

Center for Disabilities Studies

Highlights of the Year



Carmen Boyer

• Collaborative Learning Opportunities

Two hands-on courses, designed by Dr. Carol Denson, grouped 4-6 university juniors and seniors with students from the Transitional Partnership Program (TPP). A collaborative project between the Red Clay Consolidated School District and the Center for Disabilities Studies, TPP encourages 18 to 21 year old students, who have moderate to severe developmental disabilities, to develop independent living skills. Dr. Denson's course, "Leadership and Disability Policy," paired the university student teams with transitional students to develop their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Teachers, state agency representatives, and other service providers usually help to plan the IEP short and long term goals for the students. "Analysis of Consumer Disability Issues" is another popular course that examines campus resources used by the TPP students.

• Commission on Community-Based Alternatives

Through House Resolution 90, the Commission on Community-Based Alternatives brought together stakeholders to address the need for the State of Delaware to implement community-based alternatives for

people with disabilities. The report is a blueprint for a diversified, individualized, cost-effective service and support system that enables individuals with disabilities to live and work in the most integrated setting of their choice. The Commission was supported in part by Center for Disabilities Studies staff.



Amy Sawyer (left) and Paula Talarowski

• The Dads Can Do It! Conference

This conference for parents of children with disabilities and professionals in the field of services to children with disabilities was held on May 2, 2003 at the University of Delaware's Clayton Hall. Sponsored by the Center for Disabilities Studies, the Dads Can Do It! Conference invited fathers, mothers, families, friends, and professionals to attend the first conference in Delaware focused on the positive impact that dads can bring to the lives of their children, as well as how other family members and professionals can support their efforts. The conference provided a forum for fathers of children with disabilities to support one another and raised the awareness of fathers, family members, program administrators, and direct service personnel about the importance of fathers in the development of children with dis-

abilities. Program administrators and direct service personnel learned strategies for involving fathers in their services.

• New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS)

The Youth Involvement Initiative and the Fatherhood Initiative began this year to provide opportunities for young adults and fathers to develop and hone skills to be positive role models in their communities. The Youth Involvement Initiative trains both high school and middle school students in mentoring skills and teaches them the value of becoming a mentor. Spring 2002's first training session attracted twelve young adults to the Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center in Wilmington. The second project highlights father figures as positive role models in children's lives. Beginning with the first session in January 2003, six men received leadership training aimed at supporting the children and families in their community.



NDEHS children involved in the Youth Involvement Initiative

• Created Equal: Stories of Delawareans with disabilities

Funded by DFRC, Inc. and the Delaware Humanities Forum, this traveling exhibit includes photo-

graphs and stories about six Delawareans whose lives have been shaped by disability. Created Equal was hosted at a variety of museums, businesses, libraries and schools over the course of one year. The stories included in the Created Equal: Stories of Delawareans with disABILITIES exhibit challenge the stereotypical view of disability and dependency and demonstrate that, indeed, all people are created equal.



Cory Nourie (left) and Carol Bernard

• **The Delaware Sibling Support Project (DSSP)**

This pilot project during the year was funded through collaboration with the Center for Disabilities Studies and the Birth to Three Early Intervention System in Delaware. A group of trained students, parents, and other volunteers provided a support system for children who have siblings with chronic illnesses and/or disabilities. The mission of DSSP was to help build sustainable, positive and caring sibling relationships between unimpaired participants of the project and their siblings with special needs. DSSP ran six consecutive meetings geared toward siblings of children with special needs.

Project Updates



CDS Graduate Students

Preservice Training

• **The Interdisciplinary Minor in Disabilities Studies** provides an opportunity for students from a variety of disciplines to gain a substantive introduction to and understanding of the biological, social, and psychological origins and ramifications of disabilities. The program is designed to increase interdisciplinary understanding of disability and provide students, through the senior seminar, with an experience integrating their major with disability issues. Over sixty total students had completed the minor at the end of June 2003.

Community Training & Technical Assistance

• **The Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Initiative** awarded two Delaware schools the PBS Star School Award – North Laurel Elementary School in the Laurel School District and Harlan Elementary School in the Brandywine School District. The schools demonstrated significant decreases in problem behaviors. Continued expansion of the PBS state team membership includes members from PBS schools, districts, child mental health, and parent groups.

• **Community Education** continued their professional development certification, technical assistance, and training programs for disabilities service providers in Delaware. The programs are offered to increase the skills and effectiveness of direct support professionals, support coordinators, case managers, supervisors, and administrators.

