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## PROJECT BRIDGE

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THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR DISABILITIES STUDIES

MAY 2011

The May 2011 issue of Project Bridge includes project updates from the past few months and events that will take place in May and June. The next issue will be a combined issue for June and July and will be released in mid-June. Please send news and events for the June-July issue to [mercooke@udel.edu](mailto:mercooke@udel.edu) by **May 13**.

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### PROJECT UPDATES

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- The Center for Disabilities Studies is hosting its third in a series of workshops on disability-related topics on May 9. **Annalisa Ekbladh** and **Karen Zalewski**, CDS staff members with the **Public Awareness Campaign for Developmental Screening**, will share information about efforts in Delaware to improve routine developmental screening and services for children with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities. CDS is facilitating the development of the state's Act Early State Plan, a blueprint for improving early identification and subsequent services. The Center also is conducting the Public Awareness Campaign for Developmental Screening. To register for this Lunch and Learn program, contact Michele Sands at [msands@udel.edu](mailto:msands@udel.edu) or 302-831-3038. Attendees are welcome to bring a bag lunch. Water and dessert will be provided.
- CDS Director **Beth Mineo** participated in a panel presentation at the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) 2011 Convention and Expo in National Harbor, Md. in April. The presentation was called *Communication Services and Supports: FAQs and Discussion*, and the panel also included Diane Paul from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Lee McLean from UNC-Chapel Hill, Judie Schoonover from Loudon County Public Schools, and Lorrie Sylvester from University of Oklahoma. The presentation sought to familiarize attendees with the work of the [National Joint Committee \(NJC\) for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities](#), which includes a number of position papers, guidelines, documents, and technical reports supporting the rights of individuals with significant communication challenges to services and supports across the lifespan. One of the NJC's most well-regarded contributions is the [Communication Bill of Rights](#), which many families, advocates and service providers use to bring attention to the rights of those with significant disabilities. The NJC is also presenting an NIH-

funded conference in Atlanta from June 9-11 titled *Research Challenges and Future Directions in Evidence-Based Communication Interventions for Individuals with Severe Disabilities* that features many leaders in research and intervention. The [conference agenda](#) and [registration information](#) can be found online.

The CEC convention is the largest professional gathering of the special education community and offers attendees information and news about evidence-based practices. It also allows participants to explore innovative technologies, products and services and network with other professionals working with children with exceptionalities and their families. CDS staff members **Wendy Claiser, Deanna Pedicone, Max Kursh, Sarah Celestin** and **Judi MacBride** also attended the conference. In addition, **Karen Jones**, a Delaware Department of Education staff member who works closely with CDS, was a presenter at the CEC full-day institute, *Individualizing the Use of the Common Core Standards*. The institute focused on the development of individualized instruction for all students using the Common Core State Standards. Karen discussed the Common Core State Standards training plan Delaware has created for Race to the Top. She also shared information about the work CDS had done to develop Extended Standards for English language arts and mathematics based on the Common Core State Standards and the on-going training that will occur regarding accessing the curriculum and the new Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System Alternate Assessment (commonly known as DCAS-Alt1). For more information on the extended standards or DCAS-Alt1, please contact Sarah Celestin at [celestin@udel.edu](mailto:celestin@udel.edu).

- Former CDS Director **Michael Gamel-McCormick** accepted an award on behalf of Senator Thomas Harkin from the University of Kansas Department of Special Education on April 27. Harkin was honored at the annual Field Leadership Reception for his “outstanding contributions as a leading champion for children and adults with disabilities,” according to Chris Walther-Thomas, chair of the department.
- **Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities (HDWD)** has released *Disability and Health in Delaware: Delaware Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2009 Select Data*. This report includes the existing information on health disparities affecting individuals with disabilities, which can be used to monitor the health status of special interest populations, such as adults with disabilities, and assess health risk behaviors and conditions among adults with and without disabilities in Delaware. Contributors to the report were **Ilka Riddle, Sharon Romelczyk, Eileen Sparling** and **Patricia Tressell**. Please contact Eileen at [sparling@udel.edu](mailto:sparling@udel.edu) if you would like a copy of this report or need it in an alternative format.
- The Transition, Education and Employment Model (TEEM) unit has a new summer program for individuals with a vision loss aged 16 to 21 years. **Project FOCUS** is a customized program offered by CDS in partnership with the Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired. It is designed for a select group of young adults with vision loss who wish to work one-on-one with a life coach to learn to be more independent, set goals and create an action plan for the future, and focus on their strengths and interests to explore future career options. FOCUS is ideally suited for students who want to pursue full-time postsecondary education or employment and increase their capacity for

independent living. Applications for FOCUS are due May 2 to the Division for the Visually Impaired. For more information about FOCUS, please contact **Debbie Bain** at 302-831-8733 or [dbain@udel.edu](mailto:dbain@udel.edu).

