

HIGHLIGHTS

Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council Annual Report

2004

Quality Assurance
Employment
Education
Housing
Health
Community Support
and more...

- The Council is a public policy and advocacy organization that works to positively affect programs, policies and practices of importance to people with developmental disabilities and their families.
- 60% of Council Members are people with disabilities or family members of people with disabilities.
- Other Council members include representatives from state agencies, service providers, the Protection and Advocacy System (Maryland Disability Law Center) and the University Center on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Services (Kennedy Krieger Institute).
- The Council, an independent, self-governing organization, represents no single arm of government but rather the interests of persons with developmental disabilities.
- The Council advocates for public policy and supportive practices and opportunities that promote the full inclusion of all people with developmental disabilities in community life.
- Council projects promote activities in the areas of: employment, education and early intervention, child care, transportation, community supports, recreation, housing, health, and quality assurance.
- The Council designs and sponsors innovative projects to show responsive, positive ways of supporting people with disabilities.
- The Council participates in coalitions and partnerships promoting quality approaches to supporting people with developmental disabilities according to their individual choices, abilities and needs.
- The Council receives funding from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities under the provisions of Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (P.L. 106-402).

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council 2004 Project Expenditures

Housing 14%
Child Care 1%
Employment 12%
Education & Early Intervention 28%

Small Grants 2%

Family & Community Supports 24%

Leadership & Advocacy 19%

Total Project Expenditures in 2004: \$ 607,615

Employment

INITIATIVES AND OUTCOMES:

Project Income

The Arc of Howard County and The Arc of Anne Arundel County

www.arcofannearundel.org/programs

Project Income assists people with developmental disabilities to obtain individually designed employment opportunities and to have greater choice and control over their employment supports. A collaboration of 11 Howard and Anne Arundel County agencies, Project Income provides person-centered employment strategies for individuals. In 2004, the project supported eight people with developmental disabilities in start-up of small businesses, helped 13 others to get jobs of their choice, and provided skills/career training for 36. Training was provided to 248 staff in self-employment, customized employment, and work incentives. The project has taken the success stories of small business owners on the road to other areas of the State, demonstrating strategies for customized employment, providing a creative vision of employment and raising expectations of what is possible.

The Crab Cracker

Josh has a real passion in life for his wood working. For years, he had made a variety of items that he would sell to friends and display at local events in Annapolis. Josh creates bird houses, squirrel feeders, paper towel holders and now, “The Crab Crackers.” For years, Josh has been an entrepreneur, but had been unable to market his product to the Annapolis community. His dream became a reality with the creation and support of Project Income. Even before his first meeting, Josh had a name for his business, “JW Wood Creations”. The beginning development of any business is dependent upon a business idea that meets a market need. Josh and his team brainstormed on woodcraft designs. During one session, a team member recalled a story she heard about a person who had the top of the mallet fly off while eating crabs. Josh really liked the idea about making mallets and he had a number of contacts in Annapolis that he felt he could market this item to since “Maryland is for Crabs.”

Maryland Coalition for Work Incentives Improvement

The Council, as a member of the Maryland Coalition for Work Incentives Improvement, continues to work with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene on developing a Medicaid Buy-In Program that will be phased in during FY06. The Program will enable persons with disabilities to go to work or work more hours without losing medical services they receive through Medicaid. The program will start on a small scale and will be available to SSI recipients. The Maryland Coalition for Work Incentives Improvement also worked with the Maryland Disability Law Center to develop fact sheets for people with disabilities and their families about the Ticket to Work Program.

Developmental Disabilities Administration Self Determination Employment Taskforce

As a member of the Taskforce, the Council makes recommendations to the DDA on strategies to increase self-determination so that people with developmental disabilities have opportunities to be employed in their community, in jobs of their choice, and receive the supports they want and need for success.

Procurement Preference Taskforce

The Council participated on a Taskforce to make recommendations for changes to the state procurement process to ensure that it supports individualized, integrated employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The group identified opportunities to expand the program to reach a greater number of people including small

businesses owned and operated by people with disabilities. The recommendations were forwarded to the Secretaries of the Department of General Services and Department of Disabilities for action.

