

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Hunt Retires After 16 Years
- 2015 Take Your Legislator to Work

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Year in Review

January:
Disability Pride
Trainings

July: RICC
Summit

December:
ODEP Grant
Renewal

May:
Community
Conversations

March is
**Developmental
Disabilities**
Awareness Month

September:
25th
Anniversary of
the
Americans with
Disabilities Act
(ADA) celebration

August:
Universal
ADA Fare
card planning

February:
Legislative
Event

June: Community
Conversations

November: ODEP
Recommendations
to the departments

April:
Building Michigan
Communities
Conference

October: Take Your
Legislator to Work
see page 4

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Council Welcome New Staff

On January 19th the Council welcomed Diana Evans, the new Executive Secretary for the Council. Diana has worked with the State of Michigan for the past 35 years, where she spent the last 8 years with the State Long Term Care Ombudsman (SLTCO).

During her time with the State of Michigan she has provided administrative support to a variety of departments including the departments of Labor, Treasury, Secretary of State, Public Health, and History, Arts and Libraries. She spent a large portion of her career providing administrative support to the State Archives of Michigan.

Diana lives with her husband and two dogs in Lansing. She has a daughter that teaches with Chicago Public Schools and a son in college. She enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, reading, walking, and shopping.

The Council is extremely excited to welcome Diana to our staff !



Diana Evans, Executive Secretary.

Hunt Retires After 16 Years

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council lost a prized employee to retirement. After 16 years of valuable service to the State of Michigan, Terry Hunt retired on September 25, 2015. During his tenure he provided support to our self-advocacy network, Regional Inclusive Community Coalitions (RICCs), as the Community Services Consultant.

Terry was responsible for planning for the Council's annual Legislative Event, where RICC members talked with their legislators. He contributed to a number of council events and meetings, and was the staff support for the Health Issues workgroup.

Terry began his advocacy career in Fort Wayne, Indiana working at the Fort Wayne State Hospital and Training Center. There he helped people with intellectual and developmental disabilities leave the State Hospital and live in the community. He spent the next 12 years working at the Arc of Michigan and later worked at United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan as the Executive Director for 12 years. Terry has 40 years of helping people with developmental disabilities advocate for themselves.

Mr. Hunt plans to spend his retirement by riding his bike all over Michigan and enjoying time with his family.



The many faces of Terry Hunt.

2015 Take Your Legislator to Work

In celebration of National Employment Awareness Month, the Council sponsored the 2nd Annual Take Your Legislator to Work Campaign, October 2015. Legislators from across the state had the opportunity to job shadow one of their constituents with a disability.

This year 11 participants were selected along with the Lieutenant Governor, Brian Calley, who job shadowed Kyle Barker at Tom's Food Market in Traverse City, Michigan. The Campaign wrapped up with a closing ceremony in Lansing, where the Lt. Gov. gave opening remarks.



Representative Singh (left) and Senator Hertel (far right) job shadow Barbara Valliere (center).



Daniel Purdy (left) showing Representative Tedder (right) ropes at Wendy's Restaurant.



Eric Vander Stel II (left) , Representative Brinks (middle) and Senator Hildenbrand (right) take a break from washing dishes at Cantina Grill.



Jordan Caldwell (right) shows Senator Schmidt (left) the mechanics of the mailroom at Petoskey News Review.

2015 Take Your Legislator to Work



Mark Prater (left) and Senator Casperson (right) at Brimley State Park.



Matt Janego (left) showing Representative Theis how the dishwasher works at Sanctuary at Woodland.



Lt. Governor Brian Calley (left) bagging groceries with Kyle Barker (right) at Tom's Food Market.



Senator Gregory (left), Yash Mittal (middle) and Representative Greig (right) at Baptist Manor.



Shana Holet (left) and Senator Stamas (right) doing some paperwork at Arc of Midland.

Workgroup Updates:

◆ **Economic Justice Workgroup**

Completed ODEP renewal reapplication for FY2016. DDC will continue to be lead on this technical assistance opportunity for Michigan.

◆ **Housing Workgroup**

The workgroup is writing a letter of support for new bills SB 395 and HB 4719 (introduced by Senator Gregory) that would provide an income tax credit so that Michigan residents can afford to make their homes more accessible.

◆ **IFSEA**

Staff is assisting MI Family Voices in revising the resource toolkit for individuals and families. IFSEA invited MPAS and SILC to its October meeting to give an update on the issues they are focusing on for collaborative opportunities.

◆ **Transportation**

HB 5002 is the Michigan Vulnerable Roadway User legislation that adds additional protections to people and people with disabilities who use our public roadways by adding expanded definitions for vulnerable roadway users.

Universal Reduced Fare Card

The Transportation subcommittee has made great progress in the development of a universal reduced fare transportation card. The committee and staff are in the process of designing a single application to be used on a statewide basis as well as developing ideas as to what the card may look like (physical dimensions, items to be included on the card, etc.)

