



The DD Community Update

August 2009

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Summer Resource Fair/Council Meeting was a Success!

July 14th was Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council's resource fair and council meeting. Around 150 people attended, including individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, advocates, and other allies from partner organizations. There were 13 vendors at the picnic as well, who displayed information on their organizations. Vendors included United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan (UCP), Lansing Parks and Recreation, the ARC of Michigan, Michigan Disability Rights Coalition, Michigan Protection and Advocacy Services, Michigan Works, and the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living.

Michigan Works gave information on their assistance to people with disabilities seeking employment. UCP was on hand to give information on a variety of initiatives that will provide strategies for self advocacy. The ARC of Michigan provided information on their supports and education to families of children and adults with disabilities from birth to age 26 who are in the educational system. Lansing Parks and Recreation had a display of games and equipment to try out that they use in their Therapeutic Recreation program.

There was food, fun, and sunshine in abundance which made the day a big success. Among the activities were: arts and crafts, a puppet show by Capital Area Center for Independent Living, bingo, a raffle for prize baskets, and the chance to meet and have fun with other people in the disability community. The Council would like to thank the vendors and everyone who attended in making the picnic a fun and informative day!

July 14th Resource Fair in Pictures!



Yasmina from Council Staff testing out Lansing Park and Recreation's equipment



Fun & Friends!



Members of the Iosco County RICC



Many vendors were present to share information to guests



Making visors, bookmarks and door hangings at the arts and crafts table



Bingo

Iosco RICC Spotlight

The Iosco County Regional Interagency Consumer Committee (RICC) is a leader in disability pride. Since being awarded with a RICC mini-grant last September, they have used it to create the Proud of Myself Project to explore disability culture and history, as well as exploring the identity of a person with a disability.

By building disability pride, this project has helped the RICC members to view their disability as a natural part of a diverse community, as well as one of many identities they may have as an individual. Having a disability can be powerful, and people with disabilities have the power to inform their community and increase disability awareness.

In this project, the RICC has explored times when disability has been oppressed, and times when people with disabilities have fought back. The project has helped enforce that there isn't shame in disability.

The RICC participated in Walk a Mile in My Shoes, as well as a Fourth of July parade where they made posters to express their disability pride to the community. The biggest part of this project was taking what the RICC learned and using it to inform and educate their community on disability, and the RICC hopes to continue with this project in the months ahead.



Members of the Iosco RICC (left) and Sue Parent (right) at the Fourth of July Parade

Obama Supports Disability Rights by Signing CRPD

On July 24, 2009 President Barack Obama announced his intention to sign the international Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This happened in stride with the 19th Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was July 26th. The U.S. signed the treaty on July 30th. The treaty will next be submitted to the U.S. Senate for ratification.

The Convention, or CRPD, addresses established international human rights standards of people with disabilities. The CRPD also addresses barriers to full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in their communities. This treaty touches on all aspects of daily life, such as education, employment, living independently and being included in community life.

"This is a historic day in the movement for full equality, access, and inclusion of people with disabilities in America," says David Morrissey, Executive Director of the United States International Council on Disabilities. "A broad coalition of Americans with and without disabilities have called for our country to sign this treaty." *(www.usicd.org)*

U.S. Launches New Disability Website!



The federal government has launched a brand-new disability website, Disability.gov. The site offers extensive information about services and programs for people with disabilities.

The website has put together information from 22 federal agencies and has thousands of links. It was unveiled in light of the 19th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The site encourages interaction and feedback and new ways to share and organize information. Check it out!

Joint Health Issues and Public Policy Meeting

On July 21st the DD Council's Public Policy Committee and Health Issues Workgroup held a joint meeting at the Hannah Center in East Lansing. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss Michigan's budget crisis and what steps the Council should take in addressing the problems our state is facing. A total of 38 people attended the meeting either in person or by phone.

There were two guest speakers, Karen Holcomb-Merrill from the Michigan League for Human Services (MLHS) and Andy Farmer from AARP. Karen discussed the solutions MLHS has proposed to generate more revenue in the state without implementing more harmful cuts to services. A list of these solutions can be found on the League's website, www.milhs.org. One of the solutions is closing many of the tax loopholes Michigan has upheld that are costing money. Over 40 organizations forming a coalition are calling on Lansing policymakers to implement a common-sense solution and close tax loopholes. Closing these loopholes that total an estimated \$400 million a year in revenue can help to avoid further cuts to services.

