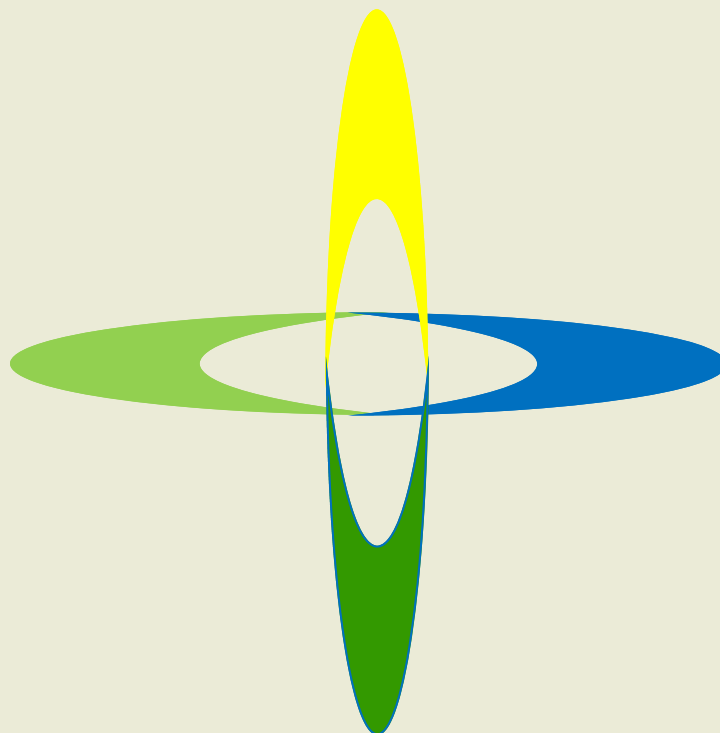


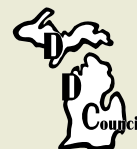


# Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council



*Our Community Includes  
Everyone*

Annual Report 2011-2012





# Council

## Council Members:

**Chairperson:** Andre Robinson– *Individuals*

Celena L. Barnes - *Family member*

Robert L. Brown– *Family member*

Elmer Cerano– *Protection & advocacy system*

Heidi A. DeVries– *Individuals*

Marlowe S. Franklin-*Family member*

Vera P. Graham - *Family member*

Sheryl Kuenzer– *Individuals*

Barbara LeRoy-*University Center*

Kristin L. Kleinheksel- *Individuals*

Susan Liebetreu- *Department of Education  
(IDEA)*

Paul Palmer-*Individuals*

Jane Pilditch– *Family member*

Robert Spruce– *Individuals*

## Council Staff:

Vendela M. Collins-*Executive Director*

Yasmina Bouraoui-*Deputy Director*

Mitzi Allen-*Executive Secretary*

Tandy Bidinger-*Public Policy Analyst*

Dee Florence-*Advocacy Secretary*

Terry Hunt-*Community Services Consultant*

Tedra Jackson -*Grants Monitor*

Meredith Smith-*Communications  
Representative*

Cheryl Trommater– *Grants Manager*

Tracy Vincent-*Resource Analyst*

---

**Our Mission** is to support people with developmental disabilities to achieve life dreams.



---

5	Grants
16	Peer Mentoring Program
18	RICC-self-advocacy
20	Workgroups

---

MDDC Annual Report is published every year. All rights reserved. Contents of this report may not be reproduced without the written permission of MDDC.

Questions or comments can be answered at (517) 355-3158.



Dear Readers,

On behalf of the members and staff of The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) I take great pleasure in presenting this snapshot of the work produced by the council. During fiscal year 2012 the council began work on its new strategic plan. The plan embodies the council's core values of Including People with High and Complex Support Needs in all Activities; providing for Self-Direction and Self-Determination; ensuring consumers' Voice at the Policy Table; addressing Economic Justice and Addressing Poverty; ensuring Community Inclusion; and protecting Rights of People with Developmental Disabilities. These values serve as criteria to which all of the council's activities must conform.

