

Monday Bulletin on Services to Youth

To Coordinate... To Enhance... To Serve... Through Communication...

Special Edition Disability Network



The Disability Networks (Centers for Independence in Michigan) provide essential support programs for youth with

disabilities, such as self-determination and empowerment training, mentoring and work preparation programs. Disability Networks are vital partners with Michigan Rehabilitation Services in providing needed transition services to youth. Hear from a few Michigan centers in this issue!

Please Forward or Print Monday Bulletin for Others

Email your contributions or ideas for "Monday Bulletin on Services to Youth" to Lynn Boza: bozal@michigan.gov or call 517/241-3957.

To subscribe, contact Lynn Boza as above. Views expressed in Monday Bulletin articles are not necessarily the views of the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth nor Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

ANN ARBOR CIL YOUTH PROGRAM TEACHES TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT ADULTHOOD

By Anna Dusbiber and Jen Chapin-Smith

No one can better help us than ourselves. So who could better teach a teen with a disability the skills and attitude they need to live independently than an adult mentor with a similar disability who has succeeded?

"I love mentoring!" Deanna Boer said. Boer mentors a youth through the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living. "I'm helping my mentee access community resources. I enjoy just spending time with her, seeing the smile on her face and hearing her say 'thank you.' My mentee's mother is thrilled with her daughter's achievement and that makes me happy."



Jen & Anna

The Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living's Youth Mentoring Program matches youth ages 14 to 21 (and 22- to 26-year-olds in special education classes) with adult mentors of the same gender and same or similar disability.

A mentor is a caring, responsible, dedicated volunteer who guides a young person, helping him or her define and creatively achieve personal goals. Mentored youth are 46% less likely to start using drugs than their unmentored peers, according to the Child Trends Research Brief of 2004.

One mentor in the Ann Arbor CIL's program taught his mentee HTML computer coding, which not only helped the student in class, but puts him well on the road to a successful career and financial independence.

One young woman with cerebral palsy was so frustrated by her math class that she considered dropping out of college. Her mentor sympathized with the difficulty math can pose when using a computer rather than writing by hand. The mentor suggested the student follow her example by taking self-paced math classes. The student is now headed toward graduation.

Continued on page 3

DISABILITY NETWORK OF MID-MICHIGAN IMPACTS STUDENTS

The Disability Network of Mid-Michigan impacts the lives of over 200 students in Midland, Bay and Saginaw counties each year. Working closely with the schools and Michigan Rehabilitation



Shay McGinnis Comparison Shopping

Services, the primary part of our youth services is a community based instruction (CBI) program that allows students to increase their pre-employment and independent living skills through “real-life” practice rather than class-room theory. The students are paired with an adult Independent Living Specialist who works with the students an average of 3 years. This provides an ongoing mentoring relationship with another adult role model. The Community Based Instruction and mentor relationship is continued during a ten week summer program that focuses on peer relationships,

career development and accessing the community.

In addition to these programs the Disability Network is providing job club training, career exploration and the exploration of post-secondary education options for a wide variety of students who are not able to take part in the regular CBI instruction.

Recently the DNMM has begun a collaborative program with Michigan



Tim Ogden working with Travis Stiehl

Commission for the Blind that includes skill training, peer support group and we will be working together

on to make sure our summer program meets some of the specific needs of the people who receive MCB services.

Collaboration Supports Independent Living

The **Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)** is the Governor-appointed Council responsible to represent the interests of all people with disabilities of all ages across Michigan, including the interests and needs of the statewide CIL Network. It promotes and advocates a philosophy of Independent Living, and works for improvement in the capacity, efficiency, and impact of IL programs, supports and services to meet consumer needs and achieve the goal of “integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society”.

The SILC works jointly with the **Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)** and **Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB)**, both located within the **Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (MDLEG)** to develop and support SILC/CIL programs and services in Michigan.

Independent Living Partners include:

- Disability Network/Michigan (DN/M), the private, non-profit association established by Michigan’s 15 Centers for Independent Living as the collective voice of the Michigan CIL Network.
- Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns (MCDC),

a Governor-appointed commission responsible for statewide advocacy for people with disabilities.

- Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), the Governor-appointed council responsible to undertake advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change activities to achieve the purposes of the federal Development Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act.
- Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC), a private, non-profit entity that is a dynamic collaboration of organizations, groups, and individuals, creating capacity in the disability community, impacting disability policy, and building the inclusive communities of our common future.
- Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service (MPAS), a private non-profit organization offering a full range of information and advocacy services to people with disabilities, including operating the Client Assistance Program (CAP) for MRS and CIL customers.
- Michigan Rehabilitation Council (MRC), the Governor-appointed council established under Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act to review, analyze, and provide advice to Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

Ann Arbor CIL Youth Program

Continued from 1

“Mentoring is alive and well in Michigan, and I applaud the mentoring programs that are providing our children with high-quality programs that build character and competence,” Michigan First Gentleman Dan Mulhern said. The governor’s husband leads Mentor Michigan, a state initiative to promote mentoring. In January he presented awards to “Super Mentors” in Washtenaw County, including Kate Zajac, who mentors a youth through the Ann Arbor CIL. She taught her mentor about self-reliance, responsibility and accessing resources. Sometimes they just have fun together, such as when they both attended the Ann Arbor CIL’s Hawaiian Luau.

The Ann Arbor CIL is a 31-year-old service and advocacy association of, by, and for people with disabilities in Washtenaw, Livingston and Monroe Counties. Four years ago, the Ann Arbor CIL created the Youth Program to meet the social, educational and recreational needs of our youth. The Youth Program hosts such events as free health classes, field trips to museums and state parks, movie nights and dance parties.

Youth Program participants can request that a CIL staff member attend their IEP meetings, helping to identify educational needs as they transition into adulthood. Every year, the CIL awards college scholarships to local graduating seniors with disabilities who demonstrate leadership in the disability rights community. At least once per month, the Youth Program publishes eNews for Youth, a newsletter of upcoming events and opportunities for local youth with disabilities, available via email and postal mail. eNews now has a readership of 500 people in the three counties.

Once or twice per year, the Youth Program hosts Girl Talk, a six-week support group of young women with disabilities aimed at boosting self-esteem. As a result of the 2006 Girl Talk series, one young woman realized she was being sexually harassed and put a stop to it. Another female student built up the courage to break up with her abusive boyfriend.

The Ann Arbor CIL’s other services are available to people of all ages, including youth. These services include information and referrals for consumers, information on how to find affordable and accessible housing, financial advice, life coaching, advice on assistive technology, computer trainings, advocacy, assistance in applying for Social Security, and access to regular sports and recreational events.

The Youth Program also teaches leadership skills to its Youth Council members, a group of seven young people with disabilities who act as an informal advisory board to the Youth Program.

The Youth Program has shown so much success with helping youth that many former participants now volunteer for the CIL.

“It was fun having a mentor [through the Ann Arbor CIL]. My mentor and I were able to socialize and go to U of M’s baseball games or hang out at the mall for dinner and a movie. What made me want to become a mentor was that I wanted to help my mentee out by doing the type of stuff that my mentor and I did,” explained Gary McNally, who now mentors a young man through the Ann Arbor CIL’s Youth Mentoring Program.

DISABILITY NETWORK/LAKESHORE: TWO TRANSITION PROGRAMS



Teens with hidden, physical, sensory, and/or health related impairments can explore transition options with the help of an adult mentor through our BRIGHTfutures program.

BRIGHTfutures is a community based mentoring program where youth 14-18 are matched with an adult volunteer for one year. Participating youth are required to identify at least two transition related goals to work on with the help of their mentor. Mentors are screened using an FBI criminal check along with other local background inquiries, and receive 7 hours of training prior to being matched with a youth. The match is offered free/low cost activities, discounts from local businesses, and support from our staff throughout their relationship.



Youth
Employment
Summit

For those youth interested in learning career focused skills, we offer the Youth Employment Summit. Participants meet twice a week for three weeks, and

are given the opportunity to learn and practice employability and IL skills. Instruction is provided by Disability Network staff and local employers. The program specifically addresses the realities of work, the importance in matching skills and abilities, successful interviewing techniques, disability disclosure, and the costs associated with living on one’s own. Workshops are offered at a variety of locations throughout our service area in order to ensure that all interested youth have an opportunity to participate.

The L.I.F.E. Program

Learning Independence From Experience

Disability Network/Northern Michigan offers a program for high school students with disabilities called "The LIFE Program: Learning Independence From Experience." This program is currently in 12 high schools with over 170 students with disabilities participating. The LIFE program is funded through a collaborative cash match agreement with Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Traverse Bay Intermediate School District and Disability Network/Northern Michigan. The LIFE program provides students with hands-on activities throughout the school year to prepare them for their transition from high school to adult life.