The health issues workgroup and public policy committee members present at the meeting discussed certain recommendations they would like to bring to the Council as a whole. Some of these recommendations are:

- Expand sales tax to include services
- Advocate for prison reform, such as addressing sentencing guidelines to be in line with other Midwest states
- Replace income tax with a graduated tax system
- Increase taxes on beer, alcohol, and tobacco
- Capture federal funds (matching funds) available to Michigan for people with disabilities

Note: The Council has already signed on to a letter supporting closing tax loopholes.

Summer Recreation

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has an Access to Recreation Initiative that has enabled universally accessible projects that include playgrounds, scenic overlooks, wildlife observation, beach access, outdoor routes, trails, canoe/kayak access, and other activities. These latest projects are located at:

Brighton Recreation Area 810-229-6566 (www.michigan.gov/brighton)

Dodge #4 State Park, Waterford 248-682-7323 (www.michigan.gov/dodge4)

Muskegon State Park 231-744-3480 (www.michigan.gov/muskegon)

Ostego Lake State Park, Gaylord 989-732-5485 (www.michigan.gov/otsegolake)

Port Crescent State Park, Port Austin 989-473-2258 (www.michigan.gov/portcrescent)

Rifle River Recreation Area, Lupton 989-473-2258 (www.michigan.gov/riflriver)

Wells State Park, Cedar River 906-863-9747 (www.michigan.gov/wells)

The Tomahawk Creek Flooding State Forest Campground in Presque Island County has also reopened after it was closed last summer to implement upgrades to the campground. The campground has expanded to 23 sites, with two sites that are handicapped accessible, complying with all site requirements recommended in the Accessible Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas. Other improvements include new accessible vault toilets with parking and access routes to toilets, hand pump, and lake front. You can find more accessible recreation and info on DNR at www.michigan.gov/dnraccessibility.

The Michigan Upper Peninsula State Fair is August 16-23 in Escanaba, Michigan. Teach a Child to Fish or Shoot at the U.P. State Fair is being held at Pocket Park, which is accessible to children with disabilities and is located at the State Fair. Please contact John Spieles at 906-293-5131 for more information on Pocket Park. For information on the State Fair, please visit

<http://www.michigan.gov/upsf>



Autism Career Planning Conference

Spectrum Training is holding a two day Autism Career Planning conference at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center in East Lansing, Michigan October 26-27.

This “Career Planning for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs)” is ideal for:

- Career counselors, job developers/job coaches, rehab administrators, vocational coordinators
- Special education administrators, teachers, teacher assistants, case managers, therapists
- Students, parents, caregivers, and young adults with ASDs (16+)

The topics covered at the conference will include career planning, career assessment, workplace supports, social communication in the workplace, and implementing a career plan.

For a registration form or questions, contact:

Spectrum Training Systems, Inc.

Phone: (920) 749-0332

Fax: (920) 882-0736

spectrumtrainingsystems@yahoo.com

<http://www.spectrumtrainingsystemsinc.com/lansing.html>

Did You Know?

Some statistics from www.census.gov on disabilities:

- There are 41.2 million people who have some level of disability in the U.S.
- 46% of people 21 to 64 with a disability were employed in the last year
- In 2006, 98.5% of transit buses were ADA lift or ramp-equipped, an increase from 61.7% in 1995.

Health Care Reform Debate

One of the most controversial issues surrounding our new presidency is the topic of health care reform. President Obama is encouraging a new health care system that will dramatically decrease the number of uninsured citizens in the United States. However, there has been many questions regarding the quality of this health care, how the government is going to pay for it, and what it will mean for private insurance companies.

Obama's health care platform can be found here:

<http://www.barackobama.com/issues/healthcare/>

The Kaiser Foundation website also offers a guide on the basics of health reform. Visit their website at **<http://healthreform.kff.org/>**

Please stay tuned for more information on the health care debate and how it will impact people with disabilities.

