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## PROJECT BRIDGE

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THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR DISABILITIES STUDIES

## NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2012

The November-December 2012 issue of Project Bridge includes project updates from the past few months and events that will take place in November, December and early January. Please send news and events for the January issue to [khoffman@udel.edu](mailto:khoffman@udel.edu) by **December 10**.

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### PROJECT UPDATES

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- The next session in the **CDS Lunchtime Learning series**, which focuses on issues addressed by CDS and topics related to disabilities, will be held on Tuesday, November 27 from 12 noon to 1 p.m. at the Center for Disabilities Studies. **Wendy Strauss, Meg Comeau** and **Terri Hancharick** will present **“The State Transition Plan for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs.”** They will discuss the task force that was established by the Delaware General Assembly to (1) research how young adults with disabilities are making the transition into adulthood and (2) develop a series of recommendations to address the findings. Wendy, Meg and Terri will provide an update on the progress the task force has made so far, reviewing where the gaps are and offering possible suggestions for the development of new services to fill the gaps. This workshop is free but registration is required; contact Katie Hoffman at [khoffman@udel.edu](mailto:khoffman@udel.edu) and indicate if you need an accommodation. You are welcome to bring a bag lunch. Water and snacks will be provided.
- CDS has been designated as Delaware’s certified entity to distribute communications equipment to low-income individuals in Delaware who are deaf-blind. This underserved population has, until now, largely been denied the opportunity to enjoy the full benefits that communications equipment and technology can provide. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) provided funding to an entity in each state for the **iCanConnect program**, with CDS receiving \$69,696 for the first year.

Working in conjunction with the FCC, Perkins School for the Blind and Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youth and Adults (HKNC), CDS will connect people in Delaware who are deaf-blind with the proper equipment and training on how to utilize it. To qualify, an individual must meet the definition of deaf-blindness in the HKNC Act and have an income that does not exceed 400% of the federal poverty level. If you know someone who might benefit from the iCanConnect Delaware

program, contact Sonja Rathel at 302-856-1081, 800-870-3284 or [rathel@udel.edu](mailto:rathel@udel.edu).

- CDS extends a warm welcome to **Jane Donovan**, who joined our staff in October. Jane will be working on the **Domestic Violence Disability project**, which is a collaborative effort among CDS, the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCADV) and National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI-DE). Jane has many years of experience in special education. She is recently retired from her position as the special education coordinator at Delcastle Technical High School.
- **Megan Pell**, who has served as a graduate assistant at CDS for several years, has joined the Center staff as a limited term researcher. Megan is working with the school age unit on the **Positive Behavior Support** and **ACCESS** projects; she also is coordinating **Junior Partners in Policymaking** for the third time.
- **Karen Zalewski**, program manager for Early Developmental Screening and text4baby, presented information about **“Learn the Signs. Act Early.”** to pediatric residents and interns at Alfred I. duPont Hospital in October.
- **Laura Eisenman**, principal investigator with the **Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID)** project, and graduate assistant **Mary Culnane** made a presentation about the project's peer mentoring component at the Pennsylvania Educational Research Association conference on October 5 in Philadelphia.
- CDS ACCESS project staff members **Julie Bowers**, and **Stephanie DeMayo**, along with **Sarah Celestin** of the Delaware Department of Education, were presenters at a session of the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual CASE (Council of Administrators of Special Education) Conference, “Action with Authentic Leadership: Let’s do it Together!” in November. CASE is a division of the Council for Exceptional Children. Their topic was “Partnerships Promoting Transformation Change: Shifting Perspectives to Provide Access to General Education Curriculum for Students with Significant Disabilities.”
- CDS staff member **Terri Hancharick** is coordinating a healthy transitions workshop for Ennis School in Georgetown in November and December. Terri also will present workshops to Autism Delaware throughout January.
- Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) updates:
  - CLSC students hosted an open house on November 8. Prospective students, family members, school staff and other community members were invited to learn more about the program. This event was developed and led by CLSC students, who provided an overview of the program to attendees.
  - Applications for the third class of the **Career and Life Studies Certificate (CLSC)** program are now available on the [CDS website](#). The deadline for submitting applications is **January 31, 2013**. For more information or to request an application, contact the CLSC program at 302-831-6974 or [CLSC-info@udel.edu](mailto:CLSC-info@udel.edu).

- On December 7, **Brian Freedman** will present an overview of the CLSC program as part of a professional developmental workshop on local college opportunities for students with disabilities. The workshop is being held at Howard Community College in Columbia, Maryland. Current CLSC students will describe their experiences in the program and answer questions.
  
