

MAKING a DIFFERENCE

REAL HOMES. REAL CAREERS. REAL LEARNING. REAL INFLUENCE. REAL SUPPORTS.



**NEWS
FOR YOU:**

- VOTING:** Everything You Need to Know
- SELF-DIRECTION:** Is it Right for You?
- EMPLOYMENT:** Supporting Diverse Workplaces



MAKING a DIFFERENCE

A quarterly magazine of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities **VOLUME 13, ISSUE 2**

On the Cover:

Former GCDD Family and Individual Supports Director, Dottie Adams, with Lucy and Narae Ahn.

The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, a federally funded state agency, works to bring about social and policy changes that promote opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities and their families to live, learn, work, play and worship in Georgia communities.



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ERIC E. JACOBSON



TOM SEEGMUELLER

We Know...

It's that time of year again...fall is here. We know this means cooler weather, leaves changing colors, football and election season. We know we should be telling you to make sure you vote in November – it doesn't matter which candidate you vote for – just vote.

We could be talking about some of the barriers that make it difficult for some people, including those with disabilities, to get to poll locations and exercise their civic responsibility. Or we could even be citing the power voting has, after Georgians made it clear they did not support the TSPLOST tax in the vote that took place in July. Even as transportation issues continue, it's apparent the residents of Georgia do not trust our policymakers to use tax dollars wisely. We will not talk about these issues in detail because they are all well documented in this fall edition of *Making a Difference* magazine.

We know that October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month and that people with disabilities have a higher than average unemployment rate. Georgia used to be a leader in supported employment but is now seeing more people being "placed" in pre-employment training and other segregated programs because it's easier and more financially lucrative. We also know there are many individuals out there fighting to give people with disabilities the opportunity to go to work and be paid at the fair market value. This edition of *Making a Difference* covers the importance of including people with disabilities in the workforce and highlights the resources out there on a local, state and national level.

Since the last magazine, the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) has experienced turnover in several key staff positions. Some have left for new positions, while others left to become caregivers for family members. We wish all of our staff, who have left or are leaving, the best of luck in the future with their new endeavors.

They are what makes GCDD an organization that continues to be a leader in changing policies and communities to support and welcome all people, including those with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families.

Finally, we want to talk about community. Regardless of the November election outcome or if you have a job, community is the place where we all live and seek relationships with other people who have some common interest with us. When we are thinking about building community, consider the things that each of us can do to make it better: get to know your neighbors; say hello to people as they walk by your house; buy from local merchants; garden together; invite your neighbors over for a pot luck dinner; read stories out loud and share your gifts. By building and strengthening our communities, we can make sure that every voice is heard – a constant goal that GCDD's Real Communities Initiative is working to make happen across Georgia.

We hope you enjoy reading this magazine and we want to hear from you. Let us know what you like or don't like by writing to vmsuber@dhr.state.ga.us.

Eric E. Jacobson
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Executive Director, GCDD

Tom Seegmueller
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Chairperson, GCDD

Tell us your thoughts about the magazine or what topics you would like to see addressed by emailing us at vmsuber@dhr.state.ga.us, subject line:

Letters To The Editor.

GCDD VIEWPOINT

How to Reach Us

Letters to the Editor

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

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Making Real Jobs and Real Employment Opportunities a Reality

GOVERNOR'S ARTICLE



“Today, we are all working together to make “Employment First” a guiding principle to ensure real jobs and real employment is a reality throughout the State of Georgia.”

To Georgia's Disability Community,

Since 1945, we have been celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month every October to raise awareness of and promote disability employment issues. In Georgia, let's not promote it, let's live it and make real jobs and real employment opportunities for citizens with disabilities a reality!

Those of us involved in Georgia's disability community know that real jobs and real employment opportunities are vitally important. In fact, I can't think of any other group other than the disability community for whom employment is a bigger issue. Good, secure employment is key to making a difference in an individual's life, as well as bringing the real communities concept to reality here in Georgia.

Throughout the State, we have made “Employment First” a guiding principle in state employment policy by focusing on integrated, community-based employment as the first option for citizens with disabilities. Success in bringing new employment opportunities to people with disabilities creates more economic freedom and empowers people to self-determine the course of their own lives.

We recognize that self-determination and meaningful employment are two leading predictors of successful, independent long-term living and a satisfying quality of life for people with disabilities. It starts long before anyone reaches working age; first and foremost, it starts with the expectations and attitudes of each individual, their families and their support community. It depends on things such as their collective belief in the importance of education, training, internships and finding early integrated employment opportunities to better prepare young people with disabilities for a competitive work environment as adults.

Georgia has hundreds and even thousands of success stories of people with disabilities going to work and earning a living every day – but it also takes great employers. Employers that use “people first thinking” to look for and focus on the abilities of people and the value that one individual can bring to their company.

The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) and a variety of state agencies have long worked with employers and advocated the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace across the State. In turn, the disability community has also been a strong advocate for meaningful employment programs and resources that provide employment opportunities and assistance to Georgians with disabilities.

Today, we are all working together to make “Employment First” a guiding principle to ensure real jobs and real employment is a reality throughout the State of Georgia.

In closing, please know that improving job opportunities and the quality of life for Georgians with disabilities takes your continuing advocacy, support and active involvement in your community. Please go to the polls on November 6th and vote.

Nathan Deal, *Governor of Georgia*

Turner Classic Portrayals of People with Disabilities

IN THE NEWS

Turner Classic Movies (TCM) will examine Hollywood's depiction of people with disabilities in *The Projected Image: A History of Disability Film* in October. TCM is dedicating the month to exploring the ways people with disabilities have been portrayed in film and the series airs Tuesdays in October, beginning October 2 at 8 PM.

On behalf of Inclusion in the Arts, Lawrence Carter-Long will join TCM host Robert Osborne in the presentation of the month-long special, and for the first time for TCM, all of the films will be presented with both closed captioning and audio description to ensure the movies are accessible for all, including viewers with auditory and visual impairments.

TCM will feature 20 films spanning from the 1920s to the 80s, and each night will explore particular aspects, themes or types of disabilities such as blindness, deafness or intellectual disabilities. To learn more about *The Projected Image: A History of Disability in Film*, visit http://news.turner.com/article_display.cfm?article_id=6184.

GCDD Helps Fund Documentary about the Children's Freedom Initiative

The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) and the Georgia Advocacy Office (GAO) helped fund the production of a multi-state documentary, *Not Home*, about children living in nursing facilities. The 90-minute film features four interweaving stories of Matthew, Qualeigh, Essie Evans and Nola Sayne, a young adult, a child and two parents whose separate lives all intersect through institutionalization. Interviews from advocates, activists, elected officials and other parents facing similar challenges are featured, as well as a graphic montage of the condensed history of institutionalization in the US. The documentary is available for distribution and screenings. For more information, visit www.nothomedocumentary.com/.

GCDD "Voices Beyond the Mirror" Awareness Video Series Wins National Telly Award

"Voices Beyond the Mirror," a series of online public awareness videos profiling the everyday realities of people living with disabilities, produced by GCDD and Atlanta-based Splendidvid, won a 2012 national Telly Bronze Award for excellence in the non-broadcast productions/social issues category. "Watching the video, personally, reminds me of the importance of accessibility in all aspects of life, especially in government communication," wrote Derrick Silas, communications director for the National Association of Government Communicators Board of Directors.



The 10-part video series features candid reflections and personal stories from people with disabilities to spread knowledge and spark conversations with the general public. To view the award-winning video series, visit www.gcdd.org/news-a-media/videos/viewvideo/1/voices-beyond-the-mirror-centerpiece-video.html.

TIA Defeated in the Majority of Regions

After nearly two years of debate, the much-anticipated Transportation Investment Act (TIA) vote on July 31, 2012, passed in some regions and not in others. The TIA, a 1% transportation sales tax for region-specific projects across the State, passed in only three out of the 12 regions. The regions that passed the sales tax will initiate the tax to fund transportation projects on their pre-determined list, while the remaining regions will have to go back to the drawing board and come up with a "Plan B" to bring transportation improvements to their region.

PASSED:

- Central Savannah
- Heart of Georgia
- River Valley Georgia

NOT PASSED:

- Atlanta
- Coastal Georgia
- Georgia Mountains
- Middle Georgia
- Northeast Georgia
- Northwest Georgia
- Southern Georgia
- Southwest Georgia
- Three Rivers

The TIA, a 1% transportation sales tax for region-specific projects across the State, passed in only three out of the 12 regions.



The GCDD Staff

GCDD Hosts Annual *Making a Difference* Appreciation Ceremony

The 2012 Annual *Making a Difference* Appreciation Ceremony, hosted by the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) on July 19, celebrated outstanding advocacy in a different way this year. Instead of awarding multiple advocacy awards, GCDD took the opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of Dottie Adams, the individual and family supports coordinator, and her 35-year career in advocacy work and dedication to countless individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

In honor of the beautiful quilts she makes with passion and skill for so many others, guests were invited to return the favor by contributing a meaningful swatch of fabric to be included in a quilt for Adams. There were also art supplies set up around the room to inspire everyone to create a scrapbook page with personal messages to Adams as a keepsake.

Eric Jacobson, GCDD executive director, and Tom Seegmueller, GCDD chair, opened the ceremony by presenting Adams with the Carl Anthony Cunningham Council Member of the Year Award. "I am proud to present this prestigious award for the first time to a staff member," said Jacobson. "We give this award annually to someone who depicts the humility and skills Carl had, and this is a great way to honor Dottie's career and commitment to others." The award is named to commemorate a former GCDD chair, who set the Council's standard for service and leadership.