Terrific Teens at Kamp A-Kom-Plish Inclusive Summer Camp

Melwood

www.kampakomplish.org

The Council supported Melwood's Terrific Teens Program for a third year. The program provided teens with and without disabilities with job training related to summer camp employment at its overnight camp for children with and without disabilities. In the summer of 2003, the Terrific Teens Program supported 15 teens, seven of whom had disabilities. Additionally, Melwood provided assistance to Patuxent 4-H Center and YMCA Camp Letts in serving campers with disabilities. A manual entitled "Terrific Teens! Inclusive Leadership Training for Teens With and Without Disabilities," was written for camps interested in replicating the program.

Advocacy & Leadership

INITIATIVES AND OUTCOMES:

Cross Disability Rights Coalition

People On the Go and ADAPT of Maryland

www.thecdrc.org

Members of two statewide self advocacy groups joined forces and continued work to get people out of State Residential Centers and nursing facilities in Maryland. The group's goals are to: move people into the community with full funding for community services, and ensure that people who transition into the community do so with the necessary tools of self-determination. CDRC has worked to get information related to the Money Follows the Individual Act to people still residing in institutions and nursing facilities. The experiences of ten people who have successfully transitioned into the community will be used to determine and remove barriers to self determination. CDRC has become an influential and powerful group sought out to provide advice on legislation and serve on committees and taskforces ensuring their voices are heard, issues are kept on the table, and collaborative work toward systems change continues.

Legislative Internship at the Maryland General Assembly People On the Go

Missy Perrott, member of People On the Go of Maryland, and a strong self advocate, completed a 2004 internship in the office of Senator Sharon Grosfeld (District 18, Montgomery County). Support was provided by The Arc of Maryland. As part of the internship, Ms. Perrott had a hand in writing the "Money Follows the Individual Accountability Act" bill and also actively participated in its entire process including getting 22 co-sponsors in the Senate. The bill eventually passed and was written into law. As a result of reviewing legislation, advising Senator Grosfeld, and testifying on bills that she felt passionate about, Ms. Perrott learned that people with disabilities have the power to influence state policy.

When legislation deals with issues relevant to people with developmental disabilities, legislators must hear our voices. The more people with disabilities get involved, the more powerful we are! -- Missy Perrott

My Life Going FAR

TASH

www.tash.org/mdnewdirections

This project trains and supports people with developmental disabilities to self-direct their services and prepares them for the Developmental Disabilities Administration's new self-direction waiver, New Directions, which begins July 2005. Project activities inform, educate, and support people with developmental disabilities and their families to plan for, receive and direct the community-based services and supports they want. The project offers

many resources in all regions of the state including peer mentors who can offer personalized support, technical assistance, a responsive training schedule for needed trainings on issues such as self determination, support brokers, fiscal intermediaries, or other individual or systemic issues, and collaboration with DDA Regional Offices and Resource Coordinators. *When the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved DDA's application for the New Directions waiver, it noted that the My Life Going FAR project has the potential to be an innovative/best practice from which other states might benefit.*

Partners in Policymaking

The Arc of Maryland, Maryland Infants & Toddlers Program-Family Support Network and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

www.thearcmd.org/Programs/Partners/Policymaking.htm

Inclusion, integration, productivity, self-determination, and independence are the key components of training offered to parents of young children with developmental disabilities and self-advocates through Partners in Policymaking. In 2004, the project focused on expanding the effectiveness of the Maryland Partners in Policymaking program. The Arc of Maryland supported graduates to: 1) increase the impact of continued efforts stemming from the project, 2) improve the levels of advocacy that Partners provide, and 3) encourage networking and collaboration among graduates. This type of focus allowed project staff to support graduates to be involved in public policy and advocacy at all levels and support the application of skills learned through the training sessions.

Take Charge: Life Leadership

The Arc of Frederick County

www.arcfc.org

This project provides leadership training to high school students with cognitive disabilities living in Frederick County who are preparing to transition from high school to adulthood. The goal of the project is to help each student to think about and clearly identify goals for the future, to map out a plan to get there, and to implement the plan with peer and professional support. Classes are held on the Hood College campus and are taught by College faculty members. The faculty partnered with self-advocates from Working Together and staff from The Arc of Frederick County on development of the curriculum.

Youth Leadership Forum

Independence Now

www.md-ylf.org

The Council continues its support of this cross-disability career leadership program consisting of high school juniors and seniors from across the state. Typically held at Bowie State University, YLF delegates stay on a college campus where they experience a taste of independence in a safe, supervised environment. Twenty-five individuals took advantage of the week long career and leadership program which was packed with valuable activities such as a day in Annapolis, where students met with elected leaders and experienced the legislative process; mentors who offered valuable insights into careers and maximizing independence; hands on experience with assistive technology; and personal and career planning.

