closed captioning technology for note-taking in class.

David Chastain (L): As far as our schools go, I believe efforts are being made to increase awareness of services available to the disabled for inclusion. Like most programs, there is probably room for improvement.

Working Like a Dog

Service Animals Help People Live Fuller Lives

The first time Andrew Fernandez saw a picture of Lucy, he knew he had to meet her.

"He pointed at her and asked, 'what's her name?'" his mom, Heidi Fernandez, explained.

Lucy, a yellow Labrador Retriever, is a trained service animal who assists people with disabilities. Andrew Fernandez' therapist called Lucy's owner and arranged for the two to meet.

"Lucy helps Andrew with fine motor issues and sensory issues. He grooms her and helps put her vest on," his mom said.

Andrew Fernandez is 12 and has autism, and working with Lucy has helped with more than physical and sensory therapy. "Lucy draws people to Andrew and encourages two-way conversation," she said. "The biggest gifts Lucy gives him are unconditional love and self esteem. He feels confident when he's with her. Sensory issues can be confusing, but Lucy makes him feel relaxed."

Because he enjoyed working with Lucy so much, Andrew Fernandez now volunteers with Georgia Canines for Independence, a nonprofit organization that trains service animals. "He helps make the dogs aware of working with children," his mom said. "He's taken Lucy to Target, PetSmart and his birthday party."

Ramona Nichols, executive director of Georgia Canines for Independence, started the organization in late 2002 with 10 dogs. Five have been placed, and five are still in training. Most of the organization's

animals are trained to help people who have mobility or hearing issues and seizure disorders.

Some are trained as therapy dogs for people with developmental disabilities. The dog's own abilities determine which direction the training takes.

"Internal motivation for tasks is important. For example, some dogs take naturally to alerting us to the doorbell or phone – they'll be great at hearing work," she explained.

Nichols, who has family members with epilepsy, also trains seizure alert dogs, who learn to lie on or near a person for comfort during a seizure, alert a caregiver that a seizure is occurring or retrieve a phone or medication for the person. "Some dogs learn to predict a seizure and let their person know 30 - 45 minutes before that a seizure will come."

Nichols has found that Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers make good service animals. "They have great work ethics, they're eager to please and intelligent. We also need their retrieving characteristic."

The organization prefers to start training when the dogs are still puppies and work with certain breeders to ensure they have extensive health and

"I prefer to have a dog rather than a cane."

behavior histories on the animals. She estimates training for each dog, which takes about two years, to cost about \$15,000. Training also includes 120 hours with the owner. Despite the cost, the organization does not charge recipients for the dog or the training.

After training is complete, Nichols matches the animals with owners in a process that is "part science and part art." First, she ensures that the dog is good at doing whatever the person needs. Then she looks at other factors, such as energy level, lifestyle and personality.

"Sometimes the dog picks the person – there's



Yellow Lab Lucy has helped Andrew Fernandez become more confident.

“Sometimes the dog picks the person – there’s an instant connection and chemistry there.”



Dawn Alford is able to live more independently as a result of the services of Golden Retriever, McAllister.

an instant connection and chemistry there,” she said.

Recipients must go through an application process that includes a medical evaluation, a written letter stating why they want a service animal and a personal interview. If accepted, the person is placed on a waiting list. Nichols estimates seven million people across the U.S. are waiting for a service animal, and the normal wait is five to six years because there are a limited number of trainers.

Dawn Alford, a student at Georgia Tech in Atlanta and a member of the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, recently received her second service animal, McAllister, after retiring her first dog, Maggie, from Canine Assistants in Alpharetta. Alford, who uses a wheelchair, has more independence as a result of her dogs.

“McAllister picks up things I drop, opens doors, turns lights on and off and opens the fridge for me,” she said. These tasks help Alford move freely around her home, which she wouldn’t be able to do on her own. For those who need it, service animals can also

be trained to pull wheelchairs.

But McAllister offers a service that is even more valuable to Alford than the tasks he performs. “He breaks down social barriers. When people see I have a dog, it breaks the ice, and they ask me about him.”

While Alford welcomes questions, she cautions that when you see a service dog with its vest on, “Don’t try to make sounds, call their name or pet them. It can distract them from their job and can put the person’s life in danger. Ask the person first if you can pet them. It’s nothing personal if they say, ‘no.’”

Willie Lee Jones, an advocate, peer supporter and computer instructor at Walton Options in Augusta, uses the services of a guide dog to help him get to and from work on the bus.