- Applications for the **2013 Junior Partners in Policymaking**® program, which will be held June 16 to June 21, 2013, are now available. Contact Grace Wesley at [jrpartners@udel.edu](mailto:jrpartners@udel.edu) or 302-722-7066 for an application form or if you have any questions. The program is looking for a diversity of youth participants with developmental disabilities and other disability advocates. More information can be found on the [CDS website](#). The deadline for applying is **February 14, 2013**. This program was created by the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council. It is funded by the council, the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, the Delaware Department of Education and the Delaware General Assembly.
  
- The **LIFE (Legislation, Independence through Assistive Technology, Families, and Education) Conference** will be held on **January 17, 2013**, at the Sheraton Dover Hotel. The LIFE Conference is Delaware's premier conference for persons with disabilities and those who support them. This year's keynote speaker is **Aaron Bishop**, executive director of the National Council on Disability. Aaron will give an overview of the changes in the federal budget and how it will impact service for people with disabilities and their families. The Center for Disabilities Studies is a sponsor for this event. CDS staff members and collaborators, and the sessions they are presenting or participating in at the conference, are:
  - **Beth Mineo**, Curricular Access through Accessible Instructional Materials
  - **Suzanne Milbourne**, Adaptations and Assistive Technology: Participation in Everyday Early Childhood Activities
  - **Marvin Williams** and **Sonja Rathel**, Assistive Technology and Telecommunication: Bringing Communication to Everyone
  - **Julie Bowers** and **Sarah Celestin**, All ACCESS: The ACCESS (Adapting Curriculum and Classroom Environments for Student Success) Project
  - **Annalisa Ekbladh**, Obtaining and Maintaining Employment
  - **Terri Hancharick**, Education Related Legislation
  - **Eileen Sparling**, Embracing Healthy Lifestyles

Instructions for online registration for the LIFE Conference, as well as a detailed conference schedule, are available on the [Conference website](#). Early registration rates are available through **January 2, 2013**. Contact [lesliekosek@bestbuddies.org](mailto:lesliekosek@bestbuddies.org) with questions.
  
- **Brian Freedman**, director of the Transition, Education and Employment Model (TEEM) unit, celebrated the birth of a daughter, Isadora Lacey Freedman, on October 29. Congratulations to the entire Freedman family on their new addition!
  
- **Josh Donaldson**, graduate assistant with the CLSC program, welcomed daughter Bailey Elizabeth Donaldson on October 21. Congratulations to Josh and family!

## HIGHLIGHTED PROJECT OF THE MONTH

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### Governor Markell Addresses Fourth Annual CDS Disability Mentoring Day

- As part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, CDS hosted the fourth annual **Disability Mentoring Day** on October 17. The Center partnered with the city of Newark and local businesses to host young adults with disabilities for on-site job shadowing and career exploration. Disability Mentoring Day is part of a national effort that promotes career development for young adults with disabilities.

Delaware **Governor Jack Markell** welcomed participating young adults and employers at a breakfast hosted by the Marriott Courtyard. During his keynote address, he urged employers to “focus on the abilities and not the disabilities.” The Governor is a key advocate of employment for people with disabilities in the state and has chosen to focus on this effort as his national initiative during his tenure as chairperson of the National Governors Association (NGA). He recognized disability mentoring in his [weekly message](#), which he recorded just prior to speaking at Disability Mentoring Day.

This year, 22 young adults spent the day at various locations throughout the Newark area. Each participant was paired with a mentor who accompanied him/her to the job site for support. Eight UD departments and 14 businesses hosted the participants.

The day concluded with a celebratory lunch, where Delaware Department of Health and Social Services Secretary **Rita Landgraf** enthusiastically encouraged the young adults to “explore the job that is good for *you*.” Secretary Landgraf, a former chairperson of the Center’s Community Advisory Council, has been a consistent supporter of employment for people with disabilities. Past Disability Mentoring Day participants who are now employed also spoke, emphasizing that perseverance can go a long way in job searches. This year’s participants then spoke about their job shadowing experiences after accepting certificates of achievement. Many indicated that the experience helped foster new professional interests. As the day concluded, many participating employers and departments expressed interest in working with CDS to provide future employment and internship opportunities.

This year’s Disability Mentoring Day was organized by Transition, Education and Employment Model (TEEM) member **Max Kursh**. CDS Director **Beth Mineo**, **Brian Freedman**, **Wendy Claiser** and **Debbie Bain** also helped make the event a success, as did mentors **Chris Barthold**, **Chelsea Brengle**, **Nikki Dell’Orio**, **Sophie DeMesse**, **Josh Donaldson**, **Amanda Horowitz**, **Jessica Inskeep**, **Krista Jensen**, **Lisa Leonard**, **Meghan Morrow**, **Jordyn Nakao**, **Deanna Pedicone**, **Bishwa Poudel**, **Melanie Sipko**, **Ally Szecsi** and **Erica Taylor**. To read more about Disability Mentoring Day, see the [UDaily article](#) published about the event.