The MC of the ceremony and a close friend of Adams, Charles Hopkins, kept the crowd entertained with professional and personal stories from over the years. Among others who addressed the crowd and shared about their experiences with Adams were Sally Carter, Linda Hazinksi, Nancy Vara and Pat Nobbie. Guests in the audience were also



Above, left: "The Directors"
Above, right (L-R): Eric Jacobson, Scott Bales and Tom Seegmueller

GCDD Welcomes New Advisory Members

Teresa Brenner
Peach County, Byron, GA

Teresa Johnson
Walton County, Monroe, GA

Kylie Moore
Fulton County, Roswell, GA

Lisa Newbern
DeKalb County, Atlanta, GA

Colleen Pirkle
Hall County, Gainesville, GA



Pat Nobbie Set to Depart GCDD

Pat Nobbie, PhD, GCDD deputy director, has been honored with a Joseph P. Kennedy Public Policy Foundation Fellowship and will be leaving GCDD after almost 12 years to work in Washington, DC. She will serve as staff to a congressional committee, which will be determined by the outcome of the November election.

“I have wanted to apply for this fellowship for many years,” said Nobbie. “I am really looking forward to working on issues for people with disabilities on the national level.”

Since 2001, Nobbie has coordinated GCDD’s state and federal public policy agenda, working to advance public policies that support an integrated community life for individuals with developmental disabilities.

“I am really looking forward to working on issues for people with disabilities on the national level.”

invited to stand up and share their Dottie stories, including a group of women lovingly dubbed “The Directors,” and “Circle of Support” by Adams.

“My best teachers have been people with disabilities and their families.”

After receiving a standing ovation, Adams took to the stage to express her heartfelt thanks. “I appreciate the acknowledgement tonight. It is nice to know that you can make a difference through your day-to-day efforts,” said Adams. “I have had so many teachers along the way who have helped shape how I think about things, how I do my work and what things I truly value. My best teachers have been people with disabilities and their families. If we pay attention to what they are telling us, that is when we usually get things right.”

The appreciation ceremony also recognized retiring Advisory Council members Scott Bales, Stacey Franklin, Randall Grayson, Tiffany Nash and Faith Reed for their hard work on the Council. GCDD also debuted a new Real Communities Initiative video, “Getting Real in Georgia,” which highlights the seven different GCDD Real Communities of practice, that encourage making positive change by reaching beyond a limited focus of disabilities to communities that engage everyone, with and without disabilities.



Above (L-R): Peter An, Theresa An and Katie Chandler
Photos Below (L-R): Sharon Chung, Dottie Adams with her son and granddaughters, and Dottie Adams with friends



To view the new Real Communities video, visit www.gcdd.org/news-a-media/videos/viewvideo/23/getting-real-in-georgia.html.

Everything You Need to Know About Voting in November

By Becca Bauer

The right to vote is one of the core ideals that makes the United States what it is today. It is the everyday person's opportunity to help shape the future of not only their life, but also their country. However, for millions of Americans with disabilities, it has been a constant battle to vote, which is the right of every US citizen.

Over the years several laws have been enacted to help eliminate discrimination and disparities many voters with disabilities face in the voting procedures. Most recently, the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) was passed by the US Congress to address accessibility changes in the voting process and make voting as inclusive as possible, especially for persons with disabilities. HAVA requires that at polling places the entrances, exits and facility must be accessible to individuals with disabilities and offer them the same participation and opportunities as others. Among other things, this act also requires each polling station to provide at least one voting system accessible to those with disabilities, including nonvisual or audio accessibility for people with visual impairment. According to the Georgia Secretary of State, in Georgia the voting system is compliant with the HAVA reforms, and the State is committed to ongoing voting improvements.

Voting is an integral aspect of life that helps an individual make a meaningful contribution to their community, but many Americans take this right for granted.

While there have been great steps in the right direction for improving access for individuals

with disabilities to exercise their vote, there are still many barriers they face and improvements that need to be made.

For many in the disability community, it is still very difficult on a variety of levels – transportation, personal support, accommodations, technology, qualified identification, ADA compliance and properly trained staff at polling locations still pose barriers in many cases.

“Today, people with disabilities have greater access to vote than ever before with new accessibility features and policies,” said GCDD Executive Director Eric Jacobson. “Although some barriers still exist, the only way to make sure your voice is heard is to VOTE. When we work together and participate as a community, we can initiate positive change.”

As November nears, the 2012 presidential race is sure to be a heated contest between the two major political parties' candidates and set to make history. Presidential candidates Barack Obama (D), the current President of the United States, and Mitt Romney (R), former Governor of Massachusetts, will take center stage in a race where the outcome will chart the direction of the country for the next four years.

“Although some barriers still exist, the only way to make sure your voice is heard is to VOTE. When we work together and participate as a community, we can initiate positive change.”

On November 6, 2012, you hold the power to share your voice and choose the elected leaders who make important decisions on issues that affect you and your community.

Although accessibility in the voting process is improving, finding out where you go, what to do and how to do it, especially for those with disabilities who may need accommodations and support, is critical. The following is a guide on everything you need to know about voting for people with disabilities from the office of the Georgia Secretary of State.

How do I know if I am eligible to vote?

In order to participate in the voting process in Georgia, you must be a citizen of the United States, a legal resident of Georgia and of the county in which you plan to vote and 18 years of age by Election Day. Additionally, to vote on November 6, 2012, you must have been previously registered or filled out a voter registration application by Monday, October 9, 2012. If you are unsure of your registration status, you can check your status through the Secretary of State's website at <http://mvp.sos.state.ga.us/> or you may contact your county voter registration office at <http://sos.georgia.gov/cgi-bin/countyregistrarsindex.asp>. You may also contact the Secretary of State's office at 404.656.2871 or (V/TTY) 656.1787 for information.

How do I know if I am registered to vote?

For a one-stop shop to check your voter registration status, find your designated poll location and directions, early voting locations, have access to mail-in applications and ballots, status, get information on elected officials, registration information on file with the county office and see a sample ballot for the upcoming election, visit "My Voter Page" at <http://mvp.sos.state.ga.us/>.

Each voter must vote at the polling location designated for the precinct the voter lives in. For more information on the location or accessibility of your specific polling location, contact your county elections office or you may contact the Secretary of State's office at 404.656.2871 or (V/TTY) 656.1787 for more information.

Voting at the polling location on election day:

On Election Day, the polling places in Georgia are open from 7 AM to 7 PM. If you are 75 years old or above or have a disability, you can go to the poll locations between 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM and you will not have to wait in line to vote. Simply ask a poll officer to assist you to the front of the line. Each voter must vote at the polling location designated for the precinct the voter lives in. For more information on the location or accessibility of your specific polling location, contact your county elections office or the Secretary of State's office at 404.656.2871 or (V/TTY) 656.1787 for more information.

What if I get to my polling location and need assistance?

There are several options for voters with disabilities who need assistance when they arrive at their polling location. If any person is unable to sign his or her name, unable to see or mark the answers on the ballot, use the voting equipment or cannot enter the voting booth without support, they may bring someone to help them. A voter with a disability can receive support from any individual EXCEPT his or her employer, a representative of his or her employer or a representative of his or her union or a poll worker or poll watcher, who is a resident of the precinct in which the voter needing support is trying to vote in. Voters with disabilities can receive assistance from any other individuals including a mother, father, sister, brother, spouse, friend or child, and each

individual assisting the voter with a disability must record his or her name on the elector's voter certificate.

In order to assist each voter properly, the Georgia Secretary of State has a State of Georgia Poll Worker Manual that is a guide for the administration of elections conducted by county election officials for poll workers. This guide outlines good practices for voters with disabilities and how to assist them. Additionally, poll officers and workers are provided training regarding the use of voting equipment, procedures and all aspects of state and federal laws applicable to conducting elections.

For voters with disabilities who do not require support to vote from another individual, but require accommodation in the form of assistive technology, there are accessible touch screen voting equipment options provided at the polls that allow for assistance but give more privacy and independence to select your choices. These options include:

- An audio ballot is available for those with visual impairment or who are blind, using headphones and a number keypad similar to an automated phone service.
- A magnifying feature is available on every touch screen voting unit in Georgia that allows you to enlarge the print on the ballot.
- Every polling place in Georgia provides at least one touch screen voting unit that allows a voter to vote while sitting in a chair or wheelchair.

A voter with a disability can receive support from any individual EXCEPT his or her employer, representative of his or her employer or a representative of his or her union or a poll worker or poll watcher, who is a resident of the precinct in which the voter needing support is trying to vote in.

The Candidates go Head-to-Head on their Visions for Disability Issues

The National Forum on Disability Issues on September 28 in Columbus, OH allowed the 2012 Presidential candidates to share their positions on disability issues directly to the disability community. In front of more than 80 disability and aging advocacy organizations, Edward M. “Ted” Kennedy, Jr., representing President Obama and Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), representing Mitt Romney, presented the two presidential campaigns visions on policies and matters relating to Americans with disabilities. Both Kennedy and McMorris had personal connections to the forum – at the age of 12, Kennedy lost a leg to bone cancer, and McMorris has a 5-year-old son with Down syndrome.

The representative addressed issues that many Americans with disabilities have expressed concerns and interest in learning more on healthcare and Medicaid coverage, community employment, independent living and access to higher education.

Additionally, President Obama taped a message for the disability community, which was shown before the representatives addressed the forum and will have been released nationwide by the time of printing.