You can be anyone you want, just put your mind to it, follow your heart, and you will be on your way. -- parting thought of a student from the 2004 YLF graduation

Education & Early Intervention

INITIATIVES AND OUTCOMES:

Special Education Leadership Project

Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

www.md-council.org

The Council's three year systems change project came to an end in September, but children and families will reap the benefits for years to come. The purpose of the project was to work collaboratively with parents, educators, school administrators and the community to establish partnerships and advocate for positive systems change in the delivery of special education services throughout Maryland. The Council advocated for the Maryland State Board of Education to adopt regulations requiring each jurisdiction in the State to develop a Special Education Citizen Advisory Committee (SECAC), which it did in September 2004. Council staff worked closely with Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop a Technical Assistance Bulletin designed to assist local school systems in the formation of a SECAC. Council collaboration with MSDE and existing SECACs continues to help forge ongoing partnerships and provide information to SECACs addressing systems change topics such as high school graduation requirements, improvements in providing opportunities for students to be served and learn in the least restrictive environment, and preparation of teachers among institutions of higher education.

The Assistive Technology Co-op: Expanding Technology Access for Children with Developmental Disabilities

AT: L.A.S.T.

www.matcoop.org

This was the third and final year of DD Council funding for this project, but permanent systems change was achieved throughout the state. Benefits of the assistive technology co-op were expanded to include families. AT: L.A.S.T. is a co-op of nonpublic schools, home school groups, local schools, and families buying their own assistive technology at reduced rates. The project delivered workshops about proper assistive technology selection and use for approximately 75 people. This year \$8,949 was saved on assistive technology through co-op purchases.

Coalition for Inclusive Educational Opportunities

Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education

www.mcie.org

The purpose of this project is to increase the number of students with disabilities in Maryland who are placed in general education classes in their neighborhood schools, and to promote systemic change through advocacy and capacity-building. Through Council funding, the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE) provided consultation to 155 families and represented another 151 families at IEP meetings, mediation, and judicial proceedings. MCIE had a 99% success rate in representing families. In the area of administrative advocacy, MCIE staff worked closely with Montgomery County Public Schools during development of its strategic plan on issues of least restrictive environment. Annually, a statewide conference is held for parents and professionals. This year's conference was attended by nearly 500 participants.

High School Assessments and Diploma Options for Students with Disabilities

In 2004, the Council worked closely with MSDE, other key stakeholders, and students and families to ensure the best available options for students with disabilities and whether or not a student would receive a high school diploma or a certificate of completion (beginning with the graduating class of 2009). As a result, the Council testified before the State Board of Education on several occasions and was included on the statewide Task Force on Comparable Testing Methods for Maryland High School Assessments. The Task Force is charged with reviewing local and national data and developing recommendations that will be delivered to the State Board of Education on whether and how to develop a comparable high school assessment that will benefit all children, including those receiving special education services.

More than 15 Special Education Citizens Advisory Committees now have meaningful parental input.

National Inclusive Schools Week

For the second year in a row, the Council supported The Arc of Maryland and the Maryland State Department of Education on a statewide essay and poster contest for National Inclusive Schools Week. In September, students

from across the state were invited to develop an essay or poster writing about and/or depicting the benefits of an inclusive education. This annual event saw approximately 80 essays submitted in 2004.

Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities

As a member of the Education Advocacy Coalition (EAC), the Council was instrumental in advocating for statewide improvements in the delivery of special education services. The EAC is a group of twenty-three organizations and individuals who advocate for systemic change and improvements in the area of public special education. In 2004, the Coalition focused not only on state issues, but matters related to the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Health

INITIATIVES AND OUTCOMES:

Maryland Medicaid's Special Needs Children Advisory Council

A Council representative serves on the Advisory Council and chairs the Communications Subcommittee of this Medicaid Committee. The Subcommittee developed family-friendly information on Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment as pertaining to children with disabilities and special health care needs. A brochure describing available services for children with disabilities and special health care needs under Medicaid was completed and distributed through all new enrollee packages approximating 200,000 per year. The Subcommittee also developed a series of information brochures on services through Maryland Children's Health Program, Medicaid Fee-for-Service, Maryland Health Partners (mental health services), waiver programs, and Rare and Expensive Case Management (REM).