- The **Awareness and Action** training program is conducting training sessions in May and June to teach people with disabilities to identify cases of abuse and give them the tools they need to report abuse and protect themselves from victimization. The training also helps those serving in a support role to understand the importance of timely and effective response while providing strategies to support individuals with disabilities to recognize and respond to abuse. New peer trainers are needed, and a train-the-trainer session will be held at CDS on May 4 to train people with disabilities to become members of the training team as peer trainers. Interested individuals should contact Debbie Bain at 302-831-8733 or [dbain@udel.edu](mailto:dbain@udel.edu) for further information. Please include a summary of experiences that qualify you for public speaking/presentations.
- CDS is conducting a series of **training sessions** this spring to provide up-to-date information, ideas and inspiration for professionals working with people with disabilities and their families/caregivers. The sessions are designed for both new and experienced direct support professionals, managers and administrators. They are offered by CDS through a contract with the Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services. Topics for the courses are: Strategies to Effectively Support Adults with Autism; New Visions Training; Awareness and Action; and Working with Families, Parts 1 and 2. Most training sessions will be offered in all three counties, with the schedule beginning May 3. They will be taught by CDS staff member Debbie Bain. Complete course descriptions, a schedule of training sessions, and a registration form are on the [Community Education page](#) of the CDS website.
- **Community Connectors** will hold its second annual **car wash** on Wednesday, May 11 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the **Sunoco Station** located at 287 Elkton Road (at Murray Road) in Newark. The cost is \$7 on the day of the event, or tickets can be purchased in advance for \$5 by contacting Debbie Bain at [dbain@udel.edu](mailto:dbain@udel.edu) or 302-831-6974. Members of the UD Greek community will join with the Connectors to wash your car. The car wash is part of a series of fundraising efforts by the Connectors. The successful April event at Friendly's in Newark that brought in over \$400 in profits including a generous donation from Bob Klopfenstein—his \$232 winnings from the 50/50 raffle. Thanks to all for their support!

## HIGHLIGHTED PROJECT OF THE MONTH

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### Changes to CBEA Program Leads to New Experiences and Opportunities for Students

- The **Community-Based Education Alliance (CBEA)** began in 2006 as a transition program for students aged 18-21 with developmental disabilities. Over the last five years, CBEA has evolved and grown into a program that thrives on community participation, person-centered planning and new experiences.

For the spring 2011 semester, the staff at CDS reshaped the CBEA program to reflect an emphasis on collaboration. CBEA life coaches **Melanie Sipko** and **Hope Hawkins** created new curricula for their classes, focusing on self-determination, money management, safety and navigation, and health and wellness. Although each class relies on daily classroom instruction, the addition of guest speakers and community experiences—to bring lessons taught in the classroom to life for the students—makes this year’s CBEA program different from other transition programs. It highlights the importance of applying learned skills—practicing them in natural contexts, not just inside the classroom walls.

Melanie described the community-based volunteer experiences that her students from the Delaware Autism Program have participated in this year and noted, “The collaborative effort with local businesses allows the students to practice effective communication and interpersonal social skills in an integrated setting. It also increases awareness of the value of inclusion and recognizes the abilities of young adults with disabilities. This has been a productive, meaningful and exciting semester with this collaborative approach.”

Hope emphasized the students’ excitement about feeling part of the University of Delaware community. Her Delcastle Vo-Tech High School students attend class each day in Alison Hall on campus, where they learn “concepts and activities through a variety of experiences, so they can apply what they learn and see the relevance it has outside the classroom and in the community,” she said.

Guest speakers have enriched the classroom experience by addressing topics such as self-advocacy and the supportive role of parents; transition and independence; learning to express oneself and have self-confidence; and being aware of supports within the community that are available when seeking employment.

The changes implemented this year have led to a new focus and a new program—**Passport**—to replace CBEA. The one-year exploratory program will enable more students to benefit from the collaborations and supported self-determination that will open doors to their future.