To learn more information on the forum, visit www.nfdi.org/

**GAO ELECTION
DAY HOTLINE
404.885.1234**

What do you need to vote?

Be sure to show up to your polling location prepared to vote. You must bring photo identification. The acceptable forms of photo identification include:

- A Georgia driver’s license, even if expired.
- Any valid state or federal issued photo ID, including a free voter ID card issued by your County Registrar’s Office or by the Georgia Dept. of Driver Services (DDS).
- Valid US passport.
- Valid employee photo ID from any branch, department, agency or entity of the US government, Georgia or any county, municipality, board, authority or other entity of this State.
- Valid US military photo ID.
- Valid tribal photo ID.

What do I do if I do not have qualified identification?

For many in the disability community, not having qualified identification or a driver’s license is often a barrier to the voting process. This has long been a controversial issue within the community and many feel it is burdensome. While improvements need to be addressed for this issue, if you fall in this category, you can get either a FREE Georgia Identification Card for voting purposes only from the Department of Driver Services or a FREE Georgia Voter Identification Card at your County Registrar’s Office.

In order to get a Georgia Voter Identification Card, you will need the following:

- A photo identity document or a non-photo identity document showing your full legal name and date of birth.
- Documentation showing your date of birth.
- Evidence you are registered to vote in Georgia; and
- Documentation showing your name and the address of principal residence

For more information visit, <http://sos.georgia.gov/cgi-bin/countyregistrarsindex.asp> to find your County’s Registrar’s Office or visit the Georgia Department of Driver Services website at www.dds.ga.gov/drivers/dldata.aspx?con=1749371755&ty=dl.

Are there other options to voting on election day?

In Georgia, there are a couple of ways to submit your vote without ever having to battle the crowds on Election Day. Any voter can request a mail-in ballot without having to provide a reason. To request a mail-in ballot, visit http://sos.georgia.gov/elections/elections/voter_information/absentee.htm and print out the application form. Once you fill out your form, you can mail, fax or take the form in person to your local County Board of Registrar’s Office. It is important to request your mail-in ballot and return it as soon as possible to ensure it is received by the deadline, which is the close of the polls on the actual Election Day. If you have a disability and need support to read and/or write your forms, you may get help when filling out your mail-in ballot application and the absentee/advance ballot form you will receive. Any person who assists an individual in his or her vote, must sign an oath that is printed either on the mail-in ballot envelope or on the application for mail-in-ballot, whichever is applicable.

“Because there are so many factors and rules to take into consideration when casting your vote, knowing the ins and outs of the voting process before Election Day will help you make sure your vote is counted.”

Georgia also offers its citizens the option to vote in person at the polls before the big rush on Election Day. Early/advance voting is easy and convenient, since it allows you to vote on a day and time that works for you. For the schedule of early voting, visit <http://sos.ga.gov/elections/countycontacts/AdvanceVotingDisplay.aspx> for more information.

Additionally, on Election Day, the Georgia Advocacy Office (GAO) will offer a hotline from 7 AM to 7 PM for voters with disabilities who feel they have been discriminated against, have complaints,

Get to Know the Candidates and Their Stances on Policies Supporting People with Disabilities



BARACK OBAMA President Obama, running as the Democratic presidential candidate, has served as the 44th President of the United States since 2008 with Joe Biden as his Vice President. Starting his political career in 1996, he served as a senator in Illinois until his presidency. According to Obama's campaign website, throughout his term as president, some of Obama's accomplishments for improving the rights of people with disabilities include the signing of the Affordable Care Act to stop insurance companies from denying coverage on pre-existing conditions or disabilities and increased funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) state grants and other IDEA programs that help youth with disabilities receive education and training to compete for jobs in their communities.

According to the Democratic National Committee's platform agenda, "President Obama and the Democratic Party will continue to lead efforts to facilitate access of Americans with disabilities to the middle class, employment opportunities and the ability to lead full, productive, satisfying lives. We will continue to oppose all efforts to weaken the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act, and we will vigorously enforce laws that prevent discrimination." To learn more about the Democratic Party's national platform, visit <http://assets.dstatic.org/dnc-platform/2012-National-Platform.pdf> and for more information on President Obama, visit www.barackobama.com/people-with-disabilities/.



MITT ROMNEY Governor Romney is running as the Republican presidential candidate with Paul Ryan as his prospective Vice President. After spending much of his career in the private sector and founding the investment firm Bain Capital, Romney was elected governor of Massachusetts in 2003.

According to the Republican National Committee platform, the GOP focuses support on education for students with disabilities and programs to increase employment opportunities for those with disabilities. Specifically, the Republican agenda addresses funding for special education that will follow students to schools of their choice and calls for states to have more control of Medicaid offerings for people with disabilities. Overall, "We renew our commitment to the inclusion of

Americans with disabilities in all aspects of our national life," the Republican platform says. To learn more information on the party's platform, visit www.gop.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/2012GOPPlatform.pdf and for more information on Romney, visit www.mittromney.com/.

questions or are unclear on anything. To reach the hotline, call 404.885.1234.

Because there are so many factors and rules to take into consideration when casting your vote, knowing the ins and outs of the voting process before Election Day will help make sure your vote is counted.

"We need to make certain there are no obstacles placed upon people with disabilities to keep them from voting," said Jacobson. "Together, people with disabilities comprise a huge voting group, and it's important to come together and exercise our power."

Voting is one of our most important rights and civic duties as citizens living in a democracy. Many have fought and even died to uphold this privilege. For the disability community, it's important to continually challenge the barriers to voting and not be forgotten as a critical voting block. When you participate in the voting process, you are paving the path for improvement. As the old saying goes, "Every vote counts," so make certain you take the opportunity to help decide your future on November 6.

**GET OUT AND VOTE:
NOVEMBER 6**

"Vote as if your life depends on it, because it does."

– Justin Dart Jr., a leader of the international disability rights movement and regarded as the "father" of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

What is Self-Direction and is it Right for Me?

By Carmel Garvin Hearn

Carmine Vara leads a very active life. He has a job at Stone Mountain Park and enjoys spending time with his girlfriend, Amanda. He lives independently with a roommate and plans daily activities with his direct support professional, Nyck. He is in charge of his life and the people who provide support to him because he has chosen to lead a self-directed life.

Self-direction, also known as consumer-direction, is an alternative to the traditional service system in which a person receives support through agencies or in an institutional setting. Self-directors make their own choices in guiding their own lives. They personally select the people they want to provide the supports they need. In turn, those direct support professionals are employed directly by and accountable to the person they're supporting. They are expected to listen and respect those individuals' voices.

Self-direction gives a person with a disability the choice to exercise control in planning for and running his or her own life. While more and more people are moving into self-direction, it may not be for everyone because it does require more responsibility and more work by the individual, along with immediate family members and sometimes, a larger network of friends and extended family members.

"Self-direction is right in line with the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities' (GCDD) mission, vision and values that people with developmental disabilities should have self-determined, inclusive, integrated productive lives in the community," said

Deputy Director Pat Nobbie, PhD. "Not everybody can choose self-direction, but for families who can, we provide our full support."


Vara began self-directing with the assistance of his immediate family and a larger support group known as a Microboard.

"The best part about it is that I get to hire my own staff," said Vara. "Working with Nyck is a pleasure."

Nyck Crumbly has been Vara's day direct support professional for the past four years. "It's always fun and interesting to find out what we're going to do for the day," he explained. "I like self-direction because it allows us more freedom. We can do whatever Carmine wants to do instead of what the head of the group home thinks Carmine wants to do."

For example, the two planned and took a weeklong vacation to the Dollywood® Theme Park in Tennessee over the summer, an opportunity that both attribute to Vara's choice to self-direct.

His road to self-direction began when Vara transitioned out of the school system and



"The best part about it is that I get to hire my own staff."

Carmine Vara



Nyck Crumbly and Carmine Vara

“I like self-direction because it allows us more freedom. We can do whatever Carmine wants to do instead of what the head of the group home thinks Carmine wants to do.”

moved into a group home. Not long after, his family realized the situation was not working out for him.

“He became complacent,” explained his mother, Nancy Vara. “He was not given reliable transportation to go to work or for any activity he wanted to do outside the group.”

Vara brought her son home but soon discovered that becoming a primary caregiver, providing round-the-clock care for a young man with developmental disabilities who needed a lot of support, was too much to take on by herself.

“I realized I needed to embrace people I trusted, who knew Carmine and what it takes to support him,” she explained. “I worried what might happen to my son if something happened to me.”

That’s when she learned about Microboards, which are small, nonprofit organizations that provide formalized circles of support for individuals with a disability.

and me. About a dozen people raised their hands.”

That’s how Vara helped her son begin living a self-directed life with a support network that will last his entire life. Not only did she establish a Microboard for Carmine, she decided to help other people develop their own Microboards.

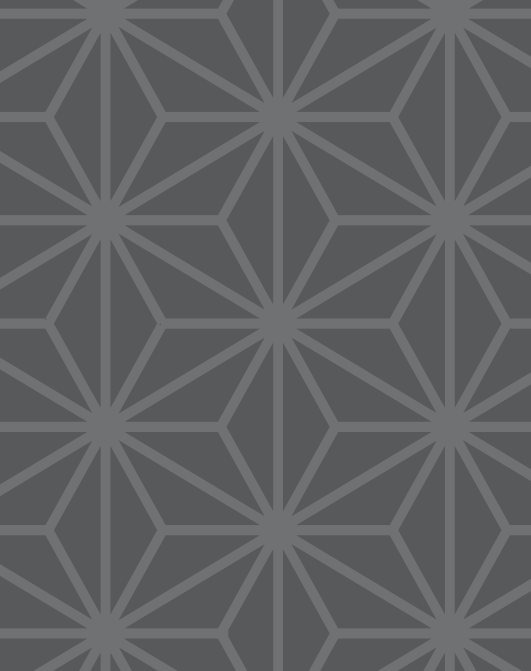
“I formed the Georgia Microboards Association to provide training and ongoing assistance to Microboards,” she explained. “We are committed to providing continued support to the individual and to the development of relationships between members that will last a lifetime.”

