

**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- **Disability Community Loses an Advocate**
- **Employment First Report**
- **Employment Workshop**

## October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

NDEAM celebrates the achievements of people with disabilities in employment. The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council decided to use this month to introduce the “Take Your Legislator to Work” campaign.

Throughout the month of October legislators had the opportunity to job shadow one of their constituents with a disability at their place of employment. Legislators toured their workplace, met co-workers, and heard why employment is important to their constituent. This campaign showcased why community-integrated employment is important for people with disabilities in Michigan.

Inspired by the Wisconsin Board of People with Developmental Disabilities Council and the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the campaign highlighted how people with disabilities strengthen the workforce , promote diversity, increase talent in the field, expand the tax base, and lower poverty rates in a community-integrated setting.

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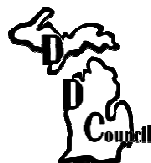
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# Disability Community Loses an Advocate



With the passing of Celena LaVerne Barnes on September 15, 2014 in a tragic house fire, the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council lost an energetic, devoted friend and ally. Celena dedicated her life to advocating on behalf of children with developmental disabilities.

She was appointed to the Council on October 1, 2010 by Governor Jennifer Granholm to represent parents of children with developmental disabilities. During her tenure on the Council she was a member of the Executive and Diversity Committees and the Individual, Family Support, Education and Advocacy Workgroup (IFSEA). She was appointed Chair of the Diversity

Committee and launched its successful Shred the Hate campaign, aimed at eliminating hateful speech and the “R” word. She also chaired the annual Developmental Disability Awareness Month Activities.

She also served on a number of other organizations including: head coordinator of Power, Hope & Grace Bible Church’s Special Needs Ministry Department, the Michigan Interagency Coordinating Council (MICC), Wayne County Parent Advisory Committee, Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health - Community Planning Council and Autism Task Force, Michigan’s Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Wayne County Infant-Toddler Interagency Coordinating Council, and Detroit Public Schools Special Education Advisory Committee.

A mother of four girls, Celena leaves behind a legacy of advocacy work for people with disabilities.

## October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) **Continued**

More than 40 individuals with disabilities applied to have their legislator job shadow them. Ten individuals were selected along with their employers. Twelve legislators and a district liaison participated. Each job shadow lasted about an hour and legislators had a glimpse of various jobs from ticket taking, program aide, inclusion specialist, porter, cleaning technicians, library aide and grocery bagger.



Representative MacMaster and Eric Chojnacki at Boyne Mountain Resort in



(Left to Right) Senator Schuitmaker, John Argo and Representative McCann at

The Campaign ended with a closing ceremony on October 29<sup>th</sup>. People traveled across the state to be in attendance, including Lieutenant Governor Calley, who gave opening remarks.

“Oftentimes people with disabilities are overlooked. We want to continue to highlight their talents and skills while working towards eliminating barriers for people with disabilities in the workforce,” said the lieutenant governor. “We should have high expectations for everyone; no matter their abilities.”

Participants got to share their job shadow experiences in two panel discussions saying “the best part was having their legislators actually do their job.” Even Representative Stamas and the employers, shared their experience.

“Marty can do the job of three or four students. He is focused and has a meticulous eye. We wouldn’t know what to do without him,” said Rachelle LaPorte-Fiori, supervisor at Oakland University Kresge Library.

Participants, employers and legislators were presented with certificates of participation by Vendella M. Collins, Executive Director of the DD Council.

“Our goal is that people with disabilities will continue to be supported in obtaining community-based employment,” said Collins.



The participants and Lieutenant Governor Calley at the Closing Ceremony in Lansing.

Executive Director, Vendella Collins and participant, Paul Miller pose for the camera at the Closing Ceremony in Lansing.



# NDEAM: Take Your Legislators to Work Participants



Katie Waters and Representative Stamas at Colonial Villa in Midland.



(Left to Right) Senator Booher and Representative Franz learning how to bag groceries from Sara Piersma at Shop-n-Save in Benzonia.



Marty Jensen showing Senator Marleau how to sight read at Kresge Library in Rochester Hills.



(Left to right) Senator Casperson, Lindsay Griffith, Zach and Representative Kivela at Econo Foods in Marquette.



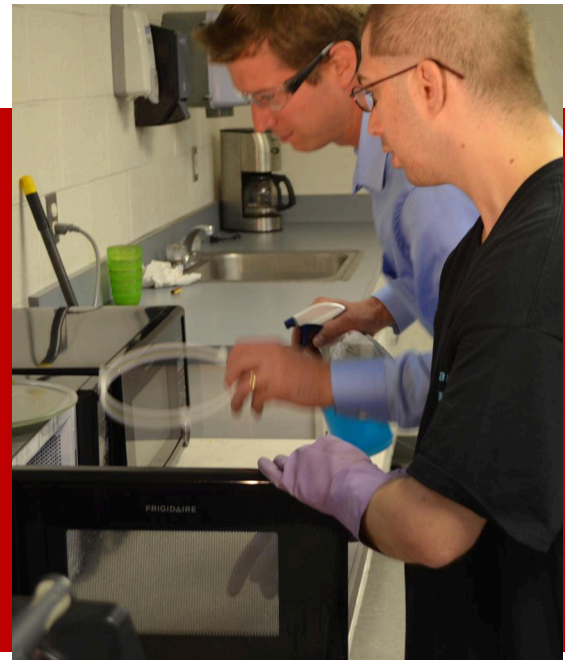
Anne DeFrain is showing Senator Pappageorge how to change a feeding tube at Wing Lake Developmental Center in Bloomfield Hills.