Passport blends practical life skills education with career exploration and employment training internships. It provides students the foundation for proceeding on to postsecondary education and/or employment. The program embeds recommended transition practices in a person-centered model, featuring person-centered planning; coaches to provide encouragement, instruction, information and guidance to the students; coordination with the student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP); campus experiences; community externship experiences; peer mentors; development of a PATH Action Plan to help students capture a vision for their future and engage in personal goal setting; and close monitoring through data collection and tracking practices.

Through Passport's Life Studies component, students will gain knowledge and develop their skills through interactive, hands-on instructional classes, weekly community and campus experiences, guest lectures and individualized externships in community-based sites. Instruction is embedded within discussions, activities and experiences similar to situations that students encounter on a daily basis. The Career Studies component consists of three courses that combine to provide an orientation to careers, prepare students to present themselves effectively, and assist students in the development of skills they need to be successful in future employment.

School districts have been invited to enroll qualifying students in Passport for the 2011-2012 school year. The deadline for submission of applicants is May 6. For more information about Passport, please contact Debbie Bain at [dbain@udel.edu](mailto:dbain@udel.edu) or Beth Mineo at [mineo@udel.edu](mailto:mineo@udel.edu).

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## RESOURCES

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- The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council has partnered with Delaware State Parks to sponsor **Adventures in Recreation: Celebrating Inclusion in Delaware**, which explores recreational opportunities for individuals with and without disabilities. There will be kayaking, horseback riding, fitness activities, adaptive equipment and refreshments at each location. Please go to the [Developmental Disabilities Council website](#) for more information or to download a free pass for park admission.
  - Saturday, May 28 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Trap Pond, Laurel
  - Saturday, June 4 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Lums Pond, Bear
  - Sunday, June 5 — 1 to 5 p.m. at Killens Pond, Felton
- The **National Health Care Transition Center** has launched a new [website](#) to assist individuals to find the care and services needed in adulthood. Using tips and tools from this online resource, families can develop plans to support young adults' independence. The site also makes it possible for pediatric and adult primary care and specialty care teams to assess transition needs to support a coordinated transfer to adult care.
- The **National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health** has released a new report examining national trends in the transition from pediatric to adult health care. The [Health Care Transition for Youth with Special Health Care Needs: An Analysis of National and State Performance](#) report provides new national and state information to establish a transition baseline, examine state variation in transition performance, and explore possible reasons for this variation. Information for this report was obtained from the 2005-2006 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs (NS-CSHCN) and the 2010 Current Population Survey (CPS). The report analyzes the national transition outcome measure according to race/ethnicity, income, insurance, gender and the presence of a medical home.

- CDS has a copy of ***Invisible Voices***, a documentary film that captures the stage show performance of six individuals with disabilities as they describe how they have adapted to and thrived with their disabilities. *Invisible Voices* was written and directed by the internationally acclaimed playwright Ping Chong and features the life stories of Billy Allen, Sandy Lahmann, Rick Modderman, Kevin Pettit, Rebecca Shields and Kelly Tobin. Meeting the Challenge, Inc., the company that produced the film, won an Award of Merit from The Accolade Competition, which recognizes film, television, videography and new media professionals who demonstrate exceptional achievement in craft and creativity, and those who produce standout entertainment or contribute to profound social change. If you would like more information or want to borrow the DVD, please contact Michele Sands at [msands@udel.edu](mailto:msands@udel.edu).
- ***Reflections on a Promise*** is another DVD that relates to disability awareness and news. The 22-minute DVD examines the history of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the impact this groundbreaking legislation has had for millions of Americans. With equal consideration given to the past, present and future of the ADA, “Reflections on a Promise” features commentary from some of America’s foremost disability rights advocates. This DVD is also available for loan through CDS. Please contact Michele Sands at [msands@udel.edu](mailto:msands@udel.edu) for more information or to borrow the DVD.

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## EVENTS

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Visit the CDS website calendar at [http://www.udel.edu/cds/index\\_calendar.html](http://www.udel.edu/cds/index_calendar.html) for more events.