The Georgia Microboards Association also provides technical advice, sample documents, organizational charts and examples of what is required at each step of the development process. It strives to educate all interested parties and helps association members connect with one another, sharing ideas and solving problems Both those who self-direct or those who use traditional services may establish a Microboard. Just like self-direction, it is a tool that can be used as desired or needed.

Todd Copper established his Microboard six years ago and made the decision to begin self-directing two years later. He lives independently with a roommate, Bobby Davis, who has also been Copper’s full-time caregiver for the past two years.

“I like being self-directed. I have more freedom,” explained Copper. “Bobby and I enjoy going out to eat, to movies and Atlanta Braves games.”

Prior to self-directing, Copper’s support was provided by agencies that might send one person for transportation, another for



“I had a meeting at my house and invited people I would have invited for an event like Thanksgiving, Christmas or Carmine’s birthday. I asked if they would be interested in supporting Carmine and me. About a dozen people raised their hands.”

“We are committed to providing continued support to the individual and to the development of relationships between members that will last a lifetime.”

“I had a meeting at my house and invited people I would have invited for an event like Thanksgiving, Christmas or Carmine’s birthday,” explained Vara. “I asked if they would be interested in supporting Carmine



“A lot of people would come to the theater early just to see Todd. They would stop and chat and ask him to recommend a movie for them.”



Above: Todd Copper and his Microboard



Right: Todd Copper with his brothers



“This is my support group of friends that care, guide, balance, dream, discover, plan, listen, grow and celebrate with me.”

personal care and so forth. Since becoming self-directed, he pays support directly to one provider who lives with him full-time.

“Living with Todd is like living with a celebrity,” said Davis. “He has a huge network of friends in this area.”

Davis provides transportation and personal care. But the two also do things together as friends and roommates, such as walking to the neighborhood pool (Copper using an electric-powered chair) or taking MARTA to see a Braves game.

Having been in a near-drowning accident at the age of two and living with Cerebral palsy since, Copper successfully transitioned from special education classes to mainstream schools, graduating from Dunwoody High School in 1995. He then worked as a vendor at the 1996 Olympics and as a Salvation Army bell ringer before finding his dream job – taking tickets at the neighborhood movie theater.

“Lots of people knew me,” he remarked. “At first I was happy having a regular job, but as time went on I made friends with the customers.”

Copper had to practice tearing tickets until he could perform the task fast enough to get hired. He held the position, which included medical benefits and a 401K plan, for 15 years, but was recently laid off. Like many other people in America today, he finds himself out looking for a job in a market where it is very tough to find work.

“A lot of people would come to the theater early just to see Todd,” said his mother, Becky Copper. “They would stop and chat and ask him to recommend a movie for them.”

That gave Copper an idea to start a website where he could post his movie reviews. Although he no longer has free access to films, he hopes to continue sharing his love for movies with his former customers.

“If you want to pick a good movie to see, go to www.toddsreeldeal.com and locate the best choice for the occasion,” he advised. Copper uses a laptop with a big screen monitor furnished by his seven-member Microboard to update his movie blog.

“This is my support group of friends that care, guide, balance, dream, discover, plan, listen, grow and celebrate with me,” Copper said about his Microboard. “They make sure life rolls along smoothly for me. I can share good news as well as my troubles with all of them.”

The Microboard has also helped him establish a bank account and go on outings and trips, including a cruise to Mexico.

“If he needs help with something, he can call on the Microboard,” observed Becky Copper. “When he wanted to replace the carpet in his apartment with hard surface flooring, the Microboard got the best price and found somebody to put it in. This was a hurdle that I might not have time to do. What an accomplishment!”

* NOTE: DHR is now known as the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD); the Independence Plus Grant is now under DBHDD; the Mental Retardation Waiver Program is now known as NOW and COMP Waivers.

The Roots of Self-Direction

Georgia's service delivery system for people with disabilities began moving toward a self-directed system five years ago when several national experts and key leadership from state agencies involved in funding services for people with disabilities came together, including the Department of Community Health (DCH), the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget. The DHR, in partnership with the DCH, received a three-year Independence Plus Initiative grant from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to design and develop a self-directed Medicaid waiver program. Additionally, GCDD partnered with the Office of Developmental Disabilities and the Center for Self-Determination to train on the implementation of self-direction through the Mental Retardation Waiver Program amendment.* (See note in sidebar on page 14.) Self-advocates and family members were an integral part of this training. Today, about 1,600 people with developmental disabilities exercise some form of self-direction.

“You hire your own staff but go through a fiscal agent to pay them. Sometimes, as we did, you already have people on board. You just change the method of payment.”

“I had been thinking about it for a while, but I am an extremely busy person,” explained Nobbie. In addition to her duties at GCDD, she is also the mother of several adult children including Mia, who has a developmental disability. “I thought that’s one thing I don’t need to take on.”

But then an incident occurred which would have required Mia to move away from a family with whom she had been living for some time. That, said Nobbie, would have

been devastating to Mia. So, she began to explore options and decided to try self-direction.

“Everything has been fine,” Nobbie continued, describing Mia’s transition to self-direction. “You hire your own staff but go through a fiscal agent to pay them. Sometimes, as we did, you already have people on board. You just change the method of payment.”

Those who self-direct one or more support services must choose an authorized fiscal agent to provide payroll administration and other expenses paid through the funding allocation. There are currently three fiscal agents authorized to operate in Georgia:

- Acumen Fiscal Agent
- Administrative Services, Inc.
- Public Partnerships, LLC

“The fiscal agent is not only familiar with all regulations having to do with payroll, such as workers compensation, but also frees the family or individual from being liable for complying with laws they may not understand,” said Doris Johnson, MPP, the DD (Developmental Disabilities) Program Administrator for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) “Having a fiscal agent lightens the burden of that responsibility for families.”

Johnson added that anyone who receives any of these waivers is eligible to transition to self-direction:

- Community Care Services Program (CCSP)
- Independent Care Waiver Program (ICWP)
- New Options Waiver (NOW)
- Mental Retardation Waiver Program (MRWP)

“If an individual expresses an interest in self-direction, they simply need to contact their support coordinator through one of our six regional offices, who will complete the paperwork to begin the process,” Johnson continued. “You can get started over the phone, and if you’re not able to come to us, our staff will come to you.”

Although only about 1,600 of the 12,000 individuals who currently receive waivers through DBHDD are self-directing, the system has recently been upgraded to make it less cumbersome and a more attractive option. Johnson expects that up to 6,000 individuals will be self-directing within the next four years.

The Self-Directed Conference - A First for Georgia

A number of the participating agencies, including GCDD, DBHDD, the Georgia Advocacy Office (GAO) and Parent to Parent will present Georgia’s first self-directed conference on October 19 at the Macon Convention Center.

“Georgia Microboards Association is going to be one of the participants and anyone who has any self-directed services will be invited to attend,” said Nancy Vara. “We’ll have breakout sessions on finding staff, support coordinators, putting a budget together, employment tips and more.”

Although a number of training services on self-directing are available to individuals and families, this is the first conference that brings people together to share information with each other.

GCDD has several resources on its website (GCDD.org) to help people get a better understanding of the self-direction process. According to GCDD’s Guide for Self-Directing NOW and COMP Waiver Services, self-directing individuals have more control over their services, their budget and ultimately their life and the way it is supported. If a family decides they no longer want to self-direct, they can opt out and go back to traditional services.

And what does Carmine Vara say to others who might be considering self-direction? “I say to anyone who wants to do this to do it! It feels good to be my own boss.”

The Way It Should Be

By Jordon Godoy

PERSPECTIVES



JORDON
GODOY

Jordon Godoy, a graduate of Whitfield County High School and former Project SEARCH intern, currently works in the laundry services department of Hamilton Medical Center in Dalton, GA. He works on rotating assignments, between a variety of jobs; loading and unloading dryers, hand-folding bed linens, operating a large press machine that dries and folds bed sheets and delivering linen supplies to the patient floors.

“I am also on a waiting list to move into my own apartment and be completely independent. Having my job and doing it well is why I’m able to do all of these things.”

My name is Jordon Godoy. I was born in El Paso, TX but now live in Dalton, GA. After completing my studies at Northwest Whitfield High School, I joined the Project SEARCH program at the Hamilton Medical Center. I was an intern from 2010 to 2011, working in departments throughout the hospital with the help of a teacher and job coach. Project SEARCH helps students with disabilities go from school to adult life with training and experience to get us ready to live on our own.

I had a teacher from the school system who taught me about budgeting, health and social skills. My job coach worked for an adult support agency, Cross Plains Community Partner (CPCP), and helped me learn job skills, how to build a resume and gave me practice at interviewing. CPCP, the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities and Hamilton Medical Center were all partners of this program that gave me the experience I needed.

The program was very helpful and taught me a lot of job skills that I had never done before. I got to work in inventory management, maintenance and food services. Even though I never had an internship with the laundry services department, the supervisor of that department noticed my hard work and good attitude while working in the other areas and informed me she had a job opening.

