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VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4

JANUARY 2014

Leaders in Policy Advocacy

The Arc Michigan is pleased to offer an intensive leadership training program for adults with developmental disabilities and parents of young children with developmental disabilities. Leaders in Policy Advocacy, a grant project funded by the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council, will support participants to become leaders in the movement for people with disabilities to claim full, productive lives in their communities. Participants will learn about disability history, inclusive education, assistive technology, self-determination, person-centered planning, social media, systems change, access to employment, housing and recreation and more!

Leaders in Policy Advocacy training requires a commitment to attend a total of six overnight sessions, once per month for six months. Weekend training sessions run from 12:30 pm on Fridays to 3:00 pm on Saturdays and are offered in each Region. There is no charge for the program.

Trainings are scheduled in Region 4 beginning:
Session 1: Friday, April 25th to Saturday, April 26th

To apply, click the [link](#) or visit www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil and go to Leaders in Policy Advocacy under grants section.



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Dear Readers:

Happy New Year!

We are happy to ring in the New Year with you. This past year the Council has accomplished a lot and we just wanted to share with you some of our achievements.

We need you to make 2014 even better than last year so email us with any suggestions at mdch-dd-council@michigan.gov



Sincerely,

Meredith Smith
Communications Representative
smithm10@michigan.gov
517-335-1542



2013....A Year in Review

Legislative Event

The Council held its 14th Annual Legislative Event on February 13th at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Lansing. Regional Inclusive Community Coalition (RICC) members, statewide local advocates, met with their state lawmakers to discuss policy issues affecting the developmental disability community.



Developmental Disabilities (DD) Awareness Month

To encourage residents to celebrate DD Awareness month the Council obtained a proclamation from the governor. Across the state RICCs participated in the month by holding viewing presentations on different disability related videos aimed at educating people about developmental disabilities. They also participated in a social media campaign promoting the month.



Annual Retreat

On May 21-22, RICCs, Council members, grantees and advocates gathered for the Council's Annual Retreat at the Okemos Conference Center. This two-day Retreat was filled with informational sessions and a spectacular Awards Banquet.



Universal Education

The Council adopted a position on Universal Education, June 2013. Universal Education honors the rights of all students in the Public Education System to learn together in an environment that assures access to resources and provides supports to all students.



A Year in Review Continued...

RICC Summit

The first RICC Summit was held on July 9th at the East Lansing Hannah Center. RICC members learned self-advocacy and leadership skills. Workshops focused on avoiding burnout, how to run a Shred the Hate Campaign, which focused on ending the use of the R-word and anti-bullying techniques, and how to use Facebook to promote RICC activities.



Employment First

On August 13, 2013 the Council adopted a mission and principles statement for an Employment First Policy in Michigan. The Michigan Employment First! Initiative vision is making competitive employment the first priority and preferred outcome of people with disabilities.



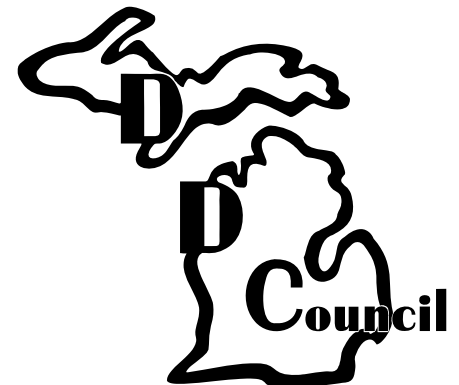
Peer Mentoring

The Council certified five additional peer mentors bringing the total number to 19. These individuals are employed or have contracted with their local Community Mental Health (CMH). 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.



8 new Council Members

In August 2013 the Council welcomed eight new Council members: Jill Barker, Melanie Brown, Justin Caine, Lori Campbell, Debra Huntley, Jeremiah Prusi, Richard Suhrheinrich and David Taylor. Three Council members were reappointed: Susan Liebetreu, David Verseput and Marlowe Franklin.



Medicaid Expansion

The Council partnered with Michigan Consumers for Healthcare and other allies to inform, to educate and to assist our RICC network to advocate with policymakers for Medicaid Expansion. RICC members maintained on-going contact with policymakers through one-on-one meetings, coffee hours, letters, e-mails and phone calls. Medicaid Expansion passed September 16th.



