

# Our Community Includes Everyone



## Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

2010 Legislative Day

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

*Featuring the*

**Outstanding Advocates Awards Program**



The **Young Leader Award** recognizes a young lady with a developmental disability who has demonstrated initiative, talent, determination, and achievement. *Tasiona Walker* is an emerging leader in the disability community. She works in the community at large to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Tasiona is a high school student who has full inclusion in her community schools. She attended the Michigan Youth Leadership Forum in 2009 and has made application to attend in 2010. Tasiona's biggest contribution has been in advocating for improved public transportation in her county. She was a founding member of the Shiawassee Transportation Advocacy Coalition. Tasiona has also been a member of two RICC's, Genesee and Shiawassee. She is a member of the youth group in her faith community and a member of the Aktion Club, a Kiwanis Club affiliate. The Aktion Club raises money through service projects to help people with disabilities make their community a better place. She is a service-minded person, helping others with shopping, housecleaning and babysitting at no charge. Through her service she has helped make a difference in the lives of the citizens of Shiawassee County.



The **Unsung Advocate Award** recognizes a person that demonstrates the spirit of the council's mission and goals. The award highlights the behind the scenes contributions of someone who has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of people with disabilities. *Duane DeRoche* has served as the chair and co-chair of the Kent RICC. He has also served as the chair of the Long Term Care Work Group, often giving testimony on the importance of Medicaid Waiver and other community supports that allow people with disabilities to live in the community. He serves as a member on the Disability Advocates of Kent County Housing Advisory Committee and is a member of the Concerned Citizen's for Improved Transportation, which focuses on improving county-wide access, sidewalks, and service in Kent County. As the transportation coordinator for the RICC, Duane actively participates in teaching proper wheelchair restraint techniques to new Grand Rapids paratransit drivers. He has been the highest individual fund raiser for Disability Advocates annual Walk and Roll Event. Over the past three years, he's raised approximately \$3500. Duane has a strong desire to do what is right on behalf of people with disabilities, stating, "I want to fill in wherever I can for those thousands of people (with disabilities) who cannot be there to speak for themselves."



The **Diversity Outreach Award** recognizes a person who demonstrates success and leadership in outreach and recruitment of people with disabilities from diverse cultures. **Martha Navarette**, a bilingual teacher in the Detroit Public Schools, is deeply committed to helping children with disabilities whose primary language is Spanish. She assists the students to reach their full academic potential as well as supporting the families to advocate for the students. Her dedication to Spanish-speaking families often goes beyond the traditional work schedule. She uses unconventional parent-teacher communication practices to ensure that each child gets what they need. Along with teaching, she regularly helps children who are not in her classes, with and without disabilities. Martha is an active member of many community groups and school committees focused on improving the lives of students with disabilities. She is a member of the advisory council for the Supporting Educational Achievement for Minorities (SEAM) project, funded by the DD Council. Additionally, she serves on the School-Community Transition Team, a partnership between Detroit Public Schools and local community service providers who serve the Latino Community.



The **Trailblazer Grantee Award** recognizes **United Cerebral Palsy Michigan's-All Aboard! Michigan** project. This transportation advocacy project has made significant impact. The project's director Mr. Glenn Ashley works with RICC's and other local groups to learn how to advocate for better public transportation options in their communities. The project uses a mass media approach to publicizing what's going on in statewide transportation advocacy. Through the [transportationallies.net](http://transportationallies.net) site, advocates can view a transportation related blog, link to other transportation advocacy sites, and find information about meeting and training related to a variety of transportation issues. The project worked closely with the Shiawassee Transportation Advocacy Coalition to make contact with key decision makers and give testimony to the County Commissioners about the need for affordable public transportation. They also helped produce videos as way to educate policy makers about a county-wide public transportation system. All Aboard! hosted an advocacy conference in Muskegon in 2008 and is in the process of planning a statewide conference that will be held in Spring 2010. Through this project, UCP Michigan has helped people with developmental disabilities realize their transportation dreams.

## **Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council Members**

Theresa Arini  
Elmer Cerano  
Kristin Columbus  
Jacqueline Day  
Cynthia Farrell  
Vera Graham  
Todd Koopmans  
Sandee Koski  
Sheryl Kuenzer  
Barbara LeRoy

Caryn Pack Ivey  
Paul Palmer  
Jane Reagan  
Andre Robinson, Chair  
Robin Sefton, Co-Chair  
Robert Spruce  
Judith Webb  
Pamela Webb  
Duncan Wyeth

### **Public Policy Committee Members**

Elmer Cerano  
Judy Cerano  
Jacqueline Day  
Vera Graham  
George Hanley  
Melinda Haus-Johnson  
Paul Palmer

Jane Reagan  
Andre Robinson  
Robin Sefton  
Robert Spruce  
Don Trout  
Theresa Squires  
Pamela Webb

### **Legislative Activities Subcommittee**

Elmer Cerano  
Jacqueline Day  
Vera Graham  
Kathy McGeathy  
Paul Palmer

Jane Reagan  
Andre Robinson  
Don Trout  
Pamela Webb

### **Awards Committee**

Jacqueline Day  
Pamela Webb  
Tony Wong

### **Council Staff**

Mitzi Allen  
Tandy Bidinger  
Yasmina Bouraoui, Deputy Director  
Vendela M. Collins, Executive Director  
Dee Florence

Terry Hunt  
Tedra L. Jackson  
Laura Robertson  
Cheryl Trommater  
Tracy Vincent

## *Order of Events*

9:00am – 10:00am Arrival of RICC members and guests

10:00am – 10:15am Welcome and Introductions

Vendela M. Collins  
*Executive Director*

Andre K. Robinson  
*Council Chair*

10:15am – 10:30 Introductory Address  
*Charlene Lizotte, Founder*  
*All About Awareness*

10:30am – 11:00am Keynote Address  
*Clark Harder, Executive Director*  
*Michigan Public Transit Association*

11:00am – 1:00pm Meet with Legislators  
*(Lunch will be served during this time)*

1:00pm – 1:30pm Follow-up and Next steps  
*Clark Harder*

1:30pm – 3:00pm *2010 Outstanding Advocate Awards Presentation*

*Introduction of Awards Presenter*

Pamela Webb  
*Awards Committee Chair*

*Presentation of Outstanding Advocate Awards*

Jane Reagan  
*Council Member*

Young Leader  
Unsung Advocate  
Diversity Outreach  
Trailblazer Grantee

Tasiona Walker  
Duane DeRochey  
Martha Navarette  
UCP Michigan  
All Aboard! Michigan

*Awards Reception Will Follow*