

# DD Council Quarterly Informational Update

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council will be releasing a quarterly update. Look forward to a update in your mailbox October 15<sup>th</sup>, March 15<sup>th</sup> and June 15<sup>th</sup>.

Each update will include what the council has done the previous quarter, upcoming events and articles on issues impacting individuals with I/DD.

SAY HELLO TO OUR **NEW HIRES**

## **Welcome Rachel and Jazmine**

The DD council has welcomed two new employees to its staff. Jazmine Fewes was hired as the communications representative and Rachel Bentley is the new Advisor to Self-Advocates of Michigan.

Prior to working with the DD council, Jazmine was a communications assistant at Public Policy Associates, Inc. (PPA). Ms. Fewes spent two years coordinating PPA's marketing efforts and oversaw a redesign of their website. Before working at PPA,

she was a legislative intern for the Michigan House of Representatives. Ms. Fewes received her bachelor's degree in international relations from Michigan State University. She can be contacted at [fewsj@michigan.gov](mailto:fewsj@michigan.gov) or 517-284-7295.

Ms. Bentley is a licensed professional counselor. Previously, she served as a rehabilitation counselor at Michigan Rehabilitation Services (Lansing district), where she provided vocational counseling and guidance to transition age youth as well as adults. She also provided assessment and case planning services for youth and adults, related to vocational goals. She received her bachelor's degree in counseling psychology from Rochester College and her master's degree in community counseling from Eastern Michigan University. Ms. Bentley can be reached at [BentleyR@michigan.gov](mailto:BentleyR@michigan.gov) or 517-284-7290.



### **DD Council Interns**

After a competitive application process, the DD council hosted Caitlin Cody and Maddie Doing as interns for four months.

The internship gave Ms. Cody and Ms. Doing the opportunity to be involved in the work of the Council while gaining confidence and increasing their leadership and advocacy skills.

Ms. Doing pursued her interests in policy. She provided a self-advocate perspective on legislation and policy. Ms. Cody decided to spend her time as an intern improving her presentation and public speaking skills. She presented at a two-day Peer Mentor 101 Training on self-care and self-determination.



### Peer Mentor Update

The Council hosted its 11<sup>th</sup> Peer Mentor 101 training September 2018, in East Lansing. The training provides Peer Mentors with tools to guide peers to become better self-advocates, make their own choices and develop leadership skills so they may lead self-directed lives. Peer Mentoring is a Medicaid covered service and a Peer Mentors' unique skills may be utilized to assist a person in reaching their goals at a Community Mental Health Service Provider(CMHSP).

Peer Mentors are referred to the training by their local CMHSP. Currently, only 11 of the 46 CMHSP's participate in the program. While the Council continuously works to expand and enhance the program throughout Michigan, it is not available statewide. Unfortunately, many people with I/DD do not have access to this beneficial service.

To become a Peer Mentor, or to find out how to request a Peer Mentor at your CMHSP, please contact Tracy Vincent at [vincentt1@michigan.gov](mailto:vincentt1@michigan.gov). CMHSP staff who want to see peer mentoring in your agency, please contact Tracy Vincent.



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

The theme for the 2018 NDEAM is "America Workforce: Empowering All". Observed each October, NDEAM celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and educates about their skills and talents, and value of an inclusive workforce.

In 1945, Congress enacted a law recognizing NDEAM and the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities, during the first week of October. In 1988, the week was expanded to a month. Organizations of all sizes are encouraged to participate.

NDEAM is in accordance with the council's support of integrated jobs at or above the minimum wage.

For more information visit the [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#).



Inspired by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy, NDEAM is a campaign that highlights 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. To celebrate the NDEAM, the DD council began the “Take Your Legislator to Work” initiative.

Legislators had the opportunity to job shadow a constituent with a disability at their place of employment. Legislators toured their workplace, met co-workers, and heard why employment is important to their constituent. The job shadow visits took place all over the state including Sturgis, Portage, Iron Mountain, Kalamazoo, Midland, Edmore, Big Rapids, Taylor and Harrison. This year 11 state legislators participated.



## Voter Rights: Community Conversations

The Self-Advocates of Michigan (SAM) have been leading community conversations around the state, focused on the rights of voters with a disability. In the state of Michigan all individuals with a disability have the right to vote, even if they have a guardian. Attendees expressed different reasons for participating in the conversations, "I came to the training to feel more confident and empowered when I vote," said one attendee.