Through our planning efforts, the Council solidified its investment with our Regional Inclusive Community Coalitions (RICCs). Our RICCs practice advocacy on local issues ranging from employment to transportation. Our RICCs lend their voices to our workgroups and committees on key issues facing them in their community.

We appreciate all the support from individuals with disabilities, other advocates and supporters as we continue this work to make sure Our Community Includes Everyone.

Vendela M. Collins

Executive Director Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council



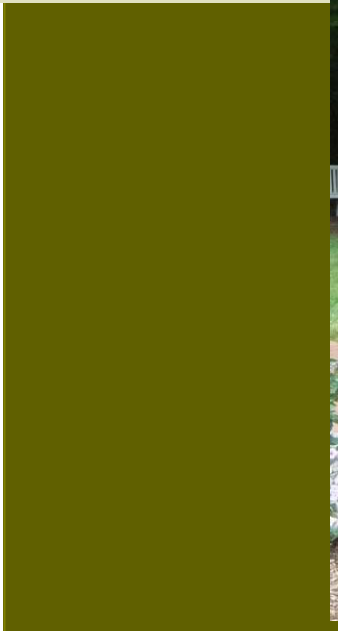
# GRANTS

## GRANTS

The grants program is one tool to promote systems change, to better support the aspirations of people with Developmental Disabilities.



# Including our Neighbors



*Including Our Neighbors* (ION) is a grant given to the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC) to create neighborhood level ownership of the issue of inclusion for people with disabilities, particularly for people with the highest support needs. Build caring relationships with neighbors that improve quality of life, social networks, housing, employment and other outcomes, while supporting people with disabilities in being contributing members of their communities. The project began in 2009 and continues today.

Personal narratives are below on how the grant affected community members:

Gage is a young adult with Autism. Due to the support that MDRC gave the generic arts program Gage was fully included. The film class that Gage took required a high level of interaction and engagement. Gage's participation led to the first time Blackbird Arts staff had the opportunity to address accommodation needs directly in a group. Gage uses an IPAD and another teen wondered why he had to use one when he could not. After a discussion with both the parent and the teen, Blackbird Arts' staff decided to have an open discussion with the whole film class. The group was very curious about Gage and what they perceived as "unusual" behaviors (pacing, etc.). This conversation led to much greater understanding among the teens and they were supportive and sensitive to Gage's needs after the conversation. Gage was able to explain some of his needs in a way that made him more comfortable in the group. Gage was included fully in the program and made new friends.

John\* heard about the ION program at Blackbird Arts in Traverse City through his local Center for Independent Living, Disability Network/Northern Michigan. Through the ION program, funded by the Developmental Disabilities Council and implemented by Michigan Disability Rights Coalition, John received scholarships and support to participate in inclusive adult pottery classes at Blackbird Arts. John is blind and has a developmental disability. At first, John had a personal assistant help him navigate the pottery studio. Now, John is using the studio independently, paying for his studio time, and making money by selling his pottery at local art shows. He is increasing his production and honing his technique so he can build his business. He is also considering teaching pottery as a way to share his skills and make more money. Including Our Neighbors not only connected John more deeply to his community, it provided a platform for building self-sufficiency and paid work.

\* Names changed

# Minority Family Support





# M

*inority Family Support* projects sought to improve education services, retention, and postsecondary outcomes for minority students with disabilities. The three funded programs were designed to help families; navigate the educational services available for their children with disabilities (emphasizing ages 3 to 26); ensure that their children with developmental disabilities receive the educational services they need, and; become active participants in their children’s educational experiences. In order to accomplish these objectives, the funded projects were charged with creating programs that supported and assisted at least 20 families per year in meeting three key program goals.

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) funded three projects to support minority families to improve education outcomes for their children: the Family Empowerment Initiative (FEI) by the Arc Kent County; Learning, Educating, Advocacy, Determined to Succeed (LEADS) by Disability Connection West Michigan and The Arc Muskegon, and; Supporting Educational Achievement for Minorities (SEAM) by Wayne State University’s Developmental Disabilities Institute. 2012 was the final year of the project. A final report with recommendations was prepared by the evaluation with input from each local project.