“Blind people must know where we are at all times. If not, we’ll get turned around – sometimes my dog will make that correction,” Jones said. “I prefer to have a dog rather than a cane.”

After the dogs complete four months of harness training, owners go through 26 days of training with their new dogs at Leader Dogs for the Blind in Rochester, Mich., where Jones acquired his dog, Chase.

Both Jones and Alford said sometimes they have difficulties gaining access to public places with their dogs, especially restaurants. “There are a few pockets of people who will complain,” Jones said.

The Americans with Disabilities Act protects the right to bring a service animal into public. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, “Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), privately owned businesses that serve the public, such as restaurants, hotels, retail stores, taxicabs, theaters, concert halls and sports facilities, are prohibited from discriminating against individuals with disabilities. The ADA requires these businesses to allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals onto business premises in whatever areas customers are generally allowed.”

For more information, visit www.gcidogs.org, www.canineassistants.org or www.leaderdog.org. 1



Chase, a Yellow Lab, helps Willie Jones get to and from work.

You Can Help Shape the Future of Technology in the Workplace

By Mary Morder



Mary Morder is Project Director for Technical Assistance Services for the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Workplace Accommodations (Work RERC) and is a Help Desk Specialist for CATEA. She produces newsletters, articles and other publications for the Work RERC and Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (Southeast DBTAC). Ms. Morder is a graduate of Georgia Partners in Policymaking, a disability rights advocacy training course and is a certified paralegal. Her professional background includes experience in disability rights law, writing, desktop publishing, marketing and communications. She has a B.A. from Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia.

Has this ever happened to you or someone you know?

- You fall behind in your work because you have Multiple Sclerosis and it is difficult to type on a regular keyboard?
- You are a person who is hard of hearing, and you have difficulty making and receiving telephone calls at work because you cannot always understand what the person on the other line is saying?
- You have a problem remembering appointments or detailed discussions at work because you have a learning disability?

For workers with disabilities, having access to the right technology can be the difference between success and failure on the job. Sometimes making minor changes in a workplace policy or procedure or finding the right technology solves the problem and enables that employee to work more productively. These changes are workplace “accommodations.” For example, for the cases described above, a voice input computer system might help with keyboarding, a teletypewriter (TTY) would assist with phone communications and use of a personal digital assistant (PDA) helps with remembering appointments.

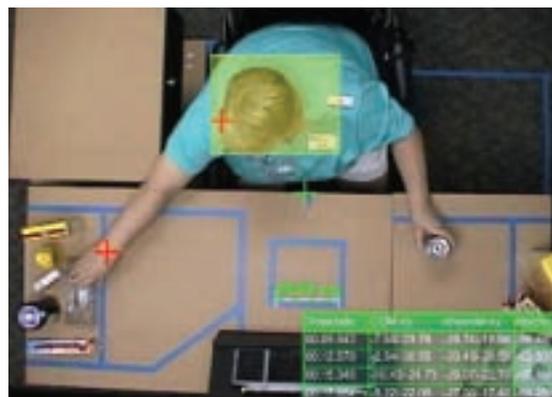
Finding the right assistive technology to aid employees with disabilities in the workplace does not have to be complicated or expensive. Many workers have at least a general idea about what solutions can help them on the job. But there is a lack of research on which accommodation will work best, and sometimes “off the shelf” technology doesn’t have all the access features a person needs.

Many workers have at least a general idea about what solutions can help them on the job.

The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Workplace Accommodations at the Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA) at Georgia Tech is conducting research to determine what accommodations work best in what

situations, and is also developing guidelines to create new accommodations and more accessible products. CATEA’s Consumer Network (CCN), a national group of people with disabilities, provide researchers with a disability perspective.

For example, 510 workers with disabilities participated in a survey on workplace accommodations. Computer adaptations and special tools and furnishings were among the most frequently used accommodations. In follow-up focus groups, participants identified specific strategies, such as purchasing screen reading software or installing better lighting. Participants also recognized that they do not always tell employers about their needs



and that they do not know what solutions are available to them. These and other factors are barriers to implementing effective accommodations.

Currently, CCN members are providing input on the design of a cashier check out stand that will accommodate seated workers. Individuals acted as cashiers. Their ability to reach and scan grocery items was used to develop design guidelines. Another project involves designing a computer workstation that reclines to alleviate low back pain. Upcoming research studies include product evaluations for a new line of telephones.