For information about serving as a site for internships or employing people with disabilities, contact Max Kursh at [maxkursh@udel.edu](mailto:maxkursh@udel.edu).

## RESOURCES

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- The **Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS)** is an independent organization within the Internal Revenue Service that serves as a voice for taxpayers at the IRS. This service is designed for people who need help resolving tax problems or would like to voice concerns about the way the IRS works. The service is free and can be tailored to meet individual needs. TAS has a location in Newark. More information is available on the [TAS website](#) or by calling its toll-free number, 877-777-4778.
- The **American Legion Auxiliary Unit** is collecting blankets, sheet sets and pillows (in plastic) for Delaware's homeless veterans. On January 21, volunteers will be needed to assemble donations at American Legion Post 28. Donations will be delivered to local veteran shelters and outreach centers. For more information on where to take donations or how to volunteer, contact Dolores Taylor at 302-543-8513.
- The **National Council on Disability (NCD)** is collecting information about voting experiences during the November 2012 election from voters with disabilities. In 2008, only 27% of polling places were fully accessible, and the NCD would like to determine if this has improved in the past four years. The [survey](#) is available online. More information about the initiative, as well as a printable version of the survey, is available on the [NCD website](#).

## EVENTS

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Also visit the CDS website calendar at [http://www.udel.edu/cds/index\\_calendar.html](http://www.udel.edu/cds/index_calendar.html).

- **November 27. Lunchtime Learning**, 461 Wyoming Road, Newark, 12 noon–1 p.m. “The State Transition Plan for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs.” See additional information in Project Updates. Register with Katie Hoffman at [khoffman@udel.edu](mailto:khoffman@udel.edu).
  - **November 29. InterAACt: Empowering Communication**, 100 Enterprise Place, Suite One, Easter Seals Conference Room, Dover, 10–11:30 a.m. Learn how augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) can help individuals participate in successful day-to-day conversations. **DATI** is hosting this event. Visit the [DATI website](#) for more information or register with [marychristine.rindaldi@dynavotech.com](mailto:marychristine.rindaldi@dynavotech.com).
  - **November 29. Exploring the V™ and Vmax™**, 100 Enterprise Place, Suite One, Easter Seals Conference Room, Dover, 12:30–3 p.m. If you have a new V™ or Vmax™, or will be getting one soon, join us as we explore tools and resources you can use to quickly and confidently launch your communication journey. This session is designed to save users time and effort through provision of the best vocabulary and strategies for the V™ or Vmax™ user. **DATI** is hosting this event. Visit the [DATI website](#) for more information or register with [marychristine.rindaldi@dynavotech.com](mailto:marychristine.rindaldi@dynavotech.com).
- November 29. DynaVox Fun Stuff: Photos, MP3, Videos, etc.**, 100 Enterprise Place, Suite One, Easter Seals Conference Room, Dover, 3–4 p.m. Learn how to use DynaVox products for media

storage purposes. Visit the [DATI website](#) for more information or register with [marychristine.rindaldi@dynavotech.com](mailto:marychristine.rindaldi@dynavotech.com).

- **January 16. Disability Day in Legislative Hall**, 411 Legislative Ave., Dover, 11 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Your voice matters: Schedule an appointment to meet with your legislators and discuss top disability issues. For more information, call the Developmental Disabilities Council at 302-739-3333.
- **January 17. LIFE Conference**, Sheraton Dover Hotel, 8 a.m.–3:45 p.m. See Project Update section for more information.
- **Save the dates** for these conferences:
  - **March 14, 2013.** Inclusion Conference
  - **March 23, 2013.** Self-advocacy Conference
  - **April 15–16, 2013.** Transition Conference

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## ADVOCACY CORNER

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**This section is dedicated to informing you about advocacy efforts and new or pending legislation or policies that relate to individuals with disabilities.**

- The **Office of Management and Budget** is holding public meetings throughout the month of November. The goal of these meetings is to review agency budget proposals and to receive public input. Each meeting will focus on a specific topic. Meetings will take place in the Senate Chambers of Legislative Hall or the Tatnall Building in Dover. More information about the dates and times of specific sessions can be found in the [Public Meeting Calendar](#).

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The Center for Disabilities Studies in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Delaware is located at 461 Wyoming Road, Newark, Delaware, 19716. Call 302-831-6974 or 302-831-4689 (TDD), email [ud-cds@udel.edu](mailto:ud-cds@udel.edu) or visit our website at [www.udel.edu/cds](http://www.udel.edu/cds).

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