## ***FEI***

The Family Empowerment Initiative (FEI) grant used a parent mentor model and used existing training material from the parent training initiative in Michigan. Offering a stipend to families gave them an incentive to participate in the learning opportunities and helped with personal expenses, i.e. childcare and gas. The participants reported they were more educated in the special education system and parent rights - therefore, parents felt they could advocate for IEPs (Individual Education Plans) that are more effective for their children. The project offered topics that were of interest for the participants in addition to special education topics. Along with the stipend, childcare and a light dinner encouraged families' participation. Having a venue in the participants' community was a plus for the families. Individual support by the Parent Mentor created the ability for the families to communicate and receive better results with their schools and their children's IEP.

## ***LEADS***

LEADS has been able to successfully provide advocacy and mentoring services to 56 families thus far. These families are from Muskegon and Oceana Counties. Each year, select program participants have remained with the program to serve as Parent Mentors to new LEADS participants. This method encourages Peer Support and ultimately self-advocacy.

## ***SEAM***

Originally SEAM intended to provide families with the opportunity to take a series of workshops in both English and Spanish once a year for three years for a total of six series of workshops that focused on Special Education and related topics. SEAM provided families with an opportunity to attend three English series of workshops and four Spanish series of workshops. In addition to those, SEAM hosted additional workshops with topics such as physical education, Medicaid, and occupational therapy. SEAM also held a picnic once a year, as well as summer as play groups in 2010 and 2011. SEAM also organized a gardening project that allowed children with disabilities to earn their required community hours for high school. SEAM also hosted a day at the zoo to close the SEAM program during end of school year 2012.

The Council funds The Arc Michigan to build on Michigan Partners for Freedom (MPF). MPF is a grassroots coalition that is building statewide demand for the self-determination (SD) option in the Community Mental Health system. Partners include: people with disabilities, family members, advocates, Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC), Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), local Community Mental Health entities, and service providers. Their objectives are to continue its efforts to increase demand for self-determination, expand the work statewide and get self-determination to those with the highest needs. They provide training, technical assistance, and consultation for people with developmental disabilities, their families, and other allies; and develop and maintain curriculum and materials on self-determination. In the 2012-2016 State Plan, MPF is tasked with expanding its reach to Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula and providing training and information for parents of young children.

MPF committed to providing training about SD to parents of children with disabilities in each of the five DD Council regions. The trainings were held in September after students were back in school to encourage attendance. MPF trainings were also listed in the new Family-to-Family Health Information and Education Center training brochure. The new training for parents of children with disabilities was developed and presented four times in Marquette, Flint, Gaylord, and Farmington Hills to 48 people. All of the trainings were held at Intermediate School Districts in the local communities. Multiple meetings were held to modify curriculum and develop PowerPoint presentations for the new audience. The project coordinator joined the Council's Individual and Family Support Education and Advocacy workgroup (IFSEA). This partnership has allowed the project to network with families and individuals unfamiliar with the concept of self-determination.

MPF continues to hold trainings and summits across the state to build leadership and advocacy skills.



**M**ichigan Disability Rights Coalition is funded to implement Partners in Medicaid Policy through a grant titled Alliance to Michigan Medicaid Access (AMMA). The goal of the project is to advocate for drastically reshaping the state's health care delivery system for people with DD. The project activities include: identifying barriers to consumer access to Medicaid services; finding opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to make their needs known and influence the way funding and services are provided to them. Also building partnerships, sharing information and promoting policy advocacy about Medicaid among advocacy organizations and provider groups. Developing and carrying out a broad-based advocacy plan to increase access to health care for Medicaid recipients; and positioning the DD Council, Health Issues Workgroup, RICCs, Regional Coordinators, and partners and allies to continue the effort after the grant project is over. Activities for the project included: focus groups with providers, developing an action plan, attended coalition partner meetings, and educational presentations.





