



The DD Community Update

March 2010

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The Michigan
Developmental Disabilities
Council

Andre K. Robinson, Chair

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2010 Legislative Day

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council's 11th Annual Legislative Day was held at the Lansing Radisson on February 9, 2010. About 160 people attended, which included members from the council's Regional Interagency Consumer Committees (RICCs), council members, Representatives, and Senators.

The annual Legislative Day is important for RICC members to build a relationship with their legislators and to discuss issues that affect their lives. A relationship with legislators is the basis of effective self advocacy, and maintaining contact with legislators allows RICCs to stay informed of what they are doing to improve local conditions for people with developmental disabilities. This is especially significant in today's economic climate where support and services for people with disabilities are dwindling.

This year's speakers were Charlene Lizotte, a Genessee RICC member and founder of All About Awareness, LLC; and Clark Harder, a former legislator and executive director of the Michigan Public Transit Association. Charlene Lizotte relayed personal stories to fire up the RICC members to speak with their legislators about issues that affect their lives. Clark Harder educated the RICCs about speaking with and building relationships with legislators. His background as a former House Representative gave RICC members valuable insight into a legislator's world. *(Story continued on next page.)*



Clockwise from top left: Clark Harder, Vendella M. Collins (Executive Director), Charlene Lizotte, and Andre K. Robinson (Chair)

2010 Legislative Day Continued

The message of the day was that meeting with legislators is only a beginning. It is important for RICC members to follow up on a regular basis with their legislators about the issues discussed and their impact. Janet Olzsewski, Director of the Michigan Department of Community Health, also took a moment to speak to participants on the importance of self-advocacy.

The day ended with the 2010 Outstanding Advocate Awards Ceremony and reception.

Tasiana Walker received the Young Leader Award. Tasiona is a member of both the Genesee and Shiawassee RICCs. She is a founding member of the Shiawassee Transportation Advocacy Coalition and is a member of the Aktion Club, which raises money to help people with disabilities make their community a better place.

Duane DeRochey received the Unsung Advocate Award. Duane is a Kent RICC member and has served as the chair of the Long Term Care Work Group. He is also a member on the Disability Advocates of Kent County Housing Advisory Committee and a member of the Concerned Citizen's for Improved Transportation.

Martha Navarette received the Diversity Outreach Award. Martha is a bilingual teacher in the Detroit Public Schools and is committed to helping children with disabilities whose primary language is Spanish. She is a member of the advisory council for the Supporting Educational Achievement for Minorities (SEAM) project funded by the DD Council.

The **All Aboard! Michigan Project** at United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan received the Trailblazer Grantee Award. This project works with RICCs and other local groups to learn how to advocate for better public transportation in their communities. The project uses a mass media approach to publicizing what's going on in statewide transportation advocacy. Their website, www.transportationallies.net, has a blog and links to other transportation advocacy sites. The award was accepted by Glenn Ashley, project director.



Award Winners. From top left: Vendella M. Collins, Linda Potter, Glenn Ashley, Tasiana Walker, Martha Navarette. From bottom left: Andre K. Robinson, Chair, Duane DeRochey.

2010 Legislative Day in Pictures



Janet Olzsewski



Arenac RICC



Manistee-Benzie RICC



Eastern UP RICC



Genesee RICC



Wayne RICC



Northern Area RICC



Oakland RICC



Iosco RICC



Allegan RICC



Kalamazoo RICC



Council Members

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

Governor Jennifer Granholm has proclaimed March 2010 as Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in Michigan. The goal is to increase awareness and promote independence, integration and inclusion of all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

To read the proclamation at the Governor's official website, click [here](#). There is also a copy of the signed proclamation attached with this newsletter.

During this month, think about and organize disability awareness activities at your RICC meetings, organizations, offices, schools, and other places.