- **May 3–June 22. Training sessions** for professionals working with people with disabilities and their families/caregivers. See CDS website for complete schedule. New Visions training sessions are listed in this section.
- **May 3. New Visions training**, 9 a.m. –12 noon, DDDS office, Tom Collins Building, Dover. Attendance at this training is a requirement for new CDS staff members and graduate students who joined CDS within the past year. The class is also open to others in the community, particularly staff of DDDS-funded agencies. It includes a discussion about the rights of people with disabilities, history of the treatment of people with disabilities, people-first language and an introduction to various types of disabilities. Please contact **Debbie Bain** at [dbain@udel.edu](mailto:dbain@udel.edu) to register for New Visions or if you have any questions. New Visions training is offered in Newark on May 18 and in Georgetown on June 15.
- **May 4. “Delaware Screens for Success,”** 4–6 p.m. Easter Seals, 22317 Dupont Blvd., Georgetown. The Family to Family Health Information Center (F2F) and CDS are offering free developmental screening. Certified screeners from New Directions Early Head Start and Child Development Watch will use a validated screening tool to check for age appropriate developmental

milestones in children from birth through age five. Appointments are not necessary. For more information, contact **Annalisa Ekbladh** at 302-831-0626 or [annalisa@udel.edu](mailto:annalisa@udel.edu).

- **May 9. Lunch and Learn**, 12–1 p.m., Center for Disabilities Studies. This is the third in a series of workshops dedicated to a specific disability-related topic. Attendance is open to members of the Community Advisory Council, CDS staff, UD staff and faculty and members of the community. See “Project Updates” for more information.
- **May 9. “Delaware Screens for Success,”** 5–7 p.m. Easter Seals Kent County Center, 22317 100 N. Enterprise Place #1, Dover. See May 4 item for details.
- **May 10. “Climb to Employment—What about Work? A Presentation on Working & Social Security Disability Programs,”** 1–3 p.m., The Freedom Center for Independent Living, Middletown. This workshop features **Anthony Francioni**, Disability Resource Coordinator for the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, who will speak about programs available to individuals who are currently receiving Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income and would like to work without losing critical health related benefits. This workshop will include important information for people with disabilities who are considering employment opportunities, their families and professionals who specialize in supportive and competitive employment programs. Please register with Katrina at 302-376-4399 no later than May 6.
- **May 11. Community Connectors’ car wash**, 11 a.m. –5 p.m., Sunoco on Elkton Road at Murray Road, Newark. See “Project Updates” for details.
- **May 15. 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Buddy Walk**, 11 a.m.–3 p.m., University of Delaware Athletic Complex. Hosted by the Down Syndrome Association (DSA) of Delaware, the 2011 Buddy Walk is a one-mile walk to promote the understanding, inclusion and acceptance of people with Down syndrome. More than 1,500 people are expected to participate by walking, volunteering or collecting donations in the name of their Buddy or Team. Following the walk are free activities and entertainment for toddlers to teenagers. As in years past, CDS will have an information table at the Buddy Walk. Anyone who is interested in helping at the table should contact Michele Sands at [msands@udel.edu](mailto:msands@udel.edu) or 302-831-3038. Additional information and registration details for the walk are available on the [DSA](http://www.dsa.org) website.
- **May 16. College of Education and Human Development reception to “Celebrate the Success of Our Students,”** 5–7 p.m., the Gardens at the Louise and David Roselle Center for the Arts. All students, faculty and staff within the College are invited to attend. Please respond with acceptances only by May 9 to [cehd-accept@udel.edu](mailto:cehd-accept@udel.edu).
- **May 17. 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Delaware People First Fashion Show**, 7–8:30 p.m., Boscov’s, Christiana Town Center, Christiana. Models will be members of Delaware People First, a self-advocacy group for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The fashion show honors the memory of Calvin Jones, a past member of the group. The cost of admission is \$5 per person, payable at the event. All

proceeds will benefit Delaware People First.

