



# The DD Community Update

July 2009

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## Informed Communities Increases Awareness of Public Policy

Informed Communities is a grant funded by the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council and run by Connections for Community Leadership (CCL) at the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition in East Lansing, Michigan. This grant works to help people with disabilities and their families be aware and take action on the issues that affect their lives.

The program holds 2 to 4 free, informational meetings a year throughout the state to inform people with disabilities and their families on public policy issues. At these meetings CCL helps people to create action plans for the subjects discussed at the meetings.

The last meeting, called Our Voices, was held in Bad Axe, Michigan on May 16th. More than 50 people with developmental disabilities attended, and it was a very successful day. The meeting centered on creating a self-exploration book. Those who attended used this book to explore their strengths and weaknesses as well as the things in their lives that are important to them. They can use the book to help develop their individual identity as a person with a disability.

The four-hour forum also gave individuals an opportunity to discuss instances in their lives where they have been treated differently because of their disability. Disability was discussed as one of many identities a person can have. They also explored different ways to react in a situation where you are being treated differently. This helped participants realize that their voice is an important tool in the face of stigma or discrimination.

To learn more about this forum and previous forums, please visit <http://www.copower.org/leader/informedcommunities.htm>. The next forum will be on September 16th, in Allegan County. The Michigan Disability Rights Coalition's website is <http://www.copower.org/mdrc/MDRC.htm> and their number is 517-333-2477.

## **DD Spotlight: Capital Area Center for Independent Living**

The Capital Area Center for Independent Living (CACIL) is an excellent resource for people with disabilities of all types. CACIL is a hub of information and services for people with disabilities in the Lansing area. CACIL is a non-profit, self-help organization that helps those with disabilities become more independent and make important choices in their lives. CACIL is dedicated to self-determination with a focus on solutions.

CACIL provides important services such as transition from institutional settings, employment training and support, disability awareness and advocacy, and transportation access. They also offer adaptive software computer training such as JAWS for people with disabilities who need accessible software.

CACIL works with nursing facility residents who are Medicaid eligible and want to move back into the community. CACIL's goal is to assist those wishing to make this transition in getting what they need to live independently.

There also a CACIL Academy, which is a curriculum program that offers training in skills needed for living and interacting in the community. Through this program individuals can work on their initiative, personal presentation, social skills, and self esteem. It also trains in knowledge needed for employment.

CACIL also offers a variety of classes such as Enhanced Fitness, a Writing Class, Positive Thinking, and Music Therapy, among others. Please call CACIL at (517) 241-0393 for more information.

The CACIL office is also the meeting place for the Capital Area Regional Interagency Consumer Committee (RICC) of the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council. There are RICCs across Michigan in many counties, and they are grassroots advocacy committees funded by the DD Council that advocate for systems change in their community. They also inform the Council of issues that are present in their specific area. For more information on the Capital Area RICC and others, please contact Terry Hunt at [huntt@michigan.gov](mailto:huntt@michigan.gov) or 517-334-7301.

For more information on CACIL, please call the office at 517-241-0438 or [www.cacil.org](http://www.cacil.org). For a list of Centers for Independent Living in Michigan, please go to <http://www.dnmichigan.org/>.

# Health and Safety Tips for Summer

Summer in Michigan is finally here! However, this also means there are certain health and safety issues that come along with the season. Here are some tips for dealing with extreme temperatures during the summer:

- Stay inside in air conditioning during the hottest part of the day. If you don't have air conditioning, consider going to a public place such as a library, mall, movie theater, or other community facilities.
- Stay hydrated! Drink plenty of water and avoid caffeine, alcohol, and sugary drinks. Eat light meals and avoid salt.
- Use lots of sunscreen when you are outside, and wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Wide-brimmed hats keep the sun from your face.
- The first signs of heat illness are dizziness, nausea, muscle cramps, and headaches. If you experience any of these, move to a cooler location, drink a cool beverage, and rest. Seek medical help if your condition does not improve immediately.



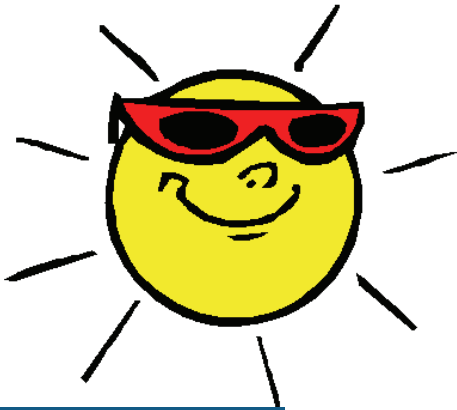
Summer in Michigan also holds the risk of severe weather. Severe thunderstorms and tornados are a possibility in these hot months. To stay up to date on current weather, check [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com), [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov), or [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) for severe weather alerts. Also, if you go to [www.emergencyemail.org](http://www.emergencyemail.org) you can sign up for a free text messaging service that will send weather alerts to your mobile phone. Find out if your neighborhood has a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) that will alert you in an emergency. Having a plan and an emergency supply kit for use when severe weather strikes is a good idea.