Ways you can get involved:

- Submit a letter to the editor (as a group or individually) to your local newspaper, explaining the importance of inclusion for all people with disabilities.
- Ask your mayor to declare March as Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in your community. Encourage him or her to make the announcement at a local school so children can be involved in the process.
- Contact a volunteer organization or a church group to partner for a community service and/or outreach project involving people with disabilities. Contact local disability organizations to form a partnership.
- Work with your local schools and public libraries to prepare a disability awareness month reading list. Ask the librarian to display the books in a prominent location.
- Suggest to a local school that its students complete an accessibility survey of the school building as a disability awareness project. Provide the students with the necessary resources/checklists. Afterward, meet with them to go over the results and discuss how the barriers they've identified can affect people with disabilities.
- If you work with a company that offers services to people with disabilities, organize a disability awareness month open house. Invite local schools to visit as a field trip.

Michigan Academy for Self Determination

2010 Learning Events

The Michigan Academy for Self-Determination is an enterprise that began as a Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council grant project. Its purpose is to promote the principles of self determination and to help participants learn about how to use tools of self determination to organize support for a meaningful life. Below is a listing of the 2010 sessions, dates, and locations for these learning events.

The Importance of Belonging—March 23 & 24 Location: The Carriage House in Midland's Heritage Park. Participants will develop problem-solving strategies for times when relationships are unbalanced or slow in developing and for helping people who are lonely to develop enduring, freely chosen, positive relationships.

The Art of Independent Facilitation—April 22 & 23. Location: United Way of Midland, 220 West Main Street. Participants will learn to support the dreams of individuals, their families, and significant others with the skills of independent facilitation of creative person-centered planning and circles of support.

Summer Institute for Academy Graduates and Allies—July 22 & 23. Location: Northwood University in Midland, 400 Whiting Drive, Midland. Participants will gather to share and update plans developed at previous Academy sessions.

Michigan Academy for Self-Determination—Oct & Nov, to be determined.

Space is limited. For registration and session costs, visit the Arc of Midland's website: www.thearcofmidland.org. For questions, please contact Jan Lampman at the Arc of Midland, (989) 631-4439.

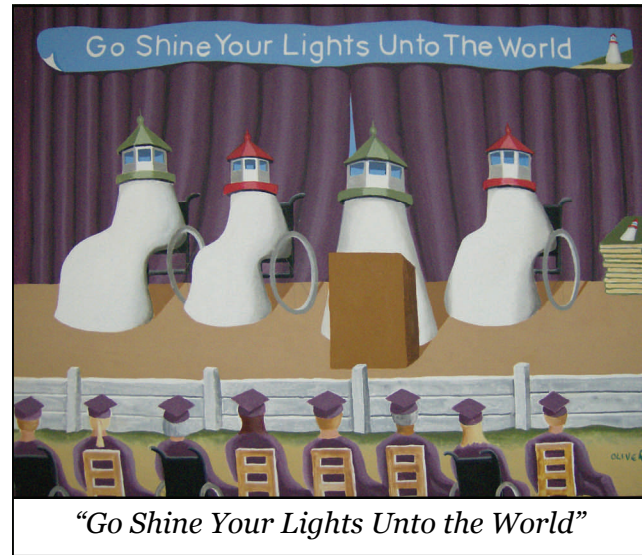
Did You Know?

If you missed this year's dinner and a movie with the RICCs before the Legislative Day, you can view a shortened version of the movie "Offense Taken" at <http://www.selfadvocacy.com/offensetaken/>, or buy a copy of your own. Low-income discounts are available. "Offense Taken" is a documentary about a community's response to a Minneapolis theater play titled "Rise of the Celebretards." It is also a response to the public use of the "R-Word" (retard) and it's misuse in today's society.

Disability Artwork

Mark Oliver, a Midland RICC member, calls himself a disability artist because he features the theme of disability first in his artwork. He explains that he is an artist first and a person with a disability second, but in his artwork, the disability is always first. It is at the forefront, and is how he captures people's imaginations and works to change their attitudes.