Transportation Odyssey

Council member Paul Palmer and Transportation Workgroup member George Hanley participated in the Michigan Transportation Odyssey, hosted by Trans4m, which looks at Michigan’s transportation systems. This two-day trip, which was from September 26 and 27th, traveled from Traverse City to Detroit using trains, buses, bikes and foot travel.



Housing Options for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

On October 8, 2013 the Council adopted a position and recommendations on housing options for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The position outlines that all people with developmental disabilities should have the opportunity and choice to live where and with whom they choose and to have the supports they need to live successfully in independent, inclusive, community-based housing.



National Disability Employment Awareness Month

The Council supported October as Disability Employment Awareness Month. To recognize Michigan’s employment accomplishments and to identify the improvements that are needed to obtain a competitive wage in an integrated environment, the RICCs obtained proclamations from their county commissioners and participated through a social media campaign promoting the month.



A Year in Review Continued....

Including Our Neighbors

Including Our Neighbors (ION) concluded a five year project on September 30, 2013. This grant helped generic non-disability specific organizations and neighborhoods change their culture, beliefs and actions by including people with developmental disabilities. It also built caring relationships with neighbors that improved quality of life, social networks, housing, employment and other outcomes, while supporting people with disabilities in being contributing members to the community. Organizations realized that they were not as inclusive as they thought. They learned about the inclusion scale and how to transform their organization to become fully inclusive. Through ION they were able to change their organizational structure, create accessible tools and systematic change.



Beyond Tokenism: People with Complex Needs in Leadership Roles

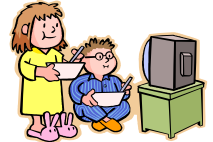
The Council believes that people with complex needs should be fully included in the community. The grant surveyed over 400 individuals in a national survey on how groups include people with high and complex needs in leadership, public policy advocacy and community activities. It also looked at how the Council can best implement the best practices used to increase the number of self-advocates on boards and decision-making bodies. The Council is now analyzing the results and trying to find the best way to implement these recommendations.



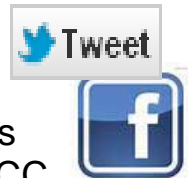
March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

As March approaches it is time to start thinking about Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Here are a few ideas to help get you started:

- ◆ Hold a viewing party to watch Possibilities DVD (from Wayne State’s Developmental Disabilities Institute) and have a discussion afterwards. <http://ddi.wayne.edu/possibilities.php>



- ◆ 31 Days of DD Awareness Month---post content on your Facebook or Twitter each day that sheds light on Developmental Disabilities.



- ◆ Trivia or game night event with facts about DD awareness month or this could be an opportunity for the community to meet and interact with RICC members.

- ◆ Use DD Month as an opportunity to write a letter to the residents of your community to acknowledge their support in making housing, jobs, schools and recreation accessible to their fellow citizens who have developmental disabilities. Send it to “Letters to the Editor” at your newspaper.



- ◆ Ask for a proclamation



- ◆ Hold a “Meet the RICC breakfast” or “brown-bag lunch” — this is a great way to follow up with your legislator from the Legislative Event. Invite them over to discuss issues in your community and to let them know who the RICC members are.



- ◆ Hold a poster contest.



- ◆ Each week send an article to your newspaper about a person in your RICC or community that is doing something positive or feature DD awareness month in your newsletter.



- ◆ Reach out to local media —tell them about what you are doing to celebrate and what DD Awareness Month means to you.

RICC Member Spotlight:

Leon Jones

Leon Jones, Chairperson of the Wayne RICC gave this powerful speech on September 27, 2013 at the Wayne RICC's Annual Disability Summit.

Look How Far We've Come

To every caregiver, parent, and individual with a disability: If you can either smile or give yourself a round of applause, do so. Now, if you look around you will see how far we've come! The fact that we are having this disability summit is proof of that. Now the reason I wanted you to smile or applaud was because each time we have this it represents a celebration for us. This is our way to say thank you and come together to say wow!!! Look how far we've come! From the Peer Mentors, self-advocacy programs, independent living services, Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as many others, God protected us and used people who gave beneficial opportunities that were not in place 25-50 years ago. We are so blessed in this generation that we live in. I would like to give a brief history lesson on how far we've truly come.

In the ancient Greco Roman days, people like Aristotle believed that it should be illegal to care for people with disabilities. So much so he didn't even believe that we should live. Yet colleges all over the globe praise this man still for his philosophy. Back in Roman culture, we were hated, left to die, put in the wilderness, thrown off cliffs and into rivers.