I began working in the laundry services department a few days a week through a staffing agency. But as I learned the job duties and got to know my coworkers, I was given more hours and more responsibilities. I just celebrated one year since being hired. I am now working four to five days a week, which sometimes includes the

Sunday shift, a shift I work alone and where I am responsible for everything.

“Project SEARCH is great for helping young people get experience with job skills. We learn how to multi-task and manage money.”

Project SEARCH is great for helping young people get experience with job skills. We learn how to multi-task and manage money. Budgeting has been helpful for me. I earned my driver’s license about a year ago and I am now driving to work. I am also on a waiting list to move into my own apartment and be completely independent. Having my job and doing it well is why I’m able to do all of these things.

Programs like Project SEARCH also help the whole community. It gives the community workers with good experience and people who are able to take care of themselves. As a Hispanic American, I like that our community has a lot of different people and all of them have chances to work. That’s the way it should be.

Creating an Inclusive Community with Project SEARCH – Shaw

By Lisa Rodriguez Buice

Shaw Industries has always lived by its strong reputation of giving back to the community. So when one of my colleagues and board members of Cross Plains Community Partner (CPCP) in Dalton, GA approached me about Project SEARCH, I knew this would be a fantastic opportunity. Our take on Project SEARCH is a unique one – focused on providing on-the-job skills training to young adults with developmental disabilities who have already graduated from high school.

Project SEARCH – Shaw has been a wonderful experience to date and is the result of the synergy and collaboration between the CPCP staff, Dottie Adams from the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD), Project SEARCH and many Shaw Industries associates. In preparing for the interns, we leaned on Suzie Rutkowski, co-director of Project SEARCH, for guidance and support. We held weekly meetings for approximately three months prior to the program start date in order to brainstorm and discuss pressing issues. The result – a thoughtfully crafted program which addresses the needs of the interns, CPCP, Project SEARCH and Shaw.

Aside from the expertise and professionalism from all of the people involved in the different organizations, I have to attribute the success of Project SEARCH – Shaw to one factor – a great stream of communication. Expectations were established across the board early, roles were defined, action items were assigned and progress reports were consistently given. All hands were on deck! We also saw tremendous value in communicating with our internal stakeholders, all of our Shaw associates, especially those who would be interacting with the Project SEARCH – Shaw interns. Doing so gave our associates an opportunity to learn about the program, ask questions and discuss any concerns or apprehensions they had about working with

someone with a disability. It was a very meaningful experience for them, and it gave us a platform to talk about some of the issues many people with disabilities face in employment. Ultimately, as critical players to the success of Project SEARCH – Shaw, our associates appreciated that we took the time to help them understand their role and its impact on the development of our Project SEARCH interns.

According to the United States Department of Labor, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is 13.9% versus 8% for people without disabilities. This statistic alone tells you that barriers to employment exist in our great nation for people with disabilities. Companies and organizations across the country are making great strides to be more inclusive by providing fair paying jobs to this very able workforce. Shaw Industries wanted to do something more. We firmly believe that “a strong workforce is an inclusive workforce,” and we’re doing something about it by providing very able individuals a place to acquire marketable, transferable skills through Project SEARCH. It’s been an investment of time and resources, but every step along the way has been well worth allowing our Project SEARCH interns the opportunity to grow personally and professionally, when they otherwise may have stumbled across an invisible barrier.

“We firmly believe that “a strong workforce is an inclusive workforce,” and we’re doing something about it by providing very able individuals a place to acquire marketable, transferable skills through Project SEARCH.”

PERSPECTIVES



LISA
RODRIGUEZ
BUICE

Lisa Rodriguez Buice is the corporate diversity manager for Shaw Industries, the world’s largest floor covering manufacturing company and a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway. She is responsible for providing direction for all of Shaw’s corporate diversity initiatives and programs and focuses on developing strategies that support Shaw as an inclusive, engaged workplace, with a heavy focus on internal and external communications, leadership and business development, diversity recruiting, work/life balance, education and training, mentorship and scholarship programs.

Encouraging Employment Opportunities For All

By Becca Bauer

The idea of supporting everyone to have fulfilling lives and the right to employment opportunities is so important that the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) has declared **October National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)**.

To learn more on NDEAM, visit: www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/.

Even though access to employment is fundamental to achieving the American Dream, too many of the more than 54 million people in the US, who live with some type of disability, fight discrimination, negative assumptions and segregation that prevent them from receiving fair employment opportunities.

Historically, people with disabilities experience almost double the national unemployment rate. According to the US Department of Labor, in August 2012 the national unemployment rate for people with disabilities was 13.9%, as compared to an 8% rate for people without disabilities. Although the unemployment rate for people with disabilities has gone down over the past few years, there is still a disproportionately lower number of people without disabilities who are unemployed.

The idea of supporting everyone to have fulfilling lives and the right to employment opportunities is so important that the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) has declared October National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Held each October since 1945, the national campaign raises awareness about disability employment issues, celebrates American workers with disabilities and supports the inclusion of workers with disabilities as contributing members to their communities through meaningful employment.

According to ODEP, this year's campaign theme, "A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce: What Can YOU Do?," encourages

a diverse workforce that embraces a highly motivated and skilled talent pool of workers with disabilities.

"Employers who ensure that inclusive workplace policies and practices are woven into the fabric and culture of the organization create an environment that encourages all workers – including those with disabilities – to work to their full capacity and contribute fully to the organization's success," said Kathy Martinez, assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy.

Historically, people with disabilities experience almost DOUBLE the national unemployment rate.

Over the course of the month, and even throughout the rest of the year in some cases, events, meetings and activities such as proclamations, public awareness programs and job fairs will be held across the country to illustrate the benefits of workers with disabilities and the skills and talents they bring to the workforce.

Bringing awareness to building an inclusive workforce is also taking place on a statewide level here in Georgia. According to Doug Crandell at the Institute on Human Development and Disabilities (IHDD) at the University of Georgia, and Nancy Brooks-Lane, director of Employment First Georgia (employmentfirstgeorgia.org), funded by the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) and the Georgia Advocacy Office (GAO), several organizations in the State are collaboratively working to build partnerships to address local level disability employment issues occurring in Georgia.

“In the past, there was often a disconnect between those on the local level trying to address common issues and those on the state level, who had the power and resources to address those needs,” said Brooks-Lane. “Our goal is to create a stronger coalition statewide, so we can start solving some of these issues and let the local level organizations have a voice.”

Additionally, led by Crandell, IHDD has formed the Georgia Supported Employment Community of Excellence, to explore why disability employment services need to change and why it would be a good thing for Georgia. The organization focuses its work on employment training, creating opportunities for supported employment and conducting research to prove the benefits of ending segregated employment for individuals with disabilities.

IHDD is already making great progress and has collaborated with Dr. Robert Cimera, a federal level policy analyst, to conduct an analysis in Georgia that could show how there is a return on investment for states when persons with disabilities are employed with jobs integrated into the community rather than being segregated to day programs. Once the study is completed, the data will help them prove the need to make changes in the disability employment service system and how those changes could benefit not only workers with disabilities, but also the State’s economy.

GCDD has also long advocated for inclusion of individuals with disabilities in workplaces

in communities throughout Georgia. There are many employment programs and resources intended to provide disability employment assistance for Georgians, but the trick is to find them and then be able to figure out how to use them. GCDD reached out to leaders on the national level, Sharon Lewis, commissioner of the Administration on Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) and on the state level, Frank Berry, commissioner of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), and Greg Schmiege, executive director of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). The following question and answer style interviews will help the public understand the employment opportunities available within their community.

An interview with Sharon Lewis, the commissioner of the Administration on Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) at the Administration for Children and Families:

Why is it important for people with disabilities to have access to employment opportunities?

For the same reasons that employment is important to the vast majority of adults in this country, regardless of a disability! Employment is not only the means to economic self-sufficiency, it is also an important way for people with disabilities to contribute as fully-participating members of their communities, to build a network of social relationships and to create opportunities for lifelong learning. The confidence and growth that comes with successful employment are tremendous, and the empowerment that comes with controlling your own resources is an important part of living a self-determined life.

What are some of the barriers people with developmental disabilities face with employment opportunities?

While we are close to celebrating 50 years since the passage of the first version of the Developmental Disabilities Act, and it has been over 22 years since the passage of the

To see the full interviews with Commissioner Sharon Lewis, Commissioner Frank Berry and Executive Director Greg Schmiege, please visit <http://gcdd.org/blogs/gcdd-blog/2384-employment-based-interviews-with-national-a-state-level-leaders-.html>

Many states already have resolved to implement policies that promote integrated employment as the first option of service for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities through the establishment of Employment First initiatives.

Americans with Disabilities Act, less than 28% of working-age adults with disabilities are currently employed. And, the number of people with ID/DD who are working in competitive, integrated employment is even lower.

There are many reasons for this. Graduation rates, a key indicator for employment success, hover around 30% for students with intellectual disabilities. Higher education opportunities for students with ID/DD are extremely limited. Supports and services to ensure success in competitive, integrated employment are not always prioritized. Families struggle with the interdependencies of facilitating and supporting a meaningful day for family members with ID/DD, while simultaneously trying to maintain their own employment. Transportation is also frequently a barrier in many communities.

Even with all of those difficult issues, I still believe the culture of low expectations and attitudinal barriers that people with ID/DD face every single day – in schools, in our communities, in the workplace and sometimes even perpetuated by well-meaning families, continue to be one of the biggest challenges that self-advocates confront.

What types of employment options should we encourage?