He explains his disability art as abstract in nature, because he wants people to make up their own minds about its message. He wants people to think, and to question themselves in their attitudes towards people with disabilities.



Mark is known for his paintings of lighthouses. His “Go Shine Your Lights Unto the World” piece (above) is meant to be lighthearted. Mark describes the painting as a “combination of comedy and sincerity.” People with disabilities don’t have to live in anger for their situations, they can laugh and care at the same time. The painting is also meant to give hope for people with disabilities through higher education. The lighthouses in wheelchairs at a graduation ceremony are guiding lights of hope directing people with disabilities to greater opportunity through education.



“Cana Island Light, Bailey’s Harbor, Wisconsin”

Mark’s lighthouse painting (left) is of the Cana Island Light, Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin on Lake Michigan. Mark began painting lighthouses because of their symbolism of safe harbor, which is something people in the disability community often need.

For more information about Mark Oliver’s artwork, please contact him at:

mdoliver@live.com, or

Phone: (989) 854-9048 or (989) 839-7548.

2010 Census—The Time is Now!

The 2010 Census forms will begin arriving in your mailbox in March. They will be clearly marked as official business of the United States Census Bureau. Because the census information is so important, if you do not complete and return a form, someone from the census will visit your home to complete the information with you. All Census workers carry official government badges marked with their name. You may also ask them for another picture ID, such as a driver's license, to confirm their identity.

Your household may also be chosen to receive the American Community Survey (ACS), which is conducted every year to provide up-to-date information about the social and economic needs of your community. The ACS shows how people live in regards to our education, housing, jobs, and more. This is different from the Census which is conducted every 10 years. Your responses will help provide local and national leaders with the information they need for community planning and programs. The ACS includes questions that are not asked by the census, and it serves a different purpose.

If you receive an ACS, it means the U.S. Census Bureau chose your address, not you personally, as part of a randomly selected sample. The ACS survey asks more detailed questions than the Census, because it is required to collect specific information for federal and state government programs. For example, long-term care providers and community planners use information about disability to help them decide where to locate services and facilities. The law requires that the Census Bureau can only publish statistics from this survey, not any information that could identify you or anyone else personally. The survey is conducted by Census Bureau employees, who take an oath of confidentiality.

A response to the questionnaire is required by law. If you are unable to fill out a form, you can call toll-free 1-800-354-7271 and complete the questionnaire over the phone. If you are not able to complete the questionnaire by yourself, you can ask a friend or relative to help you.

For more information on the ACS, visit <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>, ask.census.gov, or call 1-888-346-9682.

Public Forum on Access to Healthcare

The Michigan Civil Rights Commission will host a public forum on disparities in access to quality health care on Monday, March 22, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. in the Capital Area Michigan Works building, 2110 S. Cedar Street in Lansing, MI. The forum will follow a formal meeting of the Commission beginning at 3:00 p.m. in the same location.

The forum is an opportunity for members of the commission and the general public to learn about barriers that Michigan residents face when seeking health care, especially barriers related to race, religion, sex, physical and mental disabilities, color, national origin, or marital status.

In addition to testimony from invited experts, The Commission is asking for testimony from individuals who have been denied access to health care because of race, religion, sex, age, physical and mental disabilities, color, national origin, or marital status. This is an opportunity for people with disabilities to have their voices heard on issues affecting health care. The general public is encouraged to attend both the meeting and the forum. For more information, please call 1-800-482-3604 or visit www.michigan.gov/mdcr.

New Blog for a Better Michigan

The Michigan League for Human Services (the League) has started a new blog, “Factually Speaking” which is designed to keep people informed on issues affecting low-income families. It is also a place to gather ideas and input on advocacy issues.

Disability advocates can find an important resource in the League, and with this new blog consumers can stay up to date on state budget issues. The League works with many groups that provide direct services to residents of Michigan, and brings credible and accessible information to the public policy discussion of critical issues that affect the lives of low-income people. You can view the blog and sign up to receive it by email at <http://factuallyspeaking.wordpress.com>.