Melina Bucci and Dave Fisher, District Liaison for Senator Moolenaar, at Dow Diamond Stadium in Midland.



Representative Schor and Paul Miller smile for the camera at Michigan Disability Rights Coalition in Lansing .



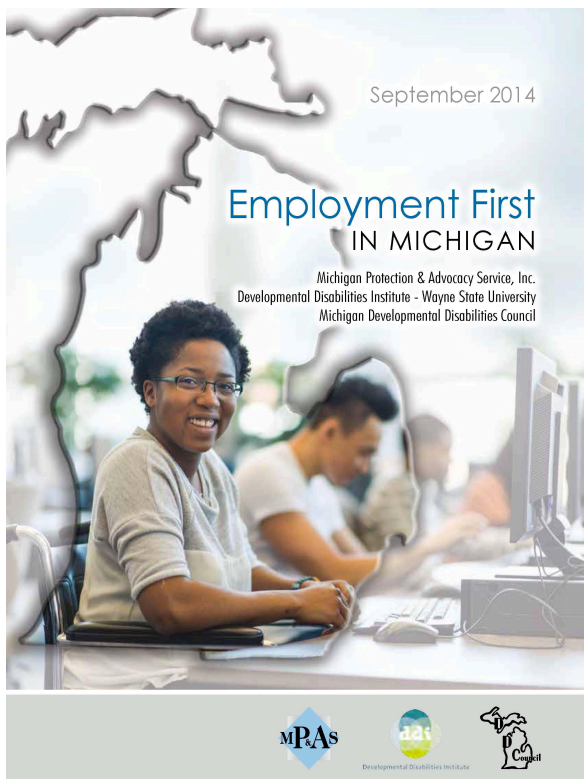
Steven Abramson and Senator Hildenbrand hard at work at Kentwood Powder Coat in Grand Rapids.

# Employment First Report

On September 22, 2014 the DD Network, which includes the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council, Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI) at Wayne State University and Michigan Protection Advocacy Services (MPAS), released a report that talks about employment in Michigan.

Below are the key points of the report:

1. In Michigan, a lot of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are unemployed.
2. Individuals with disabilities in Michigan want a job in their community; but only few of them have one.
3. Sheltered workshops are paying their workers with disabilities less than minimum wage. The average wage being paid is \$2.75 an hour.
4. Employees with disabilities should be paid at or above the minimum wage and have benefits just like people without disabilities.
5. People with disabilities should be employed in community-based jobs, where they work alongside individuals with and without disabilities.



The report supports the ***Employment First*** movement, the idea that individual integrated employment is the preferred outcome for people with disabilities. The full report is available at:

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

If you have any questions about Employment First, please contact:  
Yasmina Bouraoui at [bouraouiy@michigan.gov](mailto:bouraouiy@michigan.gov),  
or by phone at (517) 335-3142.



# Employment Workshop

## Innovative Strategies in Community-Based Employment

**Thursday, December 11, 2014**

**10:00am – 3:00pm**

201 Townsend Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor – Lansing, MI 48933



**Corey Smith**  
Senior Consultant

- Investigate moving from employment readiness to the discovery process and how to use it as a tool to gaining employment.
- Learn methods on how to develop individual employment outcomes for high school students before graduation.
- Learn to effectively work with partners in traditional and non-traditional settings, including small business, to improve employment outcomes.
- Learn to maximize economic and social capital at the individual, family, and agency level.

**The cost is \$15 and it includes lunch.**

A limited number of scholarships are available for people with disabilities. Space is limited.

For more information or to request a scholarship contact Wendy Duke-Littlejohn at [DukeLittlejohnW@michigan.gov](mailto:DukeLittlejohnW@michigan.gov) or 517-335-2062.

**The registration deadline is December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.**

## RICC Summit: Self-Advocacy

The 2014 RICC Summit held on July 8th at Crowne Plaza, featured self-exploration activities that centered on self-advocacy.

RICC members who were new to the concept of self-advocacy and wanted to learn what it means to be a self-advocate participated in *Self-Advocacy 101*.

Tedra Jackson, DD Council staff, presented on self-advocacy in Michigan. Participants learned what self-advocacy means and what it means to be a self-advocate.

Nicki Bush, Region 5 Coordinator, led the group through a self-confidence exercise. Participants took turns writing positive messages to others members in their RICC. For many, this was a huge confidence booster.

Sheryl Kuenzer, Manistee RICC and Andre Robinson, Wayne RICC, facilitated activities around “dreams and goals” and “gifts and giving.” At the end of each activity, participants were given an opportunity to share their experiences with the entire group.