Integrated employment in the general labor market with competitive wages and benefits is the goal. This would mean that people with disabilities are employed in the same manner as most working Americans – in our stores, offices, businesses and other places in our communities, not working in sheltered workshops or enclaves.

How do you support the development of options for integrated employment through the state networks at AIDD?

AIDD is working across the country to encourage employment options in several ways. Last October AIDD awarded Partnerships in Employment Systems Change grants to six states, and we are in the process of awarding two more. In each of these eight states, consortia including policy leaders from education, vocational rehabilitation, ID/DD services and members of the AIDD network are working together to improve state systems to increase competitive employment outcomes for youth and young adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

AIDD has also established a formal agreement with the Office on Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at the US Department of Labor to work together to further our coordination of resources and efforts to promote the concept of “Employment First.” Many states already have resolved to implement policies that promote integrated employment as the first option of service for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities through the establishment of Employment First initiatives. Both ODEP and AIDD support these initiatives and other efforts to change states’ employment systems by providing technical assistance, training and capacity building support. For more information on Employment First, visit www.dol.gov/odep/topics/EmploymentFirst.htm.

How many of the AIDD state network entities (DD Councils, P&As and UCEDDs) are working toward improving employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities?

Most of the AIDD network is working hard to improve integrated community-based

Even with all of those difficult issues, I still believe the culture of low expectations and attitudinal barriers that people with ID/DD face every single day – in schools, in our communities, in the workplace and sometimes even perpetuated by well-meaning families, continue to be one of the biggest challenges that self-advocates confront.

employment opportunities at competitive wages for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Approximately two-thirds of the ADD network entities report active engagement related to improving employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities through a broad range of activities including direct support for individuals with disabilities seeking employment, development of state and local policies and practices, protection of employment rights, data collection and analysis and training initiatives. A few examples include:

- UCEDDs and/or DD Councils in multiple states are working with state ID/DD agencies to establish “Employment First” as a guiding principle in policy and systems change.
- Project SEARCH is a nationally recognized education, training and internship program leading to integrated, competitive employment for students with significant disabilities. Currently seven DD Councils and three UCEDDs are supporting Project SEARCH.
- Multiple studies indicate that self-determination status is a predictor of quality of life and is positively correlated with improved employment, independent living and community inclusion outcomes, and so AIDD has committed funding to a consortium of five University Centers for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities to lead a self-determination national training initiative, the “National Gateway to Self-Determination.”
- In order to provide more students the opportunity to attend quality college programs that support students with intellectual disabilities to participate in comprehensive, inclusive educational experiences integrated into institutions of higher education across the country, AIDD is investing in the Consortium to Enhance Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities project.

Are there helpful resources in each state to help people find employment opportunities?

Each state is different, but there are federally-supported employment and training resources offered in every state, including those available through one-stop employment centers, vocational rehabilitation agencies, social security work incentive programs and more. Your AIDD Network (DD Council, UCEDD, P&A) should be able to provide information about resources specific to your state.

An interview with Frank Berry the commissioner of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD):

What are your visions and priorities for DBHDD as it relates to people with developmental disabilities?

We want people with developmental disabilities to have a choice of services and providers that fit their individual needs and preferences, so they can live as independently as possible in homes and communities that are their own. Our priority right now is to help our growing provider network understand and carry out individual service plans.

What is the current status of implementation on the Department of Justice agreement as it relates to people with developmental disabilities? Are you pleased with the progress of the transitions? Going forward, will there be more emphasis on transitioning people to living arrangements other than group homes, as recommended in the settlement?

We just finished the second year under the settlement agreement in July. We’re meeting our commitments to serve more people with developmental disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. In many cases, we’re exceeding those goals. Often people focus on how many people we’re moving from hospital care to community settings, and that’s important, but the number of individuals and families we’re helping stay at home with the right supports is just as significant. It is important to look at quality and not just numbers.

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Top Photo: Angela Stubbins working at the City of Tifton’s maintenance complex since 1995.

Bottom Photo: Paula Clark, who suffered a severe brain injury when she was 16-years-old, has been in workshop settings and was unemployed for a year.

We're proud of the progress we've made, but we also know there are areas where we need to improve. We're most concerned that some individuals with developmental disabilities didn't receive adequate support from our contracted providers, so we're working with them to correct those shortcomings and improve monitoring, compliance and quality management.

The types of living arrangements individuals choose will continue to be driven first by their preferences and needs. At the same time, we have an over-abundance of some living arrangements and a lack in others, so that's something we've got to rebalance in conjunction with our providers.

The types of living arrangements individuals choose will continue to be driven first by their preferences and needs.

What services and supports does DBHDD offer to help people with developmental disabilities who want to go to work?

The Division of Developmental Disabilities administers a Medicaid waiver service for individuals who want to find integrated and competitive employment. It's designed to help people with job development, job training and job retention.

How can the Department improve efforts to assist people with developmental disabilities who want to go to work? How can you cultivate more supported employment providers in the field?

We continue to advocate for and promote integrated employment to the public and business communities, so more job opportunities are available. Currently, we're sponsoring Customized Employment Training throughout the State. These are two-day sessions that educate and demonstrate best practices for providers and support staff of supported employment services.

Are there any policy changes that the Department should consider to improve access to employment for people with developmental disabilities? Can you, for example, consider changes to the waiver that will incentivize more individualized work arrangements rather than pre-employment as a service?

As of October 1, DBHDD will be a member of the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN). This national network consists of 27 state developmental disability agencies that are focused on improving supported employment services. SELN's stakeholder committee will discuss and consider initiatives that promote partnerships, improve service delivery and achieve successful outcomes.

How do people with developmental disabilities access employment supports offered by the Department?

An individual must be enrolled in a Medicaid waiver service (NOW or COMP) to access supported employment. If they're not already enrolled, they can contact the regional DBHDD office and speak with an intake and evaluation specialist.

An interview with Greg Schmieg, the executive director of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA):

What are the different types of employment supports people can receive through Vocational Rehabilitation services?

The current Vocational Rehabilitation program offers a variety of services and supports, ranging from vocational evaluation and training to tuition reimbursement for college. These services and supports are provided through both the program itself, as well as an array of private providers across the State. However, in order to be more effective with employment outcomes for Georgians with disabilities, I want the new agency to explore new ways of thinking and new ways of serving Georgians. In partnership with our providers, advocates, schools and employers, we must begin to identify the best practices of the future. We cannot be satisfied with just doing

In partnership with our providers, advocates, schools and employers, we must begin to identify the best practices of the future. We cannot be satisfied with just doing what we have always done...

what we have always done, so I welcome new ideas of better serving those we serve.

As the new director, what are your main goals?

The mission of the new agency is employment and independence for Georgians with disabilities, and the success of this agency should be measured solely on the outcomes of those two goals. Personally, I believe that to do that, the new agency must have an organizational culture that serves each person with a disability truly as individual-based on his or her unique strengths, talents and interests. We cannot be an agency that practices “one size fits all.” So, my main goals are to help create an agency that is inclusive, transparent, creative and passionate about those we serve.

Five years down the line, how do you see the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency helping people with disabilities in Georgia find employment?

My vision is that Georgia will be a national leader in employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Having now conducted visioning sessions across the State with providers, both public and private, advocates and other stakeholders, I am so impressed by the creative ideas I have heard. I am convinced we have the talent in this State to make great advances in employment for Georgians with disabilities. That is not to say it will be easy, but there is so much enthusiasm and desire to do better among everyone I have talked to, that I believe in them and I believe in our State. So five years from now, I can envision Georgia as the State that has the lowest unemployment rate among persons with disabilities of all states; a network of public and private providers working collaboratively to serve every single individual with a disability in such a way that leads to meaningful employment and independence; an employer community that views persons with disabilities no differently than those without and a State that prides itself on how we treat Georgians with disabilities.

What is the first step for someone with a disability who wants to work?

Again, I believe that no two individuals are

exactly alike, so the “first step” to employment may be different for each person. Having said that, I think it often begins with the person’s interests. What is it that they like to do, or would like to do? Most of us begin to think about our future occupations and career in adolescence, and those early interests we usually stick with into adulthood. So from an agency perspective, we have to figure out how can we best understand what each person has a passion for and how we create rehabilitation plans for each person that revolves around their interests and their capabilities.

In general, how many people with disabilities in Georgia have achieved employment through Vocational Rehabilitation?

I believe that the number of successful employment outcomes last year was between 4,000 and 5,000. That is a good number, but I want us to do better than that. Wouldn’t it be great, if every Georgian with a disability who wanted a job could find a job and have a meaningful career? Even though I believe that the best vocational rehabilitation occurs one person at a time, I want this new agency to show increasing numbers of successful outcomes year after year.

Are there any programs or resources that help with supported employment in Georgia?

In our visioning sessions around the State, there were a lot of comments about the success of supported employment, and at the same time, the difficulties with supported employment and the lack of supported employment opportunities and supported employment providers. Supported employment has been shown to be very effective because of the ongoing support for the duration of the job, but it is also cost-prohibitive because of that same ongoing support, which is why there are so few providers of supported employment. One of my objectives for this coming year will be to take a serious look at how the new agency can increase supported employment opportunities across the State. If something works, I certainly would like for us to do more of it.

“Wouldn’t it be great, if every Georgian with a disability who wanted a job could find a job and have a meaningful career?”

“We cannot be an agency that practices “one size fits all.”

Could Expanding Medicaid Improve Georgia's Workforce?

Nearly two million Georgians lack health insurance, placing Georgia among the worst states in the nation when it comes to health coverage. Georgia has a chance to dramatically improve its standing – and the lives of hundreds of thousands of Georgians – by expanding Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the nation's health reform law.