◆ **Health Issues**

Medicaid Spenddown

Staff has been working with the Medicaid Spend Down Coalition to help develop talking points as well as meeting with MSA to discuss Medicaid spend down pitfalls.

UPDATE: Achieving Better Life Experiences Act (ABLE Act)

RECAP: The ABLE Act is a law that was signed by President Obama, in December of 2014, which will allow people with disabilities to establish a 529-type savings account (529(a) account). This gives the account holder the ability to save up to \$100,000 and not lose their SSA/SSDI benefits. Another important feature of this savings account is that contributions made to a person's ABLE account are tax deductible up to a specific amount. Once a person has over a \$100,000 in their account, their SSA/SSDI benefits will be "suspended" until the account balance dips below \$100,000.

In Michigan, a single person can contribute up to \$5,000 into an ABLE account, \$10,000 as a couple, for a tax-exempt contribution. The total amount of monies deposited into an ABLE account cannot exceed \$14,000 in yearly contributions from all sources combined.

On the state level, Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council remains in close contact with the Michigan Department of Treasury for the most current updates regarding the progress of ABLE accounts in Michigan. The state has begun the process of finalizing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit entities interested in administering our (Michigan's) ABLE accounts. Through our communications, we have also learned that a target date for roll-out of the ABLE program in Michigan is targeted for mid-summer, 2016.

Should you have any questions regarding ABLE accounts in Michigan, you can contact Brett Williams at WilliamsB18@michigan.gov or 517-335-3139. You can also send questions to MIABLE@michigan.gov.

This article contains excerpts from section 529a interim guidance regarding certain provisions of proposed regulations relating to qualified able programs. Notice 2015-81

1 <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/n-15-81.pdf>

Preparing for Legislative Feb. 9th Event

17th Annual Legislative event will be February 9, 2016 at the Radisson in Downtown Lansing. To help you prepare for the event, below are **10 steps**.

Step 1... Find your legislator

- ◆ To find your Representative Visit:

<http://house.michigan.gov/>

Scroll down to where it says “Find your Representative”

- ◆ To find your Senator visit:

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/default.html>

Click the “Senators” box and select “Find your Senator”



Step 2... Contact your legislator!

- ◆ Follow-up with them to make sure they received the “Save the date”
- ◆ It is very important to personally invite your legislator
- ◆ Next, send the invitation

Step 3... Follow up with your legislator

Following up with your legislator does several things:

- ◆ Keeps the date in front of them
- ◆ Let’s legislators know how important this day is
- ◆ Keeps you in contact with the legislator
- ◆ Make sure to send a letter or email as a reminder

February 2016

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	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	29					

Step 4... Prepare for the Big Day!

Figure out what you can bring to the meeting. Find your strengths.

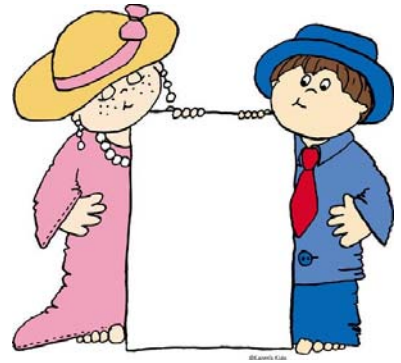
- ◆ Is it sharing a story?
- ◆ Discussing the talking points?
- ◆ Organizing the talking points for your RICC?
- ◆ Help sending out the invitations and follow-up?
- ◆ Keeping the discussion on track?



Step 5...Practice...Practice...Practice!

To help you prepare for the day, practice roleplaying.

- ◆ Put together your talking points
- ◆ Go over them one at a time
- ◆ Practice, practice, practice
- ◆ You can practice with anyone



Step 6...Important things to remember when meeting with legislator

- ◆ Stay focused and on track
- ◆ If the legislator goes off topic, get the conversation back on track
- ◆ Never argue
- ◆ Do not interrupt your guest

Step 7...How to greet your elected official

- ◆ Greet them as Representative or Senator
- ◆ Example, Representative Smith or Senator Smith
- ◆ After you greet your elected official, introduce yourself
- ◆ Wait to begin your interaction until everyone is introduced



Step 8... During the meeting

- ◆ Make sure you fill out the information card for the newsletter
- ◆ Always thank them for their time
- ◆ Take a picture with them

Step 9...After the meeting

- ◆ Remember Follow-up
- ◆ Send a thank-you note; include the picture of the event
- ◆ If you said you would get back to them with information; do it within 1 week

Step 10...Don't forget to...

- ◆ Add their contact information to your list
- ◆ Make sure you stay in contact with their office
- ◆ Follow-up with them on the points discussed
- ◆ Ask them about any progress