- **May 18. New Visions training**, 9 a.m.–12 noon, Center for Disabilities Studies. See description in May 3 listing.
- **May 20. CDS staff meeting**, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. The CDS Community Advisory Council will honor CDS staff members and students with a staff appreciation presentation and luncheon.
- **May 25–27. National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) Mid-Year Conference**, Hotel Palomar, Philadelphia. The theme of the conference is "Building a Sustainable Service System." There are special registration rates of \$195 for self-advocates, family members and students, and a group rate of \$200 per person for three individuals or more from the same organization or agency. A free public event, featuring a book-signing by Rachel Simon, will be held May 25 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Complete details about the conference are available on the [NASDDDS website](#).
- **May 28. Adventures in Recreation: Celebrating Inclusion in Delaware**, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., Trap Pond, Laurel. See description in "Resources."
- **June 3-5. UD Alumni Weekend 2011**. This third annual celebration for all UD alumni and family features a number of events throughout the weekend. On Friday, June 3, the College of Education and Human Development is hosting an Alumni Reception from 5:30–7:30 p.m. at Clayton Hall to offer alumni and friends the opportunity to meet with the leadership of the college and reunite with other alumni. Other event highlights include: Friday's Mug Night Dela-bration, UD President Patrick Harker's State of the University address, the Blue Hen 5K, reunions for the Classes of 1961, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006, and the Blue Hen Picnic on The Green. Please visit the Alumni Weekend [website](#) for more information or to register for the weekend.
- **June 4. Adventures in Recreation: Celebrating Inclusion in Delaware**, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., Lums Pond, Bear. See description in "Resources."
- **June 5. Adventures in Recreation: Celebrating Inclusion in Delaware**, 1–5 p.m., Killens Pond, Felton. See description in "Resources."
- **June 7. Lunch and Learn**, 12–1 p.m., Center for Disabilities Studies. The fourth in a series of workshops dedicated to a specific disability-related topic will focus on **Health Care Transitions**. Attendance is open to members of the Community Advisory Council, CDS staff, UD staff or faculty and members of community. To register for this Lunch and Learn program or for more information, contact **Michele Sands** at [msands@udel.edu](mailto:msands@udel.edu) or 302-831-3038.
- **June 10–11. Special Olympics Delaware Summer Games**, Special Olympics Delaware's (SODE) signature event, sponsored by DuPont, takes place at the University of Delaware with more than 900 athletes competing in six sports—aquatics, bocce, powerlifting, softball, tennis and track &

field—over two days. In addition to the competitions, athletes have the opportunity to spend the night with their teams in the dormitories, enjoy the activities in Olympic Village in between competitions, and dance their hearts out at the afternoon Families Picnic. The grand Opening Ceremony at the Bob Carpenter Center at the University of Delaware begins at 7 p.m. The opening ceremony offers free admission and is open to the public. See the [SODE website](#) for information about the statewide Torch Run with the "Flame of Hope" and other Summer Games information.

- **June 15. New Visions training**, 12:30–3:30 p.m., DDDS Stockley Center (Chapel), Georgetown. See description in May 3 listing.
- **June 17. Community Advisory Council meeting**, 9:30–11:30 a.m., Center for Disabilities Studies.
- **June 18. 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Blue-Gold All Star Game**, University of Delaware Stadium, Newark. Parking (\$5 per car) opens at 2 p.m. and children’s pre-game activities begin at 4 p.m. The pre-game celebration will start at 6 p.m. for the general public. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. Sponsored by DFRC, this annual football game showcases high school students who participate as football players, cheerleaders, band members and school ambassadors. As a frequent beneficiary of DFRC grants, CDS supports the organization’s mission to promote understanding of people with intellectual disabilities and to support programs that encourage individuals with intellectual disabilities to maximize their independence and enjoyment of life.
- **June 19–24. Junior Partners in Policymaking (JPIP)**. Students between the ages of 15-22 will live on UD’s main campus for five days and engage in activities designed to increase awareness about a variety of issues. The program stresses the importance of self-determination, effective self-advocacy, legal rights and public policy, and planning for the future, for students with and without disabilities. The week includes a visit to Legislative Hall in Dover, a program by the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative, and a celebration with current JPIP participants as well as program graduates. JPIP is a partnership between the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council and CDS and is funded by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

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## ADVOCACY CORNER

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**This section is dedicated to informing you about new or pending policies that relate to individuals with disabilities. If you would like to suggest information to share in upcoming editions of Project Bridge, contact [mercooke@udel.edu](mailto:mercooke@udel.edu).**

- **Representative Debra Heffernan** and **Senator Harris McDowell**, along with other sponsors, introduced House Bill No. 91 to the House Administration Committee on April 13. This bill is one of two that will be worked this session to bring people-first and respectful language to the Delaware state code. This bill requires all new state laws and publications, from the effective date of the enactment of this bill into law, to avoid language that is disrespectful and/or offensive to

individuals with disabilities. **People-First Language (PFL) legislation** is part of a national movement to promote dignity and inclusion for people with disabilities. PFL specifies that the order of terms used to describe any individual places the person first and the description of the person second. For example, when using PFL, outdated terms such as “the disabled” would be phrased as “people with disabilities.” This language emphasizes that individuals are people first, and that their disabilities are secondary.

## ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

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The next issue of Project Bridge will appear by mid-June. If you want to share information about your project or professional activities or announce events that will occur mid-June through early August, please contact Meredith Cooke at [mercooke@udel.edu](mailto:mercooke@udel.edu) by **May 13**.