The DD Community Update Needs *Your* Input!

In an effort to improve our audience and expand our outreach, the DD Council is updating its mailing database.

If you have received this newsletter, then you have been receiving it through either email or by hard copies and are currently on our mailing list. As we update this list, we will be sending a postcard to you, either by email or mail, whichever way you are receiving the newsletter now. Please fill out this postcard and send it back (free of charge), to let us know whether you wish to continue receiving this newsletter. With the postcard you can also change your preference on the way you receive it.

If we do not hear from you, we will assume that you no longer wish to receive the newsletter and will be taken off the mailing list. Thank you for your help and interest in the DD Council!

Please contact Laura Robertson at (517) 334-7288 or robertsonl@michigan.gov if you have any questions.

Summary Of Committee/Workgroup Minutes

Following is a summary of the latest approved Committee and Workgroup minutes as of August:

Public Policy Committee– June 2009

Federal: The state has lost money they would have received from the federal government for transportation because the state was unable to put up matching funds.

State: Due to the severe budget crisis the Governor has ordered severe cuts in all departments. Cuts that have gone into effect are the closing of the Long Term Care office and to eliminate the Single Point of Entry Project.

The legislative event is scheduled for February 10, 2010 at the Radisson hotel in Lansing. The Legislative Event & Awards Subcommittee is looking for potential speakers for the event.

The “Informed Communities” grant will hold several more forums in the upcoming year. The Kalamazoo RICC wants to hold a forum focusing on stigma.

Transportation Workgroup– June 2009

Federal: The Federal Department of Transportation has released a progress report regarding the President’s first 100 days and its impact on transportation. The link is: <http://www.dot.gov/recovery/100daysreport.htm>

Through the 2009 U.S. Transportation Reauthorization Bill, U.S. Rep Mike Rogers has asked for over \$300 million for transit projects in the Lansing area, which could be approved later this year. This includes over \$100 million for public transit.

State: MDOT announced \$740 million of Michigan roadwork cuts due to Michigan’s lack of match for federal funds. Advocacy efforts will be needed to protect vital services for persons with disabilities.

August Traveling Meeting: The August TWG meeting will be held at the Disability Network in Flint on August 13 from 10 am to noon. The Lansing office teleconference will still be available.

SMART is considering a rate increase of 25-50 cents a ride. They are seeking rider input.

The Transportation 101 grant’s Transportation Partnership Conference has been rescheduled for April 2010. Another conference called the Front Line Conference is being held September 11-13 in Bay City.

Minutes Summaries Continued...

Education Workgroup—July 2009

Seclusion and Restraint: MPAS is developing a MI report to show what has happened since MI passed a policy in December 2006. MPAS hopes to have the report out by early September. Discussion took place about have a personal story bit at a RICC teleconference to underline the need for RICC support on the issue.

Statewide Right to Education: The ACLU report has been released and MPAS is still investigating the possibility of collaborating on this issue.

Discussion surrounding possible joining and collaboration of the workgroup with other educational advocacy groups such as Michigan Alliance for Families Systems Design Committee.

Housing Workgroup— July 2009

Paul Ecklund is the new Housing workgroup chairperson.

Trust Funds: Federal—there is \$1 billion in Obama’s budget for trust funds. Obama also announced 4,000 new vouchers; 3,000 for people who are non-elderly disabled and 1,000 for transitions from nursing homes. Local Public Housing Authorities need to apply for these and are encouraged to.

Discussion on homelessness definition: There are different definitions of “chronically” homeless. The McKinney-Vento Act, proposed federal legislation, would change the eligibility for services to those whose situation is “precarious” which is a definition that is a little broader.

RICC Teleconference— June 2009

There are several DD Council grants that can assist RICC with advocacy and leadership skills. The Iosco RICC worked with the Proud & Powerful grant so their members could develop their leadership skills, then took those skills to DC to talk to their legislators and advocate for disability rights.

Regional meetings are being planned that will train RICC transportation, diversity, and public policy coordinators. Plan for them to start this fall.

The RICC Teleconference meeting time will change to 1 pm– 3pm starting in July.