CCN is looking for adults with disabilities who will participate in surveys and focus groups to provide assistive technology designers and researchers with information about what they need in the workplace. For more information, visit: www.catea.gatech.edu/ccn/ccn.php or contact: R.L. Grubbs at 800-726-9119 (voice/TTY). 1



Mia Adjusts Well to Work Life

By Patricia Nobbie, D.P.A, Mia's Mom

In the Fall 2005 issue of *Making a Difference*, Mia and I described her journey to employment, but the magazine went to print before we got to the end of the story. At the time, Mia's school district had agreed to hire a job coach, and they were scheduled to meet with the hotel where she got a job to work out the training and support arrangement.

The district allowed me to choose the supported employment provider, and we were all set to go. Mia began working two, 4-hour shifts at the Holiday Inn, refilling salt and pepper shakers, stripping tables, vacuuming ballrooms, polishing brass and doing some dishes. It was hard work, and the pepper made her sneeze, but except for the time that her job coach found her in a ballroom annex sound asleep, (sitting straight up and snoring no less!) she performed her duties responsibly. Even more gratifying was how proud she was – she told everyone she met that she had a job at the Holiday Inn – she was walking PR for the hotel!

But it wasn't enough work to keep her busy, so her job coach, Jenni, started looking for another job Mia could do on the days she wasn't at the Holiday Inn. Not long after, Jenni called me to say she had found something at the University of Georgia Alumni Association, 20 hours a week, helping out with the enormous number of mailings the Alumni Association sends. Mia called the Holiday Inn and gave them two weeks notice. They offered to keep her on their payroll until she tried out this new job, and said if it didn't work out, she could come back to the hotel. I thought this was a great reflection on the relationship that the job coaches had built with the hotel staff members who were learning

along with Mia, and on how hard Mia had worked.

We went shopping for Bull Dawg clothes, and Mia started at the Association in April. It has been a wonderful experience. The staff is small, and Mia knows everyone. They of course know all about our family since Mia is so social. Mia has her own desk, and has learned the process for several types of mailings. She participates in Division banquets and staff birthdays and brings home fun Bull Dawg paraphernalia like mini footballs and stickers. A co-worker even brings her home a few days a week since she lives around the corner. We still have some issues with nodding off on the job, a problem related to her weight, sleep habits and diet. It'll be a group effort, but the association staff is willing to work with us. She has really found her niche.

So "pre-employment" Mia is working a full 20 hours, getting herself up in the morning, making her own lunch and getting to UGA via her college



"I don't think so. I don't want to miss my job."

"entourage," Maggie and Briana, who switch off driving her as their schedule allows. Soon another employment staff person will help her build some exercise into her schedule to hopefully improve her stamina and energy level. Mia is so proud. I knew how seriously she took her job when the church asked her if she wanted to still come and set up tables for Wednesday night dinners, the activity we started last year to get evidence that she was ready to work. She thought for a moment, and then she said, "I don't think so. I don't want to miss my job." 1

StraightTalk

How Assistive Technology Has Improved The Way I Work And Live

By Tom Connelly



When I was a high school student in the early 1970s, I was thrown out of a car as it sped down the highway. I sustained a severe brain injury and as a result, my cognitive and physical abilities were significantly damaged. Although much improvement has occurred over the years, many deficits still exist. For instance, my memory is affected. Remembering visual information is especially difficult, but my verbal recall requires extra time and effort, too. My physical skills are also diminished; tremors and incoordination hinder my ability to perform functions requiring finite motor dexterity, such as writing, typing, shaving or putting on contact lenses.

“...with the aid of assistive technology, I have been able to improve my quality of life in a significant way.”

Due to these and other limitations, learning and being productive in school and at work have been a problem. For what seemed to be an eternity, I felt I was just treading water concerning my job. However, with the aid of assistive technology, I have been able to improve my quality of life in a significant way. Using a word processor and a tape recorder (and studying diligently) helped me attain a Masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, be accepted into a doctorate program and secure more meaningful and better paying employment. Some time later, when I decided to obtain professional accreditation (become a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor), using these devices allowed me to study

more productively and pass the exam. That resulted in another pay hike.