Agency staff that supports the RICC in its day-to-day operations participated in *Advising through Self-Determination*.



RICC members participating in self-confidence exercise.



Muskegon RICC member Frank Minor participating “gifts and giving” exercise.

## Spotlight: Wayne RICC Summit

The 2014 Disability Summit, organized by The Wayne RICC, was held on September 5th at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. The RICC hosted almost 100 people from various agencies and community organizations. Opening remarks were made by Leon Jones, Chair of the Wayne RICC and Tom Watkins, CEO of the Detroit Wayne Mental Health Authority.

Person-centered planning and self-determination were the focus of the morning and included an entertaining demonstration of a person-centered planning meeting utilizing an independent facilitator and a peer mentor. After lunch the focus changed to how to make a difference in your community and the importance of voting in all elections. The afternoon wrapped up with some inspirational words from Senator Coleman A Young II.

By Christy Courtney



Wayne RICC Summit.



Tracy Vincent, DD Council staff, discusses peer mentoring.

**Current legislation that the Council is looking at:**

Legislation	Workgroup
<b>Direct Care Workers Overtime</b>	Health Issues
<b>S.B. 961, The Social Welfare Act: amendment to Freedom to Work</b>	Economic Justice
<b>H.B. 4792 &amp; 5080 Vulnerable Roadway User</b>	Transportation
<i>Federal-Home and Community Based Services</i>	Housing
<i>Federal-ABLE Act (S.B. 313 &amp; H.R. 647)</i>	IFSEA
<i>Federal- Keeping ALL Students Safe Act ( H.R. 1893 &amp; S.B. 2036)</i>	IFSEA

\*all legislation is looked at in conjunction with our Public Policy Committee



## Diversity

The committee decided to focus on inclusion and providing TA to RICCs in this area. Plans include helping RICCs plan inclusion activities for DD Awareness Month in 2015, as well as other inclusion activities in their work plans. Each month there is a round robin where RICCs can give updates, report progress and ask questions of staff and other RICCs on the line. We are brainstorming ways to get more people involved in the group.

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## Strategy Team

There has been significant discussion on the availability to tools which support self-determination across the state and what training needs are necessary for PIHP's and CMH's; as well as policy changes which should be considered by DCH.

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## Program

The committee will receive reports from each grant project. The committee is also focused on planning for the 2017-2021 Five Year Plan.

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## Public Policy

**The Public Policy Committee is currently working on:**

- **Direct Care Workers:** Direct care workers often don't get fair pay for the work they do. Many aren't paid overtime or travel time. They will soon begin to be paid overtime.
- **HCBS:** CMS has created new rules to the Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver program. The goal is for people to have more options for community supports. Each state is required to create a plan to meet the criteria. The Michigan Department of Community Health is holding stakeholders meeting to gather input on the creation of the plan.

## Health Issues

The work group is monitoring integrated care for people dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare. As the council receives information regarding project implementation, we will share it with the RICCs.

The work group is monitoring implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in Michigan.

Members discussed a proposed Medicaid policy change regarding individuals who may be excluded due to their previous criminal behavior from providing personal assistance services in the Home Help program.

Work group members continue to be involved with health related groups such as Michigan Oral Health Coalition and Michigan Consumers for Healthcare (MCH), to remain current on issues and review ways to improve access to health services.

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## Housing

The prioritization sub-group has developed a work plan strategy around more accessible, affordable housing in Michigan.

The Disability Network of Michigan is asking the housing work group to assist in training of the different Centers for Independent Living (CIL's) on housing issues.

## Economic Justice

The work group is working with partners to advocate for an Employment First! Policy at the state level. The DD Network released its white paper around the status of employment of PWD in Michigan at a press conference on September 22, 2014. The amendment for Freedom to Work 2 (FTW 2), Senate Bill No. 961 was introduced on May 28, 2014, by Senator Schuitmaker and referred to the Committee on Appropriations. There is hope that it will be passed this fall. The work group is sending action alerts on this topic requesting its passage.

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## Transportation

- The workgroup is working on obtaining a 'Michigan Access Card.' This card will allow people with disabilities to use paratransit at a single point of access without having to certify in each county they travel in.
  - Regional Transit Authority (RTA) serving Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties got a new President; CEO of Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA), Michael G. Ford.
  - Detroit is getting a new railway system, the M-1 Railway, which will run down Woodward Ave from Downtown to New Center.
  - The SMART and AirRide stops at the Detroit-Wayne county airport have been moved from international arrivals to ground transportation.
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## IFSEA

- The subcommittees have been meeting to plan for 2014 activities based on work plan objectives.
- Members discussed strategies to implement 2015 work plan activities.
- Staff attended the August State Board of Education meeting to provide public comment on universal education.
- The 'Create the Change' Toolkit Subcommittee will meet in October to continue working on a draft.

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council works to support people with developmental disabilities across the state. The Governor appointed 21-member council consists of people with disabilities; family members and advocates of people with disabilities; and representatives from state and local agencies who work with people with developmental disabilities.

## Our Community Includes Everyone

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