If Georgia moves forward with the expansion, roughly 600,000 Georgians will gain health insurance, which leads to better health and more financial security. Furthermore, the expansion would bring tens of billions of new federal dollars flowing into our economy through doctors and nurses, hospitals and other healthcare providers around the State.

Providing health insurance to more individuals improves health outcomes and offers greater financial security to many families. For example, a study on Medicaid expansion in Oregon found that newly covered individuals were less likely to be sent to collections or skip paying other bills due to medical bills, more likely to have a regular source for primary care services and more likely to report being in good or excellent health. Many of these benefits could be ours.

Yet, those who are hesitant to expand Medicaid often focus on two arguments: the expansion will cost too much and Georgia's healthcare system can't handle the increase of patients with Medicaid. However, a closer look at these issues shows that expanding Medicaid would be good for Georgia's people, economy and healthcare system.

First, the federal government will pay for all of the costs for newly eligible Georgians for the first three years and at least 90% of the costs in the long-term. According to the State's own numbers, new state spending for covering newly eligible Georgians would amount to barely more than a 1% increase in the overall state budget over the next 10 years. Even taking into account the expected increase in enrollment

among Georgians currently eligible for Medicaid (mostly children), the new costs would amount to less than a 2% increase – a small price for providing health insurance to so many.

“Specifically, if more Georgians have insurance, they will seek services from doctors, pharmacies, clinics and other health providers.”

Secondly, more than \$33 billion in new federal funding over the first 10 years would help address the State's need for more doctors and ensure that Georgia has an adequate healthcare infrastructure to treat new patients coming into the system. Specifically, if more Georgians have insurance, they will seek services from doctors, pharmacies, clinics and other health providers. The new federal funding will help pay the providers who deliver the care. Seeing fewer patients who lack insurance coverage will reduce hospitals' costs and improve their bottom lines.

Failing to expand Medicaid could leave hundreds of thousands of people uncovered and complicate efforts to address Georgia's health workforce and infrastructure challenges, not to mention efforts to improve health outcomes. Although some Georgia leaders have indicated reluctance to implement the expansion, there is still plenty of time for Georgia to seize this opportunity.

EXPERT UPDATE



Timothy Sweeney is the director of health policy at the Georgia Budget & Policy Institute (GBPI). Since 2005, he

has closely followed Medicaid and other health policy developments in Georgia, documenting the effects various budget and policy proposals have on state healthcare programs. His research focuses on a wide variety of Georgia's healthcare issues affecting Medicaid and PeachCare, as well as health insurance-related tax policy issues.

“The expansion is a great deal for Georgia, as the federal government will pay for all of the costs for newly-eligible Georgians for the first three years and at least 90% of the costs in the long-term.”



“I’m too old to be 28...”

By Pat Nobbie, PhD, Mia’s Mom

This is Mia’s comment about her birthday, which is on October 19, the release date of the magazine. People who hear this are puzzled. What does that mean exactly? Don’t worry if you don’t get it. It’s Mia’s way of reflecting on how old she is. I usually follow with “I’M too old for you to be 28!” which elicits the same ‘huh?’ reaction, but it’s a reflection of how old I am!

The fall GCDD Council meeting is always around Mia’s birthday, and this year we are meeting in Unicoi State Park, where Mia marked her 16th birthday with her grandparents, aunt, cousins and siblings. Mia got a huge cake and everyone sang happy birthday. Also at that meeting, Philip Jay gave his now famous “Peanut Butter speech,” narrating the need for training for staff who support our folks which eventually led to the development of our nationally accredited Direct Support Professionals Certificate Program designed by Joy Hopkins, Dottie Adams and some other friends and allies.

GCDD met in Savannah for Mia’s 21st birthday, and the Department of Community Affairs staff there presented on housing options for folks with disabilities. Mia raised her hand and said she wanted her own apartment, refrigerator, bed, desk, computer and TV, and then stated with great determination, “My own keys.” Eric Jacobson, Tom Seegmueller and I took her to a bar to celebrate, but she only got a coke and chips because she is the most successful graduate of the D.A.R.E. program ever and no alcohol has ever touched her lips.

On October 19, 2010, when Mia was 26, the State signed the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement, a landmark agreement at the time and upon which several other state’s settlements have been based.

This upcoming meeting, when she will be “too old to be 28,” is my last. In January, I am going

to Washington, DC to serve as a Kennedy Public Policy Fellow. In my application, I paralleled my personal education from being Mia’s mom with my professional education as a teacher, literacy program coordinator, parent rep on numerous boards and councils in the Virgin Islands (VI), Information Specialist for the VI PTI, grad student and policy director for GCDD. My career has always tracked Mia’s life. At each stage, I have looked out into the community for things I knew would support her. If I didn’t find them, I’d figure out how to develop them with our partners and allies. I wasn’t always sure where we would end up, but Mia has a good, solid life with friends and family, a great living arrangement, swimming, bowling, participation in a church and a social life. As I’ve said many times, I watch her live her life and then I try to figure out how we can extend these opportunities to others.

A few weeks ago, someone asked me what I wanted to be remembered for, and I quoted something Pat Puckett, the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) executive director, said years ago that I have brazenly borrowed and used as the goal of GCDD’s public policy platform. I hope people will remember that I constantly sought “conceptually coherent public policy for integrated life in the community for people with disabilities and the people who support them.” If I’ve done my job, then Georgia’s citizens with disabilities can have good, solid lives of their own.

I hope people will remember that I constantly sought “conceptually coherent public policy for integrated life in the community for people with disabilities and the people who support them.”

MIA'S SPACE



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MIA!

Macon Debuts the First Youth Roving Listening Project

Over the summer, GCDD's Real Communities project with Centenary United Methodist Church in Macon, GA carried out the Roving Listening project for the first time. The project, which was adapted from the work of DeAmon Harges at Broadway United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, IN, the site of a GCDD learning journey trip, is a method to start deep, meaningful conversations within the community and understand each person's gifts and skills.

On July 2, Centenary Methodist Church kicked off a week of training for 30 community workers to learn the art of Roving Listening. Separated into four different teams, each made up of people with and without disabilities, the group moved out into the Beall's Hill neighborhood to listen, connect and understand the gifts and ideas of the people who live there.

The project lasted for a month, with Roving Listeners going out into the community three days each week of the project and finishing each week with a Monday night community dinner that engaged the individuals they connected with the previous week.

According to Stacey Harwell, minister of Community Building at Centenary, based on the comments learned from the project, members of the community were interested in creating more programs for youth and avenues for them to get to know their neighbors better. There was also interest in developing more opportunities for the community members to participate in crime prevention and beautification of their community.

"People enjoyed the community dinners, so we built them in to a year-round grant we recently applied for," stated Harwell. "We are continually searching for ideas to teach and carry out in the community."

Although the Roving Listening project has concluded, the goal is to receive funding from other grants through Centenary to extend the program for five years.

"Overall the project went well," said Harwell. "The community responded, the roving listeners were great and we started a solid foundation for building relationships in the community."

Clarkston Community Garden Starts Second Planting Season

After successfully completing the first planting in the Clarkston International Community Garden in April 2012, the Real Communities Initiative started gearing up for a second season with another planting on August 15. There are 26 plots in the garden, divided among families and individuals, each responsible for their own plot.

"The participants are taking on more leadership," said Basmat Ahmed, the Real Communities Community Builder. "I think this second time around they felt more confident and more used to the place, so they are taking ownership and organizing themselves."

Starting in mid-September, gardeners should begin seeing growth of veggies they planted such as arugula, cabbage, onions, radishes and more.

REAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

Participants of the Roving Listening project.



"The community responded, the roving listeners were great and we started a solid foundation for building relationships in the community."

In addition to the plantings in the Clarkston community garden, Ahmed wants to develop activities and events to bring people together. “This is a long-term idea that will include teaching food activities, as well as how we can be inclusive to everyone in the community,” she said. “People in Clarkston come from different backgrounds and it is important to involve everyone and make them feel comfortable and confident in how they contribute.”

GCDD Participates in an International Learning Journey

Recently, GCDD representatives and members of several Real Communities Initiatives had the opportunity to travel internationally and attend the Toronto Summer Institute (TSI) through a learning journey on July 7-12. This is the third time GCDD has gone to the TSI, and this year several people were able to attend including Caitlin Childs, organizing director of the GCDD Real Communities Initiative, GCDD Council members Tameeka Hunter and Cheri Pace, Real Communities Community Builders Amanda Quintana from Milton and Teri Schell from Savannah and Haven Mellor, a member of the Real Communities in Savannah.

“TSI is a conference that people attend from all over the world,” said Childs. “It is a place for those on the cutting edge who think creatively to make inclusion a reality and support innovative changes.”

One of the things TSI is known for is its unique approach for people to come and learn, share and connect with others who are already involved in innovative initiatives. It’s a small gathering and the participants drive the majority of the agenda of the conference. There are very few set workshops. The attendees decide what they would like to talk about, which creates the space for a lot of deep conversations and meaningful strategy sessions.

“This was a great place for a learning journey because the participants and facilitators were all so immersed in the movement of real change in the realm of inclusion,” said Schell. “One topic we talked about was the need to hear from

all members of a community, rather than just the experts or those who step up to the plate. Oftentimes, the person who hasn’t spoken up has a wealth of input to offer and we just have to invite and then welcome them.”

The Toronto Summer Institute originally was developed to focus solely on school inclusion and integrating classrooms, but it has evolved over the years. There are many people who come who have no connection to disabilities but want to participate because they are really focused on community-building and creating a culture of inclusion.