During August and September, 17 voter rights conversations took place across the state in Detroit, Traverse City, Grand Rapids, Marquette, Lansing and East Tawas. The presentations covered the following topics:

- Rights of a voter with a disability
- Responsibilities of voters
- Federal and state laws regarding accessible polling places
- Where to find non-partisan and accurate information about candidates

Individuals with I/DD had the opportunity to ask questions about what to expect at the polling places. It was explained that voters should ask for help if they need it. Poll workers and precinct delegates for both parties can assist voters.

The information shared was useful to not only individuals with I/DD, but also public officials, "A couple things we learned today will be taken back to our precincts," said Muskegon County Clerk, Nancy Waters. "I encourage people to come to these events to listen and learn."



## Employment First Conference

Employment First is a state and national movement to help individuals with disabilities in Michigan realize their fullest employment potential through the achievement of individual, competitive integrated employment outcomes.

This year the council an Employment First Conference: “When Everyone Who Wants a Job, Has a Job!” on July 11 and 12, 2018. The one hundred thirty -five attendees of the conference included employment practitioners, supports coordinators, case managers, CMH leadership and CRO Leadership.

Three tracks were available including leadership, provider transformation and HCBS Implementation. Keynote speakers provided valuable insights on their perspectives of the Employment First movement. Lt. Governor Calley spoke about his commitment to the movement as a parent and public official.

Dale DiLeo, President of Training Resource Network, Inc. spoke about elements needed to support Employment First, from agency level restructuring to policy, funding incentives and technical perspective. He also focused on the social perceptions of individuals with I/DD in the workplace.

Training associate Sean Roy shared his experience being a family member of an individual with I/DD. He used it as an example of how families can be proponents of employment. Employment providers should view families as potential partners to maximize employment access for all.

The council intends to host a similar conference in 2019.



## Customized Employment Training

A three-day intensive training targeting thirty-five employment practitioners was held July 31-August 2, 2018 in Lansing at LCC West, funded by the FY18 legislative appropriation for Employment First. The training was provided by Corey Smith of Griffin-Hammis Associates. The goal of the training was to provide a solid training on the customized employment (CE) approach to achieving community employment. Because CR is predicted on a “negotiation” between the job seeker (or his/her representative) and the employer, the means of getting the job differs from the traditional approach of applying, interviewing, orienting, and working. The negotiation is not just about salary and hours, but also included the process itself, often beginning with only the potential of a job but no formal position opening. Fifteen of the trainees will be receiving two days of hands-on site visits in the field to kickstart their Customized Employment practice implementation.



## Employment 4 Life

The DD council partnered with the Monroe Office of Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Camp Zip to coordinate a pilot employment program. The program was a week long camp called “Employment 4 Life”.



The goal of the pilot project was to give participants independent skills training and hands-on work experience to prepare for adult life.

Throughout the week, the 10 camp participants went to a variety of work sites, including Splash Universe, the Humane Society of Monroe County and Applebee's in Dundee. Campers were also trained on how to use the ridesharing app Lyft to travel to and from work. By the end of the week 3 campers had job offers.

#### Facts From "Employment 4 Life"

- For many campers it was their first time staying away from home
- 5 employers with options for 12 types of jobs to tryout
- 160 hours of work completed in 4 days
- 24 job application submitted
- 100% of eligible bridge card candidates completed applications
- 100% of campers began access at the local CMH
- 185 miles driven by LYFT (many first-time riders)

The council intends on hosting a Employment 4 Life camp in the summer of 2019. Stay tuned for more details.

### **Supported Decision-Making**

A day-long summit was held about supported-decision making, the focus was on maintaining an individual's right to an autonomous life. The Supported Decision-Making Summit: Upholding Individual Rights was hosted by Tina Campanella & Morgan Whitlatch.

The purpose of the presentation was to give information on how to increase skill levels when addressing how to support decision-making with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Attendees included self-advocates, families, guardians, professionals, teachers and lawyers.

During the presentation, participants learned how supported decision-making, how supported decision-making upholds civil rights, and received information on ways to support people with disabilities when they make decisions.

Webinars and in-person presentations on supported decision-making are forthcoming.

For more information contact Mary-Shehan-Boogaard at [Shehan-boogaardm@michigan.gov](mailto:Shehan-boogaardm@michigan.gov) or 517-284-7288.