For more information about the League, visit <http://www.milhs.org/>.

Upcoming Events

March 14

Daylight Savings Time Begins



March 15

Peer Mentor Training, Con't

**Causeway Bay Hotel and
Conference Center, Lansing**

9 a.m.—5 p.m.

March 18

**3rd Annual Disability & Health
Symposium**

8:30 a.m., Kellogg Center, East Lansing. Contact Amber Matthews at (517) 335-7992 to register.

April 1-2

**Transit Partner Conference
Mount Pleasant, MI.**

April 2010 Council Meeting Schedule

Council Meeting: April 13, 2010, 10:45 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Public Policy Committee: April 13, 9 a.m.—10:30 a.m.

Diversity Committee: April 12, 1 pm—3 pm

Education Workgroup: April 20, 3:30 pm—5 pm

RICC Teleconference: April 22, 1 pm—3 pm

Health Issues Work Group: April 20, 1 pm—3 pm

Family Support Work Group: April 21, 10 am—12 pm

Housing Work Group: April 8, 1 pm—3 pm

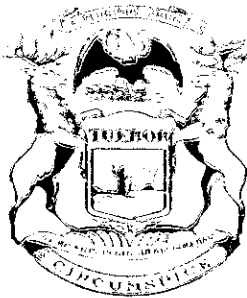
Transportation Work Group: April 8, 10 am—12 pm

Program Committee: April 13, 9 a.m.—10:30 a.m.



For Council Work group and Committee meeting minutes please visit the Council's webpage at www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil. If you have ideas, topics, or suggestions for the DD Community Update please call Laura Robertson at 517-334-7288 or email roberstonl@michigan.gov.

STATE OF MICHIGAN



Executive
Office

Jennifer M. Granholm
Governor

CERTIFICATE OF PROCLAMATION

On behalf of the citizens of Michigan, I, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm,
do hereby proclaim the month of March 2010

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

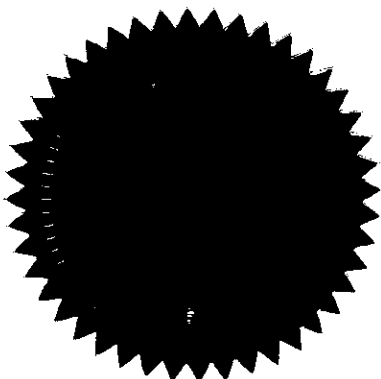
Whereas, More than 190,000 Michigan children and adults have an intellectual or developmental disability, which is nearly two percent of the state's population; and,

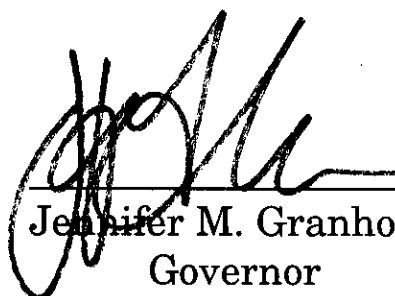
Whereas, Intellectual and developmental disabilities in no way diminish the right of individuals to live independently, enjoy self-determination, make choices, contribute to society, and be fully included in the community; and,

Whereas, Family members, friends, and members of the community can play vital roles in enhancing the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, especially when the family and community are provided with the necessary support services; and,

Whereas, The goals of the state of Michigan are to provide individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunities and support to make informed choices and decisions; pursue meaningful and productive lives; contribute to their family, community, state and nation; have interdependent friendships and relationships with others; and achieve full inclusion in society;

Now, Therefore, be it Resolved, That I, Jennifer M. Granholm, governor of the state of Michigan, do hereby proclaim March 2010 Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in Michigan. Recognizing the abilities and contributions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities enriches the communities of Michigan, enhances diversity and helps to build One Michigan Family.




Jennifer M. Granholm
Governor