Hunter, a longtime GCDD Council member, said participating in this learning journey helped her have a better understanding of the goals of the Real Communities projects. “This trip helps us remember and recognize that all communities have talents and gifts that are not tapped in to and human resources are an excellent tool to help build and sustain communities,” she said. “It made me realize how I could help build or support a community around disabilities.

Although there are not many set agendas or topics, there are many well-known advocates, both within and outside of the disability community, who are there to help guide the conversations. The aim of the conference is to facilitate and assist future leaders in building inclusive and diverse communities, schools and workplaces.

“After listening and learning from everyone there, I want to quit placing certain people or organizations outside the realm of participating in our project,” said Schell. “I want to make it a goal to reach out to all, regardless of the initial viewpoint a person seems to hold.”

“I think we will continue participating in the Toronto Summer Institute through GCDD Learning Journeys because it is core to the approach we take with our Real Communities Initiatives,” said Childs. “At GCDD, Real Communities projects are about establishing inclusion at the ground level and giving every member of the community a chance to have a meaningful contribution.”

“TSI is a conference that people attend from all over the world. It is a place for those on the cutting edge who think creatively to make inclusion a reality and support innovative changes.”

“I think we will continue participating in the Toronto Summer Institute through GCDD learning journeys because it is core to the approach we take with our Real Communities Initiatives.”

“This was a great place for a learning journey because the participants and facilitators were all so immersed in the movement of real change in the realm of inclusion.”

“With self-direction, having the freedom of choice allows you to better match personalities, qualifications to your specific needs and screen out those you don’t want without further explanation.”

STRAIGHT TALK

The Pros and Cons of Self-Direction

By Ryan T. Mercer

I have been self-directing for about three or four years using the Georgia Independent Care Waiver Program (ICWP), and in my opinion, self-direction has both its advantages and disadvantages. It affords you the option to choose your own staff and to pay them higher salaried rates, depending on which waivers you have and what their requisites are. Although you are responsible for the paperwork portion of it all, I feel that self-direction is the way to go!

Perhaps one of the greatest advantages of self-direction is being able to pay your staff a higher wage than they would typically make through an agency. In most situations, you can decide the employee’s pay rate, as well as their schedule. An agency takes an “overhead cut” because they’re handling the paperwork portion of your caseload, which affects the amount that they’re willing to pay. With self-direction, you do all of the paperwork yourself and eliminate the middle man.

Another important advantage to this approach is having the freedom to choose your own employees and to conduct your own interviews and hiring processes. Unfortunately, agencies are known to send whoever is available at the time. Sometimes they don’t take in mind certain factors and some of these people are hired on a whim. For me, one of the reasons I started self-directing is because the agency sent me people who did not communicate well and could not understand the services I needed or wanted.

With self-direction, having the freedom of choice allows you to better match personalities and qualifications to your specific needs and screen out those you don’t want without further explanation.

Often, agencies send individuals who lack people skills and leave you feeling stuck with them. Choosing someone who matches your own personality can make all the difference in the world.

While filing your own paperwork, keeping track of your own budget and monitoring your staff’s hours may be tedious at times, I feel it’s worth it to have choices. You only have to obtain the information on each employee for five years. This is strictly for audit purposes with the State.

Also, sometimes an agency does not consider or adapt to the support you need or want. For example, if you have a vehicle, an agency may not like to have one of their employees drive it and you will need to find other options for transportation. If you’re self-directing, you have the control to hire someone you know will drive your vehicle.

This is how I feel about self-direction and what is best for my situation, but every person and each situation is different. Some people might prefer to choose the route of going with an agency. It just depends on what option works best for you.



Ryan T. Mercer

is a 26-year-old advocate with Cerebral palsy. He has been involved in advocacy work for six years now

and is currently active in numerous advocacy projects including People First of Georgia and the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) program at Georgia State University.

October

October 17-19

NADD 29th Annual Conference & Exhibit Show – Mental Wellness in Persons with IDD & ASD: Innovation, Collaboration & Quality of Life (IDD/MH)
Denver, CO
www.thenadd.org

October 18-19

GCDD Quarterly Meeting
Helen, GA
404.657.2126

October 19

A Fall Conference – “Take Charge,”
Discover the Possibilities with
Participant-direction
770.451.5484

October 20

The Arc of Georgia’s Plane Pull
Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport
Atlanta, GA
www.thearcofgeorgia.org

October 22-25

Fall 2012 National ADA Conference –
The ADA, Diagnosis and Prognosis, Legal
Aspects, Practical Advice & Best Practices
San Diego, CA
888.679.7227

October 25

Conversations that Matter – Building a
Brighter Future After High School
Gainesville, GA
RSVP: Marty Owens – 678.617.5527;
Scott Crain – 770.540.4479

October 25-28

Inclusion International Conference –
Achieving Inclusion Across the Globe
Washington, DC
www.inclusion-international.org/

October 30

Discovering Hope..., Discovering Options
Jewish Family & Career Services (JF&CS)
Atlanta, GA
For more information, contact Eve Bogan
770.677.9344 or ebogan@jfcs-atlanta.org
RSVP: Brenda Revere
revere@jfcs-atlanta.org

October – December 1

Works by Lois Curtis –
A Celebration of a Life Lived Creatively
Milledgeville, GA
Shannon Morris – 478.445.4391

November

November 27

Discovering Hope..., Discovering Options
Jewish Family & Career Services (JF&CS)
Atlanta, GA
For more information, contact Eve Bogan
770.677.9344 or ebogan@jfcs-atlanta.org
RSVP: Brenda Revere
revere@jfcs-atlanta.org

November 28 – December 1

2012 TASH Conference
Long Beach, CA
Haley Kimmel – 202.540.9015
www.tash.org

December

December 5-7

Perspectives on Employment of
Persons with Disabilities
Hyatt Regency
Bethesda, MD
www.silverstarconsulting.com/perspectives/

January 2013

January 17-18

GCDD Quarterly Meeting
Atlanta, GA
404.657.2126

2012 CALENDAR

Planning an upcoming event?

Send your information to Dee Spearman, GCDD Public Information Assistant at dyspearman@dhr.state.ga.us; Subject line: “Community Calendar” by December 1 to be included in the winter calendar. For a full list of events, visit: gcdd.org/events-calendar



CALENDAR HIGHLIGHT:

“Works by Lois Curtis: A Celebration of a Life Lived Creatively,” will display in the Georgia College in Milledgeville, GA until Saturday, December 1. The display will feature original artwork by Lois Curtis, civil rights activist and folk artist who led the way to the landmark Supreme Court Olmstead Decision.

RESOURCES

For additional information about the articles and issues in this edition of *Making a Difference* magazine, consult the following resources.

Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD)
www.gcdd.org
404.657.2126 or
888.275.4233 (ASK.GCDD)

State Government

Georgia Senate & House of Representatives
www.legis.state.ga.us

Georgia Governor's Office
www.gov.state.ga.us
404.656.1776

Department of Community Affairs
www.dca.ga.gov

Georgia Housing Search
www.georgiahousingsearch.org
877.428.8844

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

General Information
www.georgia.gov

Georgia Lieutenant Governor's Office
www.ltgov.georgia.gov
404.656.5030

News

Turner Classic Movies
http://news.turner.com/article_display.cfm?article_id=6184

Not Home Documentary
www.nothomedocumentary.com/

"Voices Beyond the Mirror"
www.gcdd.org/news-a-media/videos/viewcategory/14/voices-beyond-the-mirror-personal-reflections.html

Around GCDD

"Getting Real in Georgia"
www.gcdd.org/news-a-media/videos/viewvideo/23/getting-real-in-georgia.html

Voting Feature

County Board of Registrars Office
http://sos.georgia.gov/cgi-bin/countyregistrarsindex.asp

Georgia Department of Driver Services
www.dds.ga.gov/drivers/dldata.aspx?con=1749371755&ty=dl

Georgia Secretary of State
www.sos.georgia.gov/

Obama
www.barackobama.com/people-with-disabilities/

National Forum on Disability Issues
www.nfdi.org

Romney
www.mittromney.com/

Self-Direction Feature

Acumen
www.acumenfiscalagent.com/states/ga.aspx

Administrative Services, Inc.
www.asiworks.com/

DBHDD Regional Offices
http://dbhdd.georgia.gov/regions

Georgia Microboards Association
www.gamicroboards.org/

Public Partnerships
www.publicpartnerships.com/

Perspectives

Cross Plains Community Partner
www.facebook.com/pages/Cross-Plains-Community-Partner/107336549343491

Project SEARCH
www.projectsearch.us/

Employment Feature

Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD)
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/add/

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)
http://dbhdd.georgia.gov/about-dbhdd

National Disability Employment Awareness Month
www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/

Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
www.dol.gov/odep/

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)
www.vocrehabga.org/

Real Communities

Toronto Summer Institute
www.inclusion.com/inclusionnetwork.html

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www.GeorgiaHousingSearch.org



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- Tools for Independence WORKS: Training and employing adults with developmental disabilities for meaningful community access or work. Also provides creative resources for businesses and the community. Includes LifeWORKS day program.
- Transition Supports: Life and prevocational skills development.

770.677.9345 | TFI@jfcs-atlanta.org

YourToolsforLiving.org

Jewish Family & Career Services



JF&CS is a proud partner of the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta and the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta.

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Photo (L-R): Sharon Chung, Theresa An, Peter An, Dottie Adams and Lucy Ahn, members of the Real Communities Korean Coalition at the Annual *Making a Difference* Appreciation Ceremony.