

COMMUNITY UPDATE

April 2017

18th Annual Legislative Event

The Council held its 18th Annual Legislative Event on March 7th at the House Office Building. More than 70 advocates reached out to their legislators and set up meetings in their offices. They discussed employment, and other issues affecting people with disabilities. Council staff also participated in the event by giving a brief presentation during lunch. The short program covered a brief history of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their struggle for civil rights, and full inclusion. The mission, vision, and core values of the Council was also discussed, followed by how the right to self-determination and full inclusion informed the Council's public policy platform.



Robin Sefton (left) and Chief of Staff for Senator Rebekah Warren, Jessica Randall (right), at the Legislative Event.

Peer Mentor Retreat

Thirty peer mentors met at the 2nd Annual Peer Mentor Retreat at the Crowne Plaza in Lansing on February 23-24. Participants heard presentations about:

- ⇒ *Building a Personal Brand*
- ⇒ *Organization and Time Management Skills*
- ⇒ *Goal Setting and Motivating Peers*
- ⇒ *Building Strong Relationships with Peers*

Peer mentors provide adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities opportunities to support, mentor and assist them to achieve community inclusion and participation, independence, and productivity. To learn more about how to become a peer mentor, contact Tracy Vincent at vincentt1@michigan.gov.

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Council Welcomed New Community Service Consultant

On March 27th the Council welcomed its new Community Service Consultant, Beth Scanlon. Beth comes to us from a non-profit behavioral health organization in Connecticut. She spent the last eight years working with individuals with disabilities and their families in community settings. Beth excelled at tackling difficult situations and coming up with creative, out-of-the-box solutions in collaboration with the individuals and families she served.

She received her Masters of Science in Education with a focus in School Psychology from CUNY Brooklyn College in 2006. Prior to her transition to working at the Council, Beth was a book publicist in New York City and worked with authors such as Meg Cabot.



Beth Scanlon, Community Service Consultant.

Beth resides in East Lansing with her wife and their three pets. She loves any kind of creative or crafting activity, but especially knitting and mixed media art. She is passionate about National Parks and hopes to visit each one over her lifetime. She also enjoys riding her bike around town, antiquing, cheering on MSU at local games, traveling, visiting contemporary art museums, reading and playing board games.

One fun fact about Beth is that she was a winner on The Price is Right this past February!



Meet Our Council Members

Paul Palmer



Profession: Advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Mr. Palmer is also Chair of the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council.

Term Expiration: 9/30/17

Boards, Committees, and Volunteer Opportunities: Mr. Palmer sits on the Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Community Mental Health board and Michigan Protection and Advocacy board. He is also the chair of the public policy committee for the Council.

What disability issues are you most passionate about? Mr. Palmer is very passionate about advocating for people with I/DD, especially in public policy. He has testified at various committee meetings on legislation that affected people with I/DD.

Lois Arnold



Profession: President and CEO of Special Olympics of Michigan

Term Expiration: 9/30/19

Boards, Committees, and Volunteer Opportunities: Ms. Arnold has been very involved in her community. She was Chairperson of International Special Olympics Sport Rules Committee and a member of Special Olympics International Sports Rules committee.

What disability issues are you most passionate about? Ms. Arnold is passionate about providing people with I/DD access to sports training, and competition and free health screenings. She also wants to continue to promote inclusion and acceptance for children and adults with I/DD.

Council Grant Awards



The Council is excited to announce that Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC) was awarded three grants: Youth Engaged in Leading and Learning (YELL)*; Leadership, Engagement, and Advocacy Development (LEAD); and Leadership Developmental Opportunities (LDO).

MDRC is a disability advocacy organization that “cultivates disability pride and strengthens the disability movement by recognizing disability as a natural and beautiful part of human diversity while collaborating to dismantle all forms of oppression.” MDRC has extensive knowledge on leadership development for people with disabilities. The three grants MDRC was awarded will start this month and will run through the end of the Council’s five-year plan (2017-2021). Below are brief descriptions of each grant.

YELL

Youth Engaged in Learning and Leading is a project that will pilot a model aimed at changing the culture of high schools in Michigan. The grant will achieve this by giving participants the tools they need to create change in the school and eventually communities. This youth leadership project is designed to improve outcomes related to community inclusion, advocacy, leadership, and community participation for transition-age youth with developmental disabilities. **YELL is a three-year (2017,2018,2019) pilot project.*

LEAD

Leadership, Engagement, and Advocacy Development will provide intensive training for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and parents of minor children with I/DD. The training will help the participants learn to achieve systems change by being effective public policy advocates at the state and federal level. The program will also help individuals become leaders in the disability advocacy movement and in the public discussion of policies that impact their lives and roles in the community.

Council Grant Awards Continued



LDO

Leadership Development Opportunities is a comprehensive training program for people with I/DD that will use a multi-layered approach to leadership development. They will also provide a range of technical assistance and trainings to people with developmental disabilities, family members and organizations to enhance the leadership of individuals within the disability community along with other project activities.

If you have questions about the grant awards please contact Tedra Jackson at jacksont7@michigan.gov.


Public Policy Update

Universal Statewide Reduced Fare Card (USRFC): The universal card would allow Michigan citizens to travel across county lines at a reduced rate. The USRFC workgroup met with Secretary of State (SOS) to try to get the card implemented. After meeting with SOS, the group decided to seek other methods of implementation. The group will reconvene at a later date to begin exploring other options for rolling out the card.

Direct Supports Workers (DSW): A state budget proposal looks to increase the wages of DSW by \$.50 per hour. The proposal requires increasing worker's wages in order to keep current direct supports workers and to recruit new ones.

Oral Health: The group is working on developing talking points and gathering stories on the difficulties of people with disabilities accessing adult dental services.

State Budget: The governor's budget recommendation has been released and both the House and Senate have started the hearing process. Committee hearing schedules can be found at <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/>



Public Policy Update Continued

Medicaid Spend-Down: Staff along with the Olmstead Coalition, continues to meet with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to discuss income disregard* in order to try to reduce Medicaid Spend-Down requirements.

Housing: The housing workgroup's sub-committees on training, voucher reform, and monitoring housing laws, met in February 2017. The committees created advocacy plans around the issue specific topics. They will bring their plans to the larger workgroup at the next meeting.

Employment: The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program technical assistance grant is in full swing. The grant looks to increase employment outcomes for people with disabilities in Michigan. Two new providers started receiving technical assistance during the month of February 2017. The two providers, Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) based in Southfield, and Lakestate Industries based in Escanaba, received a site visit on February 21st and 22nd, respectively. Genni Sasnett, a consultant to the ODEP grant, and representatives from the DD Council, Vendella Collins and Yasmina Bouraoui attended the site visits.

For more information about what issues the Council is following please go to our website www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil, click on Public Policy Committee or contact Brett Williams, williamsb18@michigan.gov.

*Income disregard is the amount of money you are paid

Legislation we are watching

State

- *SB36 and SB38* which outlines fingerprinting and photo identification procedures for children and youth with special healthcare needs.
- *HB 4198* which looks at vulnerable roadway users.

For more information on these bills and others visit:

<https://www.legislature.mi.gov/>