CENTER *for* CIVIL JUSTICE

*Fighting Poverty Through Advocacy.*



MICHIGAN DISABILITY RIGHTS COALITION  
**WITH LIBERTY AND ACCESS FOR ALL**



Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council



**M**ichigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC) implemented Connections for Community Leadership (CCL). The project worked with the Regional Coordinators, RICCs, families and youth with disabilities to provide a range of basic and intermediate leadership training, technical assistance and other learning experiences. CCL held leadership training for the DD Council and Council staff. They also held 3 day-long training sessions for the Regional Coordinators and other DD Council project partners. The trainings covered: disability identity, history, and pride; leadership development and facilitation; boards and committees; leadership and advocacy; the Lejoste Model of Leadership Development; leadership styles and tactics; and the various resources available through CCL including We Lead, and Lead On curricula. CCL staff continued to build a relationship with the Regional Coordinators over the course of the year. Staff utilized the knowledge of the Regional Coordinators in identifying training locations and other logistics regarding training in the respective regions.

CCL also held the Third Annual Her Power! Her Pride! Her Voice! - A weekend event for high school girls with disabilities from around the state. Participants explored issues relating to disabilities and women such as body image, self-esteem, and identity. Twenty young girls from all over Michigan attended. There was a diverse group of girls with many developmental and mental health disabilities. Most of the girls that attended had medium high to high and complex support needs. Due to this, for most of the girls, it was their first time staying away from home, or spending the night at a location other than with relatives. This was only possible due to the extensive amount of 24 hour personal attendant support that CCL provides at this event. This year the event was extended by one day, making it four days. Check out their Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/HerPowerHerPride>.





---

3 ( (5#) (1 725 ,1 \*#

---

*“Peer Mentoring builds self confidence for both the peer mentor and the person they are mentoring.”*

Peer Mentor

*“When we meet peer to peer we relate to each other because we understand what each other is going through.”*

Peer Mentor



# P

## eer Mentor Program

A Peer Mentor is a person with a developmental disability who has learned problem solving strategies, how to be a self-advocate, how to live a self-determined life, and knows how to access services and resources in the community.

A Peer Mentor does not tell their peers how to live their lives. Instead, a Peer Mentor offers the benefit of their experiences, passing along encouragement and support to help others construct their own advocacy to bring about the changes they want for their lives. A Peer Mentor works in partnership with the Case Manager. Through their combined and varied experience, Peer Mentors and Case Managers are able to provide a wealth of assistance and information for the individuals they serve.

The Council continues to expand and strengthen peer mentoring in Michigan. The Council funded a Peer Mentor 101 training in May 2012. The trainers were Certified Peer Mentors. A total of 63 people with developmental disabilities have been trained across the state since January 2010.

In addition to Peer Mentoring 101, the Council provides opportunities for peer mentors to expand their knowledge base and increase their skills. The Council funded a suicide prevention training and human sexuality training in 2012.

Peer Mentors are referred by their local Community Mental Health (CMH) agency to participate in the Council's peer mentor training. Trained peer mentors are provided a six-week internship at their local CMH agency. Once the internship is complete, they will become certified peer mentors. Through their own personal experiences, they will provide essential support that promotes self-determination, help peers direct their own lives and support them to become better self-advocates, make choices and develop leadership skills.