Research & Evaluation

• **The Interagency Resource Management Committee Evaluation Project** has been involved in several projects with Delaware's Birth to Three Early Intervention System. The project continues to collect and analyze data on the progress of children served through Child Development Watch, Delaware's early intervention program for children from birth to three years of age. The Center reported the results of a 2002 survey of families to assess families' perceptions of their experience working with Child Development Watch. This year, focus groups of therapists, counselors, specialists, and family service coordinators to assess the developmental achievement of the children they serve and the communication among families, service providers, and service coordinators to meet the needs of children and families and to support children in achieving developmentally.



Judy Greene (left) and Emanuel Jenkins

Service in the community

• **New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS)** served 205 children and 22 pregnant women from 2002-2003. Many of the children returned for a second or third year in the program. Twenty-six of the children had a developmental delay or disability. NDEHS experienced many significant events during the year including the end of their partnership with Southbridge Children's Center, participation in the Partners In Excellence (PIE) pilot program, the first All Partners and All Staff Conference, and a federal review process which happens every three years.

Dissemination

CDS participated in a wide range of events to disseminate information on our research, evaluation, and service projects to the community including:

- The Disabilities Awareness Day Picnic
- LIFE Conference
- The Legislative Forum
- The Inclusion Conference

We also tailored presentations, trainings, and reports to a wide range of community partners as requested.

Our specific dissemination products include:

- **delAware** One issue of *delAware*, published in 2002-2003, focused on diversity and highlighted stories throughout Delaware.
- **delAware: A Research Brief** One issue of our research brief focused on attendant services for people with disabilities.
- **Website** The CDS website went through a transition during the year and was streamlined and updated to include sections on news, events, and an expanded reports and publications section.

Publications

Denson, C. R. (2003). The ADA and public sector transportation: A case study. *Directions in Rehabilitation Counseling*. Volume 14, 131-136.

Denson, C. R. (2003). Developing partnerships between transit advisory committees and transit providers.

Mann, T. (Ed.) (Spring 2003) *delAware*.

Mann, T. (Ed.) (Spring 2003) *delAware: A Research Brief*, 3.

Peters, D.L., Dugan, J., & Weber, J. (2003). *Technical Report 3: Implementation Year Two, 2001-2002*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware.

Visit www.udel.edu/cds for copies of reports and information on all of our dissemination activities.

Financials

The Center for Disabilities Studies had an operating budget of \$4,986,431 from July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003. Of this total, \$2,340,603 was obtained through grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Bureau and Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

The Center also received matching support worth over one million dollars from the University of Delaware in the form of graduate research assistantships and tuition waivers and support of a wide range of projects and activities.

Our funding sources:

Federal Government	45%
University of Delaware	22%
Delaware Department of Education	21%
State of Delaware	8%
Delaware Disabilities Planning Council	<1%
Delaware Department of Transportation	<1%
Red Clay Consolidated School District	<1%
Individual gifts	<1%

Staff & Students

Core Staff

Michael Gamel-McCormick, Director
Carol Denson, Pre-Service Coordinator
Theda Ellis, Associate Director (through 09/02)
Rebecca Hardy, Assistant to the Director (through 10/02)
Debbie Koch, Staff Assistant
Tracy Mann, Dissemination Projects (beginning 10/02)
Mary Thomas, Records Specialist

Project Staff

Community Education

Carol Bernard
Mark Bernstein
Judy Greene
Cory Nourie
Michael Partie
Beverly Stapleford
Karen Townsend

Delaware Alternate Portfolio Assessment

Alison Chandler
Shaunna Crossen
Diana Farrell
Donald Peters
Janine Weber

Early Learning Center

Karen Rucker

FACT

Jim Salt

Family Support

Tim Brooks
Teresita Cuevas
Vanessa Harper
Pat Tressell
Donald Unger

Interagency Resource Management Committee

Debbie Amsden
Denise Hartranft

New Directions Early Head Start

Jennifer Adams
Ada Baker
Heidi Beck
Martha Buell
Karen Catrow



Center for Disabilities Studies Staff

F. Renee El-Williams
Carolyn Graves
Norma Grice
Robin Harbaugh
Amy Harter
Allison Miller
Danielle Rossiter
Whitney Rutherford
Lidia Vela
Robin Wilsher
Holly Yoder

Positive Behavior Support

Debby Boyer
Sarah Hearn

Transition Partnership Project

Laura Eisenman
Jackie Gallagher
Diane Merrill

Graduate Students

Sarah Blake, Nick Butt, Keith Casey, Amy Dolan, Valerie Dorn, Jennifer Dugan, Monica Fahey, Joshua Greene, Nicole Jodlbauer, Christina Kaissi, Emily Klein, Andrew Maffeie, Karen Permenter, Jennifer Phillips, Amy Sawyer, Milica Smiljanic, Lisa Trischitta, Deanna Tyree, Sarah Unger, Kimberly Walker