We were called idiots and made fun of. We were used as beggars to increase someone's greedy pocket; never really being seen as citizens. So in the middle ages to the next 200, 300 years after that, asylums were built for us where we were treated like animals and were put in rooms with unbearable living situations. Until these recent times from the renaissance period in the 1500's all the way down to just 50 years ago, we've went from being mistreated and segregated in society. We have been looked down upon and treated like we were some infectious disease, yet still whether we walk around, roll around, or crutch around, WE ARE STILL HERE!!! Look how far we've come!

From being placed in what people call idiot cages to mental institutions. From being abandoned by society to moving forward and seeing the acceptance of society. To all the parents, friends, supporters, and caregivers who have fought long and hard to make sure we are treated with the rights and dignity we deserve. As we are all here today, let us see this disability summit as milestones of progress. Whether or not you may see it that way, everyone under the sound of my voice including me is a part of this history. So always remember this: regardless of what people may say of our disabilities, whether in their eyes it may seem minor or major, the only true disability is a lack of love and compassion. So as we continue on in the fight for disability awareness, continue to be confident in the obstacles you've already overcome as individuals.

Blessings to all!

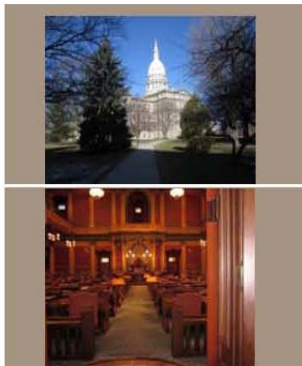
by Leon Jones

Leon Jones puts up the peace signs at the Wayne RICC's Annual Disability Summit.



Upcoming Events

The 15th Annual Legislative Event is a month away. This year it will be a one day event that will include an informational session in the morning and lunch with your Legislator. RICC members will be able to discuss issues affecting the disability community such as, transportation, healthcare, employment and much more. Mark your calendar for February 11, 2014. You don't want to miss it!!!



**Save the
Date**

Time: 11:30am
@ Radisson Hotel
Downtown Lansing



Legislative Event

FEBRUARY 2014

Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Th	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

Workgroup and Committee Meetings Jan. 2014

Transportation Workgroup

Date: January 9, 2014
Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

RICC Teleconference

Date: January 23, 2014
Time: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Diversity Committee

Date: January 13, 2014
Time: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Economic Justice Workgroup

Date: January 28, 2014
Time: 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM

DD Council Meeting

Date: January 14, 2014
Time: 10:45 AM - 4:30 PM

**Individual and Family Support
Education and Advocacy
Workgroup**

Date: January 29, 2014
Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Housing Workgroup

Date: January 16, 2014
Time: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Healthy Michigan Plan

The Healthy Michigan Plan, previously known as Medicaid Expansion, requires additional co-pays and other changes for people who will become eligible for Medicaid under the plan. To make the changes, the Michigan Department of Community Health (DCH) worked with the Governor’s office to draft a “waiver,” which explains how people will become eligible under the Healthy Michigan Plan. This Plan will be different from Michigan’s traditional Medicaid program. Therefore, it must be approved at the federal level by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Whenever you have differences in Medicaid, the state must ask CMS for approval – and the state asks for approval by submitting a waiver.

DCH hopes to get CMS approval in time to begin expanding coverage by April, 2014.

For more information on Healthy Michigan Plan please visit: www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil and look under advocacy section, and look for Healthy Michigan Plan.

You may also want to visit the Michigan Consumers for Healthcare website at - michiganconsumersforhealthcare.org



<u>Legislation</u>	<u>Workgroup/Committee</u>
Conventions for Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD)	Public Policy Committee
Vulnerable Roadway User: HB 4792 &4799	Public Policy Committee/ Transportation
H.B. 4478 Signature Stamps and Marks	Public Policy Committee
H.R. 1213 Common Sense Housing Investment Act of 2013	Public Policy Committee/ Housing

Housing

The workgroup continues to work on the United for Homes Campaign which aims to end the shortage of affordable rental homes for people with the lowest incomes. The workgroup has also finished the “Housing Options for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities” paper which was adopted at the October 8th Council meeting. The group also submitted comments to MSHDA regarding the 2015-2016 QAP.