A good website that assists those with disabilities in making an emergency plan is [www.disabilitypreparedness.gov](http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov).

For severe weather tips and suggestions, go to [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

## Summer Recreation

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) offers information on resources for those with disabilities such as accessible camping, hiking, and beaches. Information can be found by visiting the DNR's website at [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr) where an Accessible Recreation brochure is available. Here you can also read the DNR's Accessibility Strategic Plan and a PDF of its Accessible Programs, Services, and Facilities.



The DNR has an Accessibility Advisory Council which makes recommendations to the DNR on accessibility issues to the Director and Department. The council works to involve citizens in planning and development to ensure that all facilities and programs are barrier-free and accessible to all users.

Council member information is available on the DNR's website.

## Joint Health Issues and Public Policy Meeting

The Health Issues Workgroup and the Public Policy Committee are having a joint meeting July 21st from 1-4 pm at the Hannah Community Center in East Lansing. The meeting will be discussing the budget crisis in Michigan and its affects on those with developmental disabilities. The purpose of the meeting will be to help develop a DD Council response/advocacy strategy for Michigan's budget crisis.

There are two guest speakers, Andrew Farmer from AARP and Karen-Holcomb-Merrill from the Michigan League for Human Services. The meeting will discuss the structural problems associated with the budget, and what *we* need to do about it.

This meeting and all of the DD Council's committee and workgroup meetings are available by teleconference.

Please contact the office at (517) 334-6123 for teleconference number and passcode information.

# Finding Our Way Home Grant Improves Housing Options

“Finding Our Way Home” is a grant funded by the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council. Through this grant, the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition, Allegan Community Mental Health, The Arc of Livingston, Disability Advocates of Kent County (DAKC), Disability Network of Lakeshore and Southwest Counseling Solutions worked together to help people with disabilities find housing that they need.

There are many difficulties for those with disabilities in finding affordable, decent housing. Some of these difficulties include lack of SSI funds, not enough housing units available, and not enough supports to aid those living in the community who need them. Through these organizations’ efforts, they were able to make substantial improvements in finding affordable housing for many people. Here are the results:

- 1,261 people with disabilities now have homes of their choice.
- 67 people with disabilities moved from group settings to a home in their community.
- \$2,699,609 was leveraged for housing programs and services.
- 19 banks made mortgage funds available to enable people with disabilities to purchase their own homes.
- 87 housing programs/policies were created or improved.
- 384 units of affordable, accessible housing were made available.
- 1,351 people were assisted in their pursuit of home ownership or rental housing.



*Salli Christenson from the ARC Livingston and Frank L. from DAKC at the Michigan Conference on Affordable Housing in Lansing, MI.*



*Ebony, a consumer who found affordable housing of his own as a result of services he received from Southwest Counseling Solutions.*

## Advocating for the End of Seclusion and Restraint in Michigan's Schools

Seclusion and restraint has become a big issue not only in Michigan but across the nation. School systems using seclusion and restraint have come under scrutiny because of cases where it has been used unfairly and improperly.

According to the Michigan Department of Education's publication, Standards for Emergency Use of Seclusion and Restraint of 2006, seclusion and restraint in the school environment should only be used as a last resort in emergency situations to protect the safety of all concerned. It also states that neither of these should be used solely for staff's convenience, as a substitute for an educational program, or as a substitute for less restrictive alternatives.

Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service (MPAS) is now advocating for the elimination of seclusion and restraint entirely in the school system, for many reasons. MPAS believes that the State Board of Education's efforts to update the policies has not resulted in sufficient protection for students and staff.

In the opinion of MPAS, any policy adopted by the Board should:

- Apply to all students.
- Ban seclusion. Seclusion, as allowed in the State Board policy is potentially harmful and has no demonstrated educational value.
- If allowed at all, restraint should be limited to emergencies involving significant risk of substantial harm to self or others. Restraint should never be part of a behavior support plan.
- Prohibit practices that are inherently dangerous or used for punishment; require training to protect safety of students.
- Require public reporting of use.
- Integrate the Board's recently approved policy on school-wide positive behavior support. Require certification standards to require training and education around positive behavioral supports, crisis reduction, de-escalation techniques, and other best practices.
- Change state law or regulation to make policy effective. Much of the State Board's policy offers good suggestion, but unfortunately does not have power to mandate that schools comply.

MPAS is collecting and investigating personal stories on seclusion and restraint in Michigan schools. If you have recent stories please call MPAS at 800-288-5923, fax at 517-487-0827, or visit their website at [www.mpas.org](http://www.mpas.org).

## Celebrating Olmstead Over Ice Cream!

June 22nd was the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to reject forced institutionalization of people with disabilities and requiring states to support people with disabilities in the community. This case was extremely important in supporting and moving towards full inclusion and integration of people with disabilities into the community.

The Michigan Disability Rights Coalition celebrated this decision and Michigan's commitment to the integration mandate of the Americans with Disabilities Act with an ice cream social. Many people attended, including those with disabilities as well as advocates, friends and allies of people with disabilities.