In the mid 1990s, my employer, Georgia Department of Labor/Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) sent me to be evaluated at the Center for Rehabilitation Technology at Georgia Tech. Consequently, I was fitted with an adjustable mobile chair, a slant board, an arm brace with a Velcro strap, and a more powerful computer. These accommodations enabled me to type with less effort and more accuracy. Following that, VR upgraded my computer to be able to access a new network with Internet and email capabilities. Using the World Wide Web enabled me to research topics and draw illustrations much quicker. This in turn enabled me to increase the number of presentations about traumatic brain injury I give to various groups from 80 in one year to 208 the next. A 160% increase! And of course email allows me to communicate with my supervisor, co-workers and others on a much quicker basis.

Like most people, I use simple recording devices on my telephones at work and at home that allow me to respond to messages received in my absence. But I also carry a micro-cassette recorder in my pants or jacket pocket and can reach it in a matter of seconds when I want to record my thoughts. It was purchased by my employer after the state Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator evaluated me at my office. It is quite an improvement when compared to my old method of searching for a writing utensil, finding something to write on and finally scribbling some abbreviated notes on my thoughts.

Thanks to a recent AT assessment, the future holds even more promise. I'm looking forward to the possibility of additional computer modifications, including Dragon Dictate Naturally Speaking, a speech to text software program that will allow me to more quickly send updates on job-related information to other staff. This will, in turn, help them place clients in jobs more quickly and efficiently. And that is the purpose of VR – to help people with disabilities reach their goals of finding and maintaining employment. 1





OCTOBER

October 19-20
Governor's Council on
Developmental Disabilities
Quarterly Council Meeting
and Public Forum
 Savannah, GA • 888-ASK-GCDD
www.gcdd.org

October 29-November 1
National Spinal Cord Injury
Association (NSCIA) –
Spinal Cord Injury Summit
(SCI) & SCI Hall of Fame
 Hyatt Regency • Bethesda, MD.
www.spinalcord.org

NOVEMBER

November 1-3
8th Annual GA Workforce
Opportunities & Touch The
Future Conference
 Classic Center • Athens, GA
 770-423-6765
www.dol.state.ga.us

November 3-5
Abilities Expo –
Real People Real Challenges
Real Solutions
 Santa Clara, CA • 800-385-3085
www.abilitiesexpo.com

November 8-11
2006 TASH Conference
Baltimore Convention
Center
 Baltimore, MD
 410-828-8274 • Fax: 410-828-6706
www.tash.org

November 10-12
National Coalition
Building Institute
Welcoming Diversity/
Prejudice Reduction –
Train-the-Trainer
 202-785-9400
ncbiinc@aol.com

November 17-19
Fall 2006 World Congress
& Expo on Disabilities
 Pennsylvania Convention Center
 Philadelphia, PA
www.wcdexpo.com

November 16
Sixth Annual Housing Georgia Conference
and Magnolia Awards Program
 Cobb Galleria Centre
 Atlanta, GA
 404-679-0650
www.magnoliaawards.org

Outstanding achievements in affordable housing will be celebrated this year by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs during the Sixth Annual Housing Georgia Conference and Magnolia Awards Program. The event will recognize achievements in the areas of Affordable Rental Housing, Creative Partnerships, Homeownership, Neighborhood Revitalization, Special Needs and Superior Design. A special "Housing Champion" award will also be given to recognize the ongoing contributions of an individual or group in promoting affordable housing.

In addition to recognizing housing successes in Georgia, the conference provides an excellent opportunity for participants to interact with housing professionals from many facets of the industry and to learn the secrets of success from award finalists. Workshops will be organized around the six award categories, with finalists discussing their activities. The sessions will be followed by a luncheon and awards presentation, hosted by DCA Commissioner Mike Beatty and featuring a keynote address by Paul Vitale, a nationally known trainer and author of best-selling book, "Are You Puzzled by the Puzzle of Life?"

DECEMBER

December 6-8
Annual Federal Disability
Employment Conference
 Hyatt Regency
 Bethesda, MD
www.grad.usda.gov/perspectives

JANUARY

January 2007
Governor's Council on
Developmental Disabilities
Quarterly Council Meeting
and Public Forum
 Atlanta, GA
 888-ASK-GCDD
www.gcdd.org



Why Guide Cats Never Caught On.



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Below, please find further resources of information related to the articles in this edition of *Making a Difference* magazine.

Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD)
www.gcdd.org
 404-657-2126 or
 888-275-4233 (ASK-GCDD)

State Government

Department of Community Affairs
Georgia Housing Search
www.georgiahousingsearch.org
 877-428-8844

Department of Community Health
www.dch.state.ga.us/
 404-656-4507

Department of Human Resources
www.dhr.georgia.gov
 404-656-4937

Department of Labor
www.dol.state.ga.us

General Information
www.georgia.gov

Georgia General Assembly
www.legis.state.ga.us/

Georgia House of Representatives
www.legis.state.ga.us/legis/2003_04/house/index.htm

Georgia Senate
www.legis.state.ga.us/legis/2003_04/senate/index.htm

Georgia Governor's Office
www.gov.state.ga.us/
 404-656-1776

Georgia Lieutenant Governor's Office
www.ltgov.georgia.gov/02/ltgov/home/0,2214,2199618,00.html
 404-656-5030

Employment

Benefits Navigators
 866-772-2726

Briggs & Associates
www.briggsassociates.org
 770-993-4559

Career Opportunities for Students With Disabilities
cosdonline.org

Cobb-Douglas Community Services Board
www.cobbcsb.com

Employment Institute
www.employmentfirstgeorgia.org

Employment First of Georgia
www.employmentfirstgeorgia.org

Institute on Human Development and Disability
www.ihdd.uga.edu

Job Accommodation Network
www.jan.wvu.edu
 (V/TTY): 800-526-7234

National Center on Workforce and Disability/Adult
www.onestops.info
 888-886-9898

Statewide Independent Living Council
www.silcga.org
 Voice: 770-270-6860
 Toll Free: 888-288-9780
 TTY: 770-270-5671

Political Candidates/ Resources

Georgia Disability Vote Project
www.gdvp.org

Gubernatorial Candidates
Sonny Perdue
www.votesonny.com

Mark Taylor
www.marktaylor.com

Lieutenant Gubernatorial Candidates
Casey Cagle
www.caseycagle.com

Jim Martin
www.jimforgeorgia.com

Allen Buckley
www.buckleyforgeorgia.com

Service Animals

Georgia Canines for Independence
www.gcidogs.org
 404-735-DOGS

Canine Assistants
www.canineassistants.org
 800-771-7221 • 770-664-7178

Leader Dogs for the Blind
www.leaderdog.org
 888-777-5332

FAQs about ADA's Protection of Service Animals
www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/qasrvc.htm

Transportation

MARTA
www.itsmarta.com/accessibility/index.htm

Federal Transit Administration
www.fta.dot.gov

Disability Law and Policy Center
www.dlpcga.org
 770-270-9964

Disability Day at the Capitol 2007

Mark Your Calendar...Thursday, February 22, 2007

Visit www.gcdd.org or call (888) ASK-GCDD this fall for event details...

RSVP required to attend breakfast or lunch.

- Rally on the Capitol steps to celebrate community, advocacy and friendship.
- Enjoy breakfast or lunch with advocates from across Georgia.
- Show legislators WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



United Cerebral Palsy of Georgia

Supporting people with all developmental disabilities throughout Georgia



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www.ucpga.org

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AlbanyARC

Albany Advocacy Resource Center

Albany ARC, serving our community since 1963, promotes the general welfare of people with disabilities and fosters the development of programs on their behalf.

(229) 888-6852
(24-hour on-call)
www.albanyarc.org



Georgia Housing Search

providing Georgians with access to rental housing opportunities



Are you looking for an available, affordable rental unit?

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Georgia Housing Search can help and it is easy and convenient!



Log on and search for units at www.georgiahousingsearch.org or call 1-877-428-8844





Tameeka Hunter



Ralph Green



Bobbie Batista



Hosted by the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) and moderated by former CNN anchor Bobbie Batista, Discovery Day highlighted the value of people with disabilities as part of the workforce and promoted ways for business leaders to incorporate these workers into their companies. Sponsored by The Home Depot, the Southern Company and the InterContinental Hotels Group, the day included high profile speakers such as Neil Romano, member of the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities and Ralph Green, a member of the U.S. Paralympics 2006 Alpine Ski Team. "The corporate world has the need for good, dependable workers, and the employment agencies have the technical skills to assess the work environment, to match people with jobs, to train the workers, and to problem solve as issues arise," said Dottie Adams, GCDD family and individual support director. "We just have to get these two worlds together and there is no limit to what REAL CAREERS might be possible." The following GCDD members participated in the success of Discovery Day: Tom Seegmueller, Vicki Gordon, Marlene Bryar, Scott Crain, Tameeka Hunter and Millicent Powell.

Discovery Day



Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
2 Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 26-246
Atlanta, GA 30303-3142
404-657-2126, www.gcdd.org

Address Service Requested