Students actively participating in the LIFE program learn a variety of independent living skills through hands-on experiences. Most classes meet weekly in the classroom as well as bringing students out into the community. It's a program designed to focus on disability awareness, self-advocacy and career exploration. Topics covered throughout the school year include self-esteem, goal setting, self-determination, problem solving, teamwork, cooperation, banking, budgeting, job seeking skills, social/leisure activities, accommodations, maintaining healthy relationships...and much more. Students are challenged to think about their futures and their path in life. This program gives students the opportunity to learn about themselves, about

jobs and plan for their post-school lives. Another value to the LIFE program is that we offer on-going support to teachers and school faculty. We bring in community resources to the school and support transition services.

After high school, Disability Network/Northern Michigan offers a program called the Youth Advocacy Council. It's a leadership program for young adults with disabilities ages 18-26. YAC focuses on building leadership skills, self-advocacy, social skills and community involvement. Young adults plan social activities, volunteer projects and also choose topics for job skill classes. Each young adult involved plays an important role in shaping the goals of this program and their own personal goals. The program coordinators work in collaboration with the young adults to see that these goals are met. YAC is lead by young adults with disabilities. They developed their own mission statement: *To create social and community connections for people with disabilities.*

For more information contact the Transition Specialists:

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Annie Campbell: acampbell@charterinternet.com

Phone: (231) 922-0903 or toll free at 866-869-8600

Web: www.disabilitynetwork-nmi.org

Save the Dates Events & Training

APRIL

Michigan Association for the Education & Rehabilitation of the Blind & Visually Impaired Conference

April 26-27, 2007 @ Livonia Marriott

Contact Mary Beth Kullen: Kullen@gdbvi.org

Health Resource Parent Training

April 21, 2007 @ Clinton County RESA

Contact Jeannie at 1-800-359-3722.

<http://www.bridges4kids.org/f2f/training.htm#4>

MAY

Real Life Learning: DB Central

May 2, 2007 @ Oakland Schools, Waterford MI

May 4, 2007 @ Kalamazoo, MI

1-888-758-0508

www.dbcentral.org

Job Developer Workshop

May 11, 2007

Kellogg Center, E. Lansing, MI

For more info contact Betty Taylor at 217-333-2325 or

ertaylor@uiuc.edu

MI-AHEAD Conference

May 17 & 18, 2007

Radisson Hotel, Lansing, MI

More info coming soon: <http://www.mi-ahead.org>

AUGUST

Mid-Michigan Educators' Summit

August 15, 2007

Valley Plaza in Midland, MI

Contact Kayla Courneya and at

courneyak@baisd.net or via telephone at (989) 667-3280

A flyer is at: [http://www.baisd.net/documents/](http://www.baisd.net/documents/Save%20the%20Date81507.pdf)

[Save%20the%20Date81507.pdf](http://www.baisd.net/documents/Save%20the%20Date81507.pdf)

Build Community & Enjoy a Day with Friends!

The second annual Youth Day of Caring-your chance to help out while having fun-is fast approaching. On Saturday, May 5 from 10 am to 3 pm, staff members, volunteers and youth from Washtenaw Youth Mentoring Coalition member-organizations will participate in a local community service project through the Washtenaw United Way.

EVERYONE MUST write “Washtenaw Youth Mentoring Coalition” in company line AND in the answer to question #9.

Question #7 asks “am I registered as a site leader?” Click “no” if you are under the age of 18. Click “yes” if you are 18 or older.

If you have dietary restrictions, be sure to mention it in the text for the answer to question #9.

If you use a wheelchair or need other accommodations, please note it in #9.

Participants must provide their transportation to and from the site. However, the United Way will provide lunch, snacks, water and t-shirts.

Once you’ve registered you’ll get an email and a postal letter letting you know where to go on May 5. The letter will include a permission slip for parents of under-18-year-olds to sign. Be sure to bring the permission slip with you on May 5! At the site that Saturday, you’ll get your t-shirt and certificate of community service hours.

ALL participants MUST pre-register at:
<http://www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey.zgi?p=WEB2267EYX7C5Y>.

For more information contact:
Jennifer Chapin-Smith
Community Mentorship Coordinator
jchapin@aacil.org
734-971-0277 x23

NASDSE Satellite Conference Series

For more information see the OSE-EIS Web site at
<http://www.michigan.gov/ose-eis>