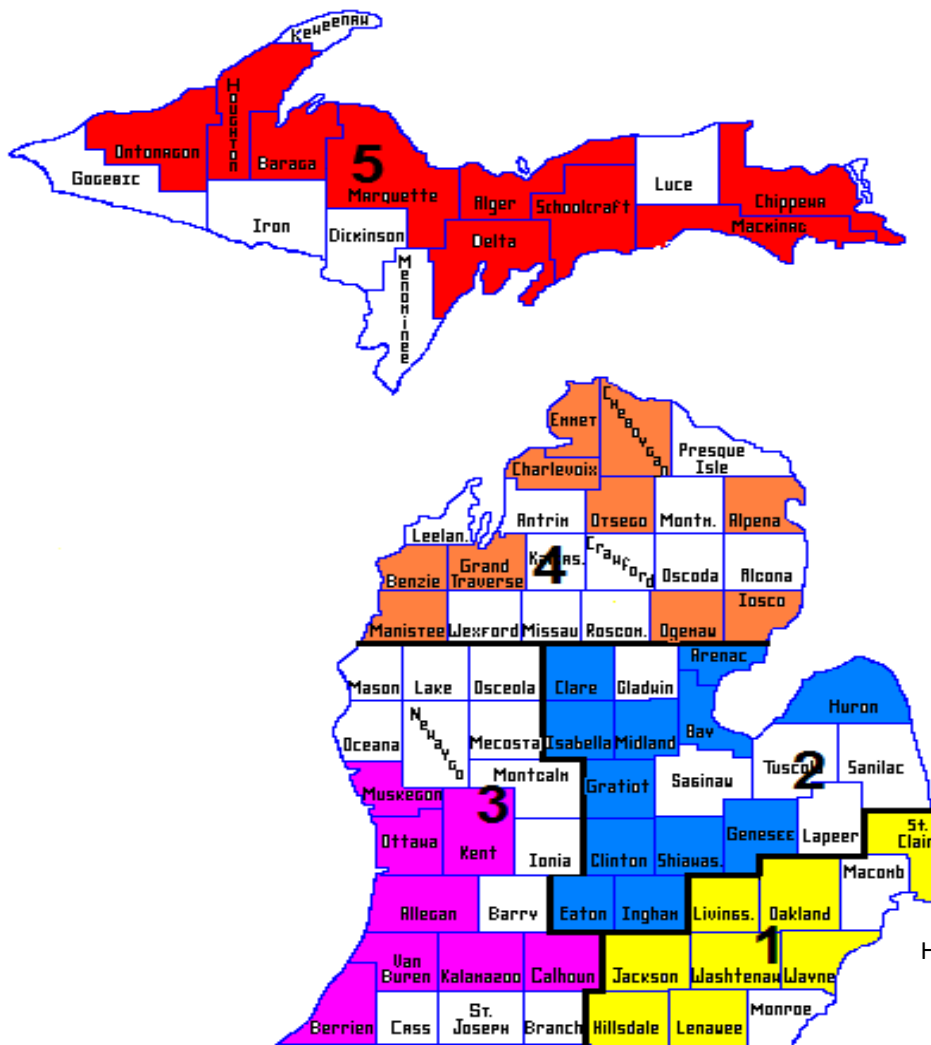
Currently, there are 13 certified peer mentors in Michigan. These individuals are working at or have contracted with their local CMH.



## REGIONAL INCUSIVE COMMUNITY COALITIONS

A RICC is a local grassroots group of people funded and supported by the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council). Members include people with disabilities, family members, friends, local advocates, community leaders and service providers. There are currently 31 RICCs across the state, covering most of the 83 counties in Michigan.

RICCs (Regional Inclusive Community Coalitions) are the grassroots, self-advocacy arm of the Michigan DD Council. RICCs help members: get information about local services and resources; develop capacity in areas such as leadership and self-advocacy skills; and build relationships with policymakers to advocate for improvements. Each RICC is unique and targets issues of greatest concern to members, such as transportation, access to health care, community accessibility, etc. While systems change seldom comes quickly, RICCs support members to learn about and practice self-advocacy so the collective effort of the group helps communities' better respond to the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families. The Council established five regions in Michigan. In each region, a Regional Coordinator (RC) was provided to support RICCs, Council grant projects, and other Council activities in that region. Washtenaw Association for Community Advocacy is funded in region 1, United Cerebral Palsy Michigan is funded in region 2 and region 4, The Arc of Kent County is funded in region 3, and Superior Alliance for Independent Living (SAIL) is funded in region 5. The Regional Coordinators will support RICCs, Council grant projects, and other Council projects to learn about local resources and existing technology that can improve sharing and networking among Council initiatives. They come together, and meet Council requirements and carry out their missions in ways that support people with DD to make decisions, develop leadership skills, and live the lives they choose.



Highlighted are the 31 RICCs of the DD Council .

# WORKGROUPS



“Working together to build a better community”

The Council’s work groups monitor activities in their assigned target area; identify issues, problems and possible actions; develop an annual work plan to identify the goal of the work group; increase council members knowledge about the target area; and recommend potential objectives and possible projects to the Council.



