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Society for Disability Studies Conference Brings Together Disability Community

IN THE NEWS

Every June, the Society for Disability Studies (SDS) brings together a vibrant mix of academics, activists, artists, students and community members to share and learn ideas on building places and spaces that gives access to everyone – with or without disabilities.

“It is a conference that covers everything from academia to grassroots movements,” said Tammy Berberi, past SDS president and 2015 site chair.

Downtown Atlanta was host to this year’s SDS annual meeting where dozens of academic panels, discussions, workshops, presentations and social gatherings were held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel from June 10 – 13. Members and other conference attendees shared ideas, met local disability justice activists and formed valuable professional relationships.

Kicking off the annual conference was the Summit on Disability and Social Justice hosted by the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) and SDS.

This day-long summit gathered academics, grassroots organizers and activists to examine the way disability justice is connected to other social justice struggles. Led by GCDD’s Real

Communities Director Caitlin Childs, the summit used engaging participatory panels and breakout sessions to understand how disability rights fits into social justice work.

The four workshops discussed topics such as incarceration and institutionalization; youth organizing; food justice; and sexuality as a human right and reproductive justice.

“The Real Communities model fits in extremely well with SDS’ mission of showing how communities can be strengthened by learning from each other,” said Berberi. “It gives a genuine sense of empowerment to work together and find solidarity across various perspectives.”

The Social Justice Summit was honored with a proclamation by Sen. Gail Davenport (D-District 44) and City of Atlanta Councilman Clarence Terrell “CT” Martin who proudly declared June 10 as Disability Justice Day.

With over 500 attendees, the 2015 conference also commemorated the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through various events including the ADA25 Georgia Legacy Parade held on June 13 (*Read more about the parade on page 12*). In its work, SDS thrives to find ways to afford full participation and access for all people.

The 2016 Society for Disability Studies Conference will be held from June 8 -11 in Phoenix, AZ.

society for disability studies

in scholarship, activism, and the arts

For more information on the Society for Disability Studies Conference, visit www.disstudies.org