Undergraduate Students

Alicia Armstrong, Kristen Akers, Beth Ash, Jennifer Cali, Kate Cataldi, Kristin Chickadel, Lauren Coakley, Molly Dunson, Ken Dutch, Leanne Evans, Kristen Figaro, Kelly Gilbert, Melissa Hause, Lisa Mandrachia, Alison Pace, Michelle Reid, Mandy Romano, Amy Rubens, Sarah Ruiz, Johanna Salfank, Janine Scherr, Ashley Testa, Philisa Weidlein, Katie Wingate, Allison Wojcik, Caitlyn Young

Community & University Partners

Our community and university partners provide invaluable support in meeting our mission. The Core Advisory Council offers policy input and direction to the Center. Members include people with disabilities, families, and representatives from state agencies, service providers, and advocacy organizations.

Center for Disabilities Studies Core Advisory Council

- Marie-Anne Aghazadian, Parent Information Center
- Steven Amick, Delaware State Senate
- Debbie Bain, Freedom Center for Independent Living (formerly)
- Martha Brooks, Delaware Department of Education
- Russ Dynes, Department of Public Health
- Micki Edelson, Homes For Life Foundation
- Deborah Farris, University of Delaware, ADA office
- Tony Glenn, DFRC, Inc.
- Ann Grunert, Special Olympics Delaware
- Andrea Guest, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Susan Gumbs, Division of Substance Abuse & Mental Health
- Brian Hartman, Delaware Disabilities Law Program
- Linda Heller, Division of Services for Aging & Adults with Physical Disabilities
- Harry Hill, Division for the Visually Impaired
- Peggy Hirsh, Family Member
- Kyle Hodges, State Council for Persons with Disabilities
- Ray Hunt, Independent Resources, Inc.
- Jack Jadach, John G. Leach School, Colonial School District
- Yolanda Jenkins, Division of Child Mental Health Services
- Brenda Kramer, Family Member
- Rita Landgraf, State Council for Persons with Disabilities
- Bill Love, The Arc of Delaware (formerly)
- Raetta McCall, Advocate
- Pat Maichle, Developmental Disabilities Council
- Terry Olson, Mosaic, Inc.
- Alfred Onuonga, HIV/AIDS Services, Delaware Center for Justice
- Paul Poplawski, Division of Substance Abuse & Mental Health
- Marianne Smith, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services
- Phil Soule, Division of Social Services
- Robert Valihura, State Representative

University Partners

- Center for Community, Research, and Service
- College of Human Services, Education, and Public Policy
- Department of Consumer Studies
- Department of Individual and Family Studies
- Department of Psychology
- Department of Sociology
- Education Research and Development Center
- School of Education

Community Partners

- AmeriCorps
- Appoquinimink School District
- The Arc of Delaware
- The Autism Society of Delaware
- Child Development Watch
- Community Legal Aid Society
- Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative
- Delaware Department of Education
- Delaware Department of Health and Social Services
- Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, & Their Families
- Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council
- Delaware Division of Child Mental Health Services
- Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens
- Red Clay Consolidated School District
- Southbridge Children's Center
- State Council for Persons with Disabilities
- & numerous local school districts, agencies, and organizations.

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Annual Report

July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The 2002-2003 program year was one filled with new projects and new directions. While the Center continued to fulfill its mission related to the model programs, training, pre-service personnel preparation, program evaluation, and dissemination of information, we also responded to the needs and demands of the communities in which we work. This report highlights work in areas and with groups that are new to us.

One of the most exciting new tasks of the past year was to staff the Delaware House of Representatives Resolution on Community-Based Alternatives for Persons with Disabilities. This policy work allowed us to hear the needs of consumers and family members from throughout the state and address areas such as employment, transportation, health care, and housing.

Other new directions for the Center included a sibling support group for very young children with disabilities and a traveling dissemination project that highlighted the stories of six Delawareans with disabilities. Both of these projects were in direct response to needs expressed by families and consumers.

In addition to creating new projects based on community needs, we also combined existing activities to develop projects that make both programs stronger. One such creation was the combination of undergraduate course work with our Transition Partnership Program. Read inside to see how this blending of activities developed into hands-on experiences for students preparing to work in the field of disabilities.

As always, none of the work we do could occur without the support and participation of the persons with disabilities, their families, the agencies, and programs with whom we interact each day.

Thank you for your continued support.



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