

Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council Annual Report 2010-2011

Systemic Advocacy

Effective June 30, 2009, the Legislature eliminated Medicaid optional services such as dental, vision, and podiatry as a way to reduce state spending and help balance the budget

The DD Council funded *Smiles Across Michigan* to help coordinate a statewide advocacy effort to restore funding for Medicaid Adult Dental and other optional services and to document unmet/undermet needs of people with disabilities.



Smiles Across Michigan is a statewide endeavor to improve the oral health of people with developmental disabilities by assessing oral health needs, developing strategies for addressing those needs, and providing education and advocacy to encourage better oral hygiene and motivate accessible and appropriate care by oral health care professionals.

The Smiles Project built partnerships with allies such as Michigan Oral Health Coalition, Delta Dental, Michigan Dental Association and Michigan Dental Hygienists Association, and provided self-advocacy training to consumers at meetings across the State.

At the meetings people were supported to write letters to policy makers, educating them about the importance of dental services and, advocating for funding restoration.

The trainings helped participants better understand that letters can be particularly effective in influencing legislator's views and how to make their voices be heard.

As a result of the advocacy efforts of the council, the Smile project, and other allies, legislators restored funding for Medicaid Dental and some other optional services, effective October 1, 2010.

Life In Focus

Duane DeRochey joined the Kent RICC with no advocacy experience but knew somehow he wanted to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

The RICCs, the voice of self-advocates for a wide range of community issues such as health care, employment, transit, and housing, was just the place to get a start.

DeRochey says his involvement with the RICC helped him overcome his shyness and to develop leadership and self-advocacy skills.

Working from the bottom up, Duane has held various leadership roles including Chair, Co-Chair, and Transportation Advocacy Coordinator. He's helped spearhead local efforts to advocate for restoring Medicaid adult dental services.

It is easy for any group to lose sight of its objectives or get caught up in personal issues. Duane has developed a comfortable manner in which he can defuse ego problems so the RICC stays focused on its goals.

Through his RICC leadership he has help build relationships with allies and community decision-makers, advocate for disability concerns. One person seldom can have an impact, but when you work as a group, you are more likely to have success. Duane understands community organizing principles and the importance of strength in numbers.

The RICCs build community coalitions, sponsor workshops, provide training and support to rally around issues. RICCs are charged with recognize



ing the diversity within each Michigan community and addressing the needs of culturally-diverse people with disabilities.

Advocating outside the RICC 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 \$3,500.

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."

DeRochey lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan with his wife.

Leadership and learning are
Indispensable to each other.
John F. Kennedy

The Duane Rochey Story

Resource Fair



On the second Tuesday 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 inactive 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.

The Council is excited to see the growth of the Resource Fair and look forward to next year's event.



THE ADA 2010

the single most important piece of legislation to improve the lives of people with disabilities

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council observed the 20th Anniversary of the ADA by having a panel discussion at the Annual Resource Fair. Participants learned why the ADA is called the single most important piece of legislation to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Six panel members with expertise in the ADA answered audience questions in a lively exchange that was beneficial and enjoyable to all.

In addition to the panel discussion, the magnetism of Justin Dart and the human spirit of the disability movement was brought to life by the skilled oral storytelling.

"I AM WITH YOU. I LOVE YOU. LEAD ON" Justin Dart Jr.



The Matrix Theatre Company and volunteers of Southwest Detroit constructed a giant puppet of Justin Dart. The puppet was on display at the Annual Resource Fair. Advocates had their pictures taken with the puppet, learned about the history of the ADA.

Michigan Partners for Freedom

Michigan Partners for Freedom provides training, support, and stipends for Local Leaders in thirteen communities in Michigan. Local Leaders are people with disabilities who work in their communities to spread the word about the advantages of self-determination. They also provide help to others who want to know how to get the tools of self-determination for themselves. Community Mental Health Centers

in the areas where Local Leaders are working have experienced increases in the number of requests for the tools of self-determination. In addition, the Local Leaders themselves have all made remarkable progress in self-confidence, ability to express themselves, ability to plan presentations and strategize how to increase their communities' awareness of self-determination.



**Building Statewide Demand
For Self-Determination**

John D. says: *"My journey with self-determination is robust! I am pursuing a Communications degree at Kalamazoo Valley Community College and have been on the honor roll every semester since I started in 2005. I determine the direction in my life and strive to further my independence by arranging public transportation to get to work, school, exercising weekly at the Portage YMCA, and visiting with family on holidays and birthdays. By addressing numerous venues like the AMBUCS service organization, local schools, statewide conferences, and many community committees about the principles of self-determination, I offer motivation to people with and without disabilities."*

The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a person's determination." Tommy Lasorda

CCL has had great success with their disability pride initiative, Proud and Powerful. Proud and Powerful is a campaign to help people with disabilities empower themselves, gain self-acceptance, and realizes the power they can have in their own life and in the community. Their trainings and presentations have been very popular both in Michigan and nationally. CCL also provided leadership training to six RICCs, and supported leaders with developmental disabilities in their own leadership initiatives through technical, financial and community support.