Individual and Family Support, Education and Advocacy Work group (IFSEA) provides needed services and supports to people with developmental disabilities and their families throughout the lifespan, in areas: education, transition, future planning, aging services, information dissemination, self-determination, and disability pride.

IFSEA sent letters to legislators/senators in support of legislation that would require insurance companies to cover autism. They encouraged its members and other families to contact their representatives urging them to support the bills. As a result, the legislation passed. IFSEA also wrote a letter to Senators Stabenow and Levin to co-sponsor the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE Act) as well as legislation that would ban seclusion and restraint in schools: Keeping All Students Safe Act. As a result of letter writing from RICCs and other advocates Senator Stabenow co-sponsored the ABLE Act. This bipartisan legislation will create an improved quality of life for individuals with disabilities through tax-free savings accounts.

IFSEA has developed an advocacy strategy to create awareness and education around universal education. Universal education is the belief that all students have the right to learn together in an inclusive environment that provides supports and ensures access to resources. It supports new ways of teaching and learning. It also removes barriers, provides flexible and responsive supports and facilitates life-long learning for all. A position paper has been drafted and a distribution list is being created. IFSEA has also created a fact sheet on self-determination and disabilities pride to distribute to families.

The Transition subcommittee is preparing to draft a paper on what services and supports should look like for young adults 22-26. IFSEA provided information to families and people with developmental disabilities by hosting seminars on various topics across the state (human sexuality, self-determination, disability pride).



The Economic Justice Work Group spent the entire year advocating for the Freedom to Work Legislation. In December of 2012 Medicaid Freedom to Work legislation was amended, which allows more people with disabilities to work without losing Medicaid benefits.

The original Act was established in 2003 and helps employers find the best person for the job, by allowing them to choose among a broader pool of qualified applicants. It improves health and lowers Medicaid costs. Studies have shown that people with disabilities who participate in Michigan's Freedom to Work program incur fewer medical expenses when they are working. It is also a path to private insurance for some individuals, providing an opportunity to qualify for employer-sponsored health insurance, which pays a portion of Medicaid's cost. Now, the Amendment widens the path to employment for people with disabilities who want to work and pay taxes. It raises the Freedom to Work eligibility level to 250% of the federal Poverty level.

The workgroup is currently working on Employment First! policy at the state level. This policy outlines that people with disabilities are employable and can work in an integrated work environment.



The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council established a Health Issues Work Group (HIWG) to advise the council about key health issues facing Michigan's diverse communities. The work group assists the Council with proposing projects that promote health and well-being; educates people with disabilities, providers, policymakers and others to expand awareness of the need for and benefits of healthcare for people with disabilities; provides leadership in developing, monitoring and responding to public policy that impacts health issues.

The work group activities included commenting on proposed changes to Medicaid policy. Drafted health talking points for RICCs to use at the council's Legislative Event. The work group participated in RICC regional meetings to help train attendees regarding public policy advocacy for health issues. Drafted a health policy paper for distribution to RICCs, policymakers and interested others. Partnered with the DCH Health Equity, the DCH Oral Health Program and the Michigan Oral Health Coalition to disseminate information. Participated in and supported Michigan Consumers for Healthcare, a statewide advocacy coalition, to monitor and influence the implementation of the federal Affordable Care Act.

The work group partnered with the council's Public Policy Committee and Transportation Workgroup to host a joint meeting to explore the issue of access to transportation to Medicaid funded health care. As a result, materials were drafted for the local RICC network to use to increase access to transportation.



The Michigan Disability Housing Workgroup is a joint effort with Disability Network Michigan, United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan, Community Housing Network, Michigan Disability Rights Coalition, and a several other local advocacy groups, including a number of regional Disability Networks. This year the group focused on Voucher Reform, Group Home Reform, and Policy Advocacy/Strengthening Relationships with Policymakers. They built and maintained an active cross-disability, cross organizational coalition with broad expertise in disability housing issues and the ability to respond promptly to advocacy opportunities related to housing for people with disabilities. The group has also continued to advocate and testify on the need for changes in the Michigan State Housing Development Authority's (MSHDA's) Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP). Their work has resulted in changes in the scoring system in the process for developers applying for funding.