Economic Justice

The Economic Justice Workgroup is advocating for timely implementation of the Medicaid Freedom to Work policy, which Medicaid has indicated will not happen until 2014 in order to be in compliance with Medicaid rules. The group is also working with partners to advocate for adoption of an Employment First! Policy at the state level. They have begun gathering data on employment for people with developmental disabilities in Michigan. So far they have learned from the National Core Indicators (NCI) Adult Consumer Survey, 2011-2012, that:

- 60% of individuals with developmental disability want a community job
- 17% have a paid community job
- 22% have it in their Person-centered Plan

The workgroup will continue to share their findings about the status of employment in Michigan for persons with developmental disabilities. Please join them!

IFSEA

IFSEA partnered with Michigan Family Voices to provide learning opportunities to families of children with disabilities. Learning opportunities that have been provided so far: Dream It, Achieve it! Social Security, and Transition Planning Tools to Help Young Adults with Disabilities Reach Their Hopes and Dreams. The 'Create the Change' Toolkit subcommittee is developing a toolkit to assist young adults, families and siblings in writing testimony and advocating with policymakers. IFSEA viewed "Hear Our Stories Documentary" by Dan Habib, the movie documents stories of individuals who have been restrained and secluded in school. IFSEA will be discussing possible next steps and an advocacy strategy to address this issue.

Transportation

The group is working on a universal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Card. The idea is that persons with disabilities will not have to qualify for a disability bus pass and/or paratransit bus pass in the multiple local areas that they visit. The workgroup has also been working with Wayne RICC on service issues with DDOT. Several RICC members were appointed to the Regional Transit Authority's Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). Also about 100 Local RICC and TWG advocates met with legislators from around the state at a Legislative Day arranged by Trans4M to discuss their transit concerns and needs.

Health Issues

The workgroup is monitoring integrated care for people dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare. Michigan's project will begin in four regions: the entire Upper Peninsula, Macomb County, Wayne County and southwest Michigan (counties of Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph and Van Buren). This demonstration project will initially operate for three years, as opposed to a statewide initiative which was originally announced. MDCH released this past summer a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Integrated Care Organizations (ICOs) for the 4 pilot sites and received 13 responses. The implementation of the project has been moved to July, 2014.

Public Policy

The Public Policy committee is working on a number of key issues, which include:

- **Medical/Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation:** Beneficiaries continue to have trouble getting rides. The workgroup has increased membership in the group to gain more knowledge and now have a transit provider, and several members from the various transit provider associations.
- **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD):** The workgroup has continued to update RICC members on this subject. The treaty was reintroduced and there were two hearings. Both of Michigan's U.S. Senator's support it.

Strategy Team looking for new members

The Council's Strategy Team meets about twice a year, looking at issues that have the greatest positive impact on systems for lasting change in the lives of people with disabilities. The team assesses the current situation in Michigan and chooses issues that are most important and most likely to succeed at the current time. These issues are communicated with Council members, workgroups, committees, and staff. It then creates actions, long and short term, which it recommends to the Council.

If you are a person with a developmental disability, and are interested in serving on the Council's Strategy Team, please contact Yasmina Bouraoui by e-mail at bouraouiy@michigan.gov or by phone at (517) 335-3142.

Program

The program committee is focusing on grants. It will be receiving reports from each grant project. Currently, the committee is reviewing and updating the grant dissemination plan on how to get the word out about our projects.

Diversity

The committee is discussing different ideas to help the RICCs promote diversity. Discussions have centered around a bigger focus on inclusion and providing Technical Assistance (TA) to RICCs in this area. The committee plans to help RICCs create inclusion activities for DD Awareness Month in 2014, as well as other inclusion activities in their work plans.

More Information about Workgroups or Committees

- ◆ **IFSEA:** Tedra Jackson jackson7@michigan.gov or Tracy Vincent at vincentt1@michigan.gov
- ◆ **Strategy or Economic Justice:** Yasmina Bouraoui at: bouraouiy@michigan.gov
- ◆ **Public Policy or Transportation:** Tandy Bidingert at: bidingert@michigan.gov
- ◆ **Health Issues:** Terry Hunt at: huntt@michigan.gov
- ◆ **Diversity or Program:** Tedra Jackson at: jackson7@michigan.gov
- ◆ **Housing:** Meredith Smith at : smithm10@michigan.gov

Happy New Year!!!



The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year

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, mentors, guardians, and advocates of people with disabilities; and professionals from state and local agencies who assist people with developmental disabilities.

Our Community Includes Everyone

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4

January 2014