The project has cultivated strong connections with the Ingham Intermediate School District. This effort continues to create systematic change for the leadership development and inclusion of students with developmental disabilities in school programs. They have seen educators speak out passionately regarding disability injustices in the education systems. Teachers are also implementing activities regarding disability pride into their classrooms and schools. High school professionals are examining and raising their expectations of students with disabilities.

CCL has also provided leadership support to several Developmental Disabilities Council Workgroups (public policy, program committee, R-Word Committee, RICC Restructuring Committee, Education Workgroup, and the five year Transition Workgroup), Michigan Offices of Services to the Aging, Lansing Rotary Club, Michigan Historical Library Committee, Mid Michigan Industries, Peckham, and the Brain Injury Association of Michigan.



Michigan
Developmental
Disabilities Council

LEGISLATIVE EVENT



Justin Dart, advocate and, 'Father of the ADA,' often told people with disabilities to, "Vote as if your life depends on it. Because it does." His words are as true as ever today with politicians attempting to enact cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid; the very safety net programs so many People with Disabilities, Seniors, Children, and Veterans with Disabilities rely upon.



The Council informs people about the political process, sponsors a legislative event, promotes voting and supports other activities to increase the political clout of people with developmental disabilities.

The political process is one of the most powerful tool for change.

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council's Annual Legislative Day was held at the Lansing Radisson Hotel in February. 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 the contact allows RICCs to stay informed of what legislators are doing to improve local conditions for people with developmental disabilities.

The annual legislative day features presentations to the Council's Outstanding Advocates Award Winners.

Outstanding Advocates

- The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council Outstanding Advocates Awards recognize and honor the contributions of advocates who, through their volunteerism in the community, have improved the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities. Awards are presented in five categories: munity.

Award Winners

2010

Trailblazer Grantee

All Aboard!

Young Leader

Tasiona Walker

Diversity Outreach

Martha Navarette

Unsung Advocate Award

Duane DeRochey

2011

Trailblazer Grantee

Community Living Services

Young Leader

Ashlee Eichler

Diversity Outreach

Unsung Advocate

Laura Hall

RICC That Makes A Difference

Kent RICC

Champion Award

Sen John A. Gleason



In the arena of human life the honors and rewards fall to those who show their good qualities in action." --**Aristotle**



Members of the Council

2010 - 2011

Theresa Arini, Holly, MI

Lural Baltimore, Lansing MI

Celena Barnes, Detroit, MI

Elmer Cerano, Lansing, MI

Jacqueline Day, Lansing, MI

Kristen Columbus, Tecumseh, MI

Marlowe Franklin, Traverse City, MI

Vera P. Graham, Hope, MI

Barbara LeRoy, Ph.D., Detroit, MI

Shana Holet, East Lansing, MI

Sandee Koski, Pinckney, MI

Michele LaCount, Petoskey, MI

Susan Liebetreu, Lansing, MI

Wendi Middleton, Lansing, MI

Paul Palmer, Lansing, MI

Karyn Peck Ivey, Detroit, MI

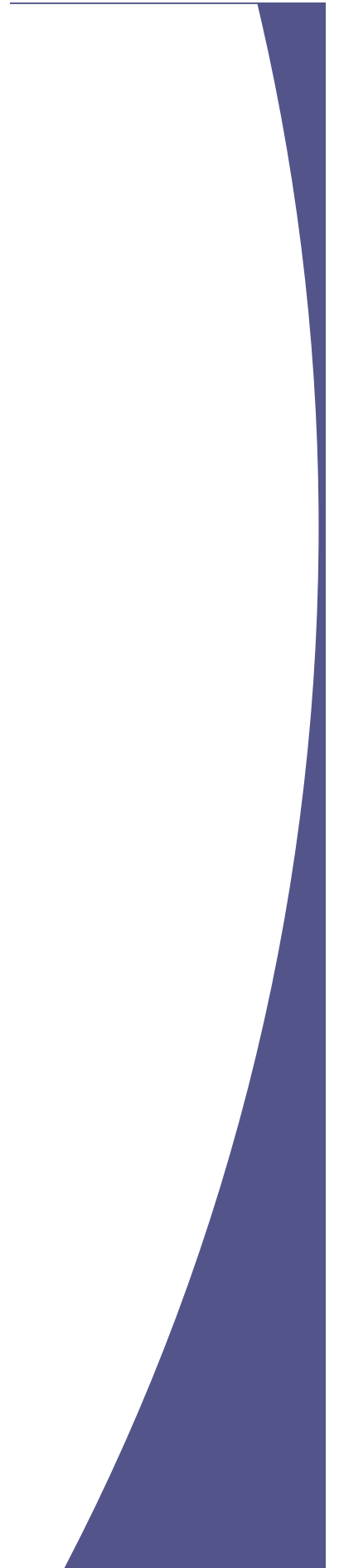
Andre Robinson, Detroit, MI

Robin Sefton, Ann Arbor, MI

Robert Spruce, Detroit, MI

David Verseput, Lansing, MI

Duncan Wyeth, Lansing, MI



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