## The Arc Detroit Community Awareness Project

The Arc Detroit is holding a series of workshops for those with developmental disabilities. Their next workshop is on July 30th from 1-3 pm at the Arc Detroit Building, 51 W. Hancock, Detroit. This workshop is on guardianship and exploring alternative opportunities to control your own life.

**RSVP by July 23: Barbara Cardinal, Mental Health Navigator, The Arc Detroit 313-831-0202**

The Arc Detroit will also have a workshop on August 10th at 1 pm at the same location. This workshop is a creative housing workshop for people with developmental disabilities, their families, care providers and allies. It will explore housing options that maximize control and independence in the lives of people with developmental disabilities.

**RSVP by Aug 5: Barbara Cardinal, Mental Health Navigator, The Arc Detroit 313-831-0202**



## Upcoming Events

### July 30th

**1– 3 pm**

The Arc Detroit Community Awareness Project– Alternatives to Guardianship Training workshop, at The Arc Detroit Building

### Aug 10th

**1 pm**

The Arc Detroit Community Awareness Project– Creative Housing Workshop, at the Arc Detroit Building.

### July 31st

**9 am–12 pm**

Pride and Power– Their Role in Leadership Seminar at the Hannah Community Center, East Lansing

### Aug 13th

**10 am–12 pm**

Transportation Workgroup Annual Traveling Meeting, Flint

## 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 July:**

### **Public Policy Committee– May 2009**

**Federal:** The budget to increase funding for all DD Councils has been approved, Each Council will receive a slight increase in funds.

**Budget:** Governor Granholm has issued an Executive Order cutting over \$221,864,600 from the current budget. This includes numerous optional Medicaid services, such as dental, chiropractic, hearing aids, etc. Every department had funding cut by 4% across the board. State employees must take 6 unpaid leave days.

**Hate crimes:** Hate crime legislation has been introduced; the Council is sending a letter to all state Representatives encouraging them to vote in favor of the legislation.

**Medicaid:** There will be NO CUT to Medicaid paid transit for school based services.

**Mt. Pleasant Update:** The Mt. Pleasant site is to close by October 1, 2009. Individuals not yet transitioned into the community will be moved temporarily to the Caro Institution.

**Council Strategy to Budget Cuts:** Let legislators know how cuts will effect your life (personal stories) in letters, emails, phone calls, etc. Partner with other disability advocates that share our concerns to develop a “united front.” Tax increases are inevitable– ask legislators to explore a structural change of closing tax loop holes and other options for taxing.

### **Transportation Workgroup– May 2009**

**Project Ideas:** Brainstorming for project ideas for 2011 is underway. Topics include rapid bus system, accessibility, regional coordination and training, riders audit, disability discounts, universal ADA/Paratransit pass.

**Ramp It! Project:** Senator Gleason suggested legislators pay for the ramp through donations. There is also talk of labor being donated to build it.

**Funding Formula Update:** No decision has been made on whether the funding formula should protect a base level of public transit services in all communities or funding for all services that are currently running. Will be discussed at next meeting.

**CATA Listening Session:** Jackson RICC approached their transit provider and asked for similar listening sessions Capitol Area Transit Authority (CATA) held. The provider agreed and their first listening session was in June.

**TWG Traveling Meeting:** The Genesee RICC has offered to host the August traveling meeting this year. A tentative date has been set for August 13, 2009. A meeting announcement will be sent out once plans have been finalized. The Lansing site is still available and various phone sites.

# Minutes Continued...

## **Program Committee– April 2009**

Dissemination Process: Tracy Vincent reviewed the revised list of printed resources with the group. The committee decided to begin the process of sorting the video resources after the meeting.

Technical Assistance Process: The committee approved the technical assistance policy without changes.

## **Legislative Event & Awards Sub-Committee– June 2009**

Currently brainstorming speakers for various parts of the event. The sub-committee would like to have a brief training for the RICCs the morning of the event about talking points with legislators.

## **Family Support Workgroup— June 2009**

Updates: Autism insurance legislation passed in the House. Audrey updated on the parents as peers mentors, and is working on pulling a group together to write the curriculum.

Kathy Neville from the Insurance Advocacy for Home-Based Alternatives Program at DCH discussed eligibility for children with very high health needs.

More details were discussed on the one-day seminar. The seminar will be on October 21st from 10 am–3pm. The location is TBD.

## **Education Workgroup—June 2009**

Start up reports were discussed. for Minority Family Support to Improve Educational Outcomes Grants. It was decided that quarterly reporting to the workgroup through phone calls/handouts would be fine.

MPAS is working with Julia Hernandez to translate selected chapters of MPAS's advocacy manual into Spanish.

Seclusion and restraint: MPAS is developing a MI report to show what has happened since MI passed the voluntary policy in 2006 and have collected information from ISD's on their policies.

MPAS is highlighting 30 personal stories in the report. A meeting will be held with interested organizations to discuss the strategy to educate the community. Individual teachers may not recognize that their professional organizations may support seclusion and restraint.

The MDE Website has posted the 2007-2008 School Performance data sheet for all indicators for all districts in the state, organized by ISD and school district. Re-imagining grants are available and have been posted on the MDE website.