The Transportation Workgroup (TWG) did a considerable amount of advocacy on the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) bills. These bills established an authority to administer a transit system in Southeast Michigan. The Council mobilized the RICC network and the Transportation work group. This laid the groundwork for the eventual passage of the law in late 2012.

The group has also collaborated with two transportation Coalitions: the Let's Get Moving Coalition, and the newer Trans4M on a variety of transit issues, which include: Complete Streets, Transportation funding, ADA, and the regional transit bills.

TWG is also focusing on the ability for persons with disabilities to get to medical appointments using Medicaid funded transportation. The work group is also looking at the use and abuse of handicapped parking spaces, hang-tags, etc. They are looking at possible legislation to enhance penalties to punish abusers.





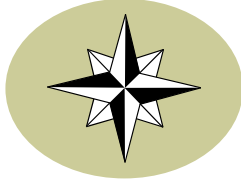
---

## 2012 Legislative Event

On Wednesday, February 8, 2012, the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council held its 13th Annual Legislative Event at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Lansing, where 200 people with disabilities met with their elected officials.

During the event members from various Regional Inclusive Community Coalitions (RICCS), which are local self-advocacy groups, met with Legislators and Aides from their counties to discuss issues affecting the disability community. The annual Legislative Day is important event 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, which allows RICCs to stay informed of what legislators are doing to improve local conditions for people with developmental disabilities.





# Resource Fair

In July the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council hosted its Annual Resource Fair dedicated to the health and wellness of individuals with developmental disabilities. The Resource Fair was intended to acquaint or reintroduce families and individuals with support services that can be accessed over a lifespan (from birth to death). Organizations from across Michigan were on-hand to discuss services like Early-On, transition, family-to-family information exchange, children's mental health, respite, therapeutic recreation, SSI, SSDI, special education, assistive technology, and many more. The fair offered multiple interactive presentations and was attended by council and RICC members, their families, friends, advocates, and others. In addition to receiving resources, participants renewed and made new friendships while enjoying a delicious lunch.





**S**hred The Hate (STH) is the Council’s campaign to encourage Michigan citizens to eliminate hate speech from their vocabulary. Hate speech is a term for speech intended to degrade a person or group of people based on their race, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Hate speech makes threats, intimidates, harasses or is used to bully. In 3 years the STH campaign has collected approximately 10,000 pledges from citizens throughout Michigan. Regional Inclusive Community Coalitions (RICCs) continue to lead the campaign for the Council.

Members of the Delta RICC have gone into local schools to teach students about hateful speech. They have also gone around their community making presentations. Through their campaign, they have collected approximately 1,854 pledges from community members to stop using the ‘R-word’ and other hateful speech. The Delta RICC continues to reach out to local community members, schools and officials to spread their message.

Over the past year, the Iosco RICC has been very effective in getting the word out about ‘Shred the Hate.’ They have actively gone out to schools across their counties educating students about the R-word. These information sessions provide a context of what bullying is, and how it hurts people.

**One student writes:**

*Thank you for coming to my class for the presentation! It really meant a lot to me. To all of us! I love the way you did things! It wasn't like our usual presentations about bullying, which is like "don't be a bully," your presentation was very different. And it I think, helped get the point through better. Thank you so much for coming to do a presentation in my class!*

A. Cooper



## Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

201 Townsend Street Suite 120

Lansing, MI 48913

Phone: (517) 335-3158

Fax: (517) 335-2751

Website:

[www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil](http://www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil)

## Our Community Includes Everyone

Annual Report 2011-2012

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council works to support people with developmental disabilities across the state. The Council's mission is to support people with developmental disabilities to achieve life dreams. Its vision is that all citizens of Michigan have the opportunities and supports to achieve their full potential. The work of the council confirms that people with disabilities are supported across their lifespan to live self-determined lives in a diverse and inclusive community.