Taking Charge - Health Care Decision Making

Resource Connections of Prince George's County, Inc.

www.rcpgc.org

This collaborative effort of seven agencies serving individuals in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties developed a curriculum used to teach individuals with disabilities to be co-facilitators in pilot training sessions. Often, medical professionals have an incorrect concept of when a guardian's signature is needed for testing or treatment and people with developmental disabilities may not be given the necessary information and assistance to make informed medical choices or participate in their health care decisions to the maximum extent. These trainings help individuals with developmental disabilities make choices about their own health care, including evaluating health care options themselves, and considering the use of advance directives. Participants also receive assistance in general decision making, understanding that they have power and responsibility over their health decisions, and identifying whom they trust and would like to help them make more complicated decisions about health care.

Building Healthy Futures

The MD DD Council provided funding to the Coalition for Inclusive Child Care and the Child Care Administration to support the "Children and Caregivers: Building Healthy Futures" conference. The Council also supported the Healthy Futures Child Care Conference, hosted by Healthy Child Care Maryland, which trained approximately 300 child care providers about including and caring for children with disabilities and special healthcare needs in child care settings.

Community Supports

INITIATIVES AND OUTCOMES:

Family NET Works

Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council www.family-networks.org

The Council's Family NETWorks website reached an all time high of 98,700 hits in one month. The site provides current information and events, connects users to resources on a wide range of topics, and networks parents. A new "Spotlight" section highlights inclusion stories and other important topics. The Council awarded a new round of Family NETWorks support grants totaling \$6,400 to parent groups; generally \$500-1,000 each. This year the Council: 1) supported parent groups focused on Down syndrome, spina bifida, and autism and a support group for Orthodox Jewish families and 2) funded training focused on topics such as education rights, transitioning, and supporting friendship building among children in inclusive settings.

Transportation for People with Disabilities

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council continues to examine transportation issues that impact people with disabilities throughout the state. This year our efforts have focused on the coordination of services to provide quality transportation and the provision of services that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure that all transportation is accessible to those who wish to use it. Travel guides and other forms of transportation information are available throughout the state. The Council has worked with others to investigate the possibility of using technology to provide real-time information, such as route changes and arrival times, for transit users.

Youth with Developmental Disabilities and the Juvenile Justice System

Because of extensive problems at Maryland's juvenile justice institutions and detention centers, the need for juvenile justice reforms has received considerable attention by the Governor, Legislature, media, families and advocates. And because many youth involved in the juvenile justice system have a disability, there has been heightened awareness of the issue in the disability community. The National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice, The Arc of Maryland, and the Council collaborated to conduct a one day conference entitled "Achieving Positive Outcomes for Court-Involved Youth with Developmental Disabilities." The purpose of the conference was to identify issues, promote awareness, and improve service delivery. Over 80 people from MSDE, Department of Juvenile Services, local Youth Services, and advocacy organizations attended the conference.

Taskforce on Inclusive Child and After School Care

The Council assisted Partners in Policymaking graduates to draft legislation to develop a state Task Force on Inclusive Child and After School Care and testified in support of the legislation. The Department of Disabilities and Child Care Administration agreed to form the Task Force in partnership, negating the need for the legislation. The Task Force is co-chaired by the Department of Disabilities and the Child Care Administration and Council staff have an active role in guiding its work. The Task Force made its first series of recommendations in 2004 and will continue to work on regulatory changes, training, and after-school care issues. A final report will be submitted to the Governor and General Assembly in July 2005.

Avoiding and Ending Institutionalization

The Council continued its work with its partners in the Developmental Disabilities Coalition in advocating for an end to institutionalization. Highlights included hosting Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature with more than 300 people in attendance, sponsoring national experts to visit Maryland to educate policymakers, researching community capacity issues, and advocating for the implementation of "community for all" policies.

Housing

INITIATIVES AND OUTCOMES:

Governor's Commission on Housing Policy

www.dhcd.state.md.us

The Council served on the Governor's Housing Policy Commission to advocate the interests of individuals with disabilities. The Commission was charged with developing recommendations to ensure an ample supply of workforce housing and to address the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities. The Commission submitted a report, including eight priority recommendations, to the Governor and General Assembly. Five of the recommendations are either specifically focused on disability or include disability concerns. Most notable are: 1) establishment of the "Maryland Housing and Community Revitalization Trust" to fund affordable housing development, a portion of which would be directed to people with disabilities at SSI-level income, and 2) establishment of a Bridge Subsidy Program to provide temporary rental assistance to people with disabilities while they wait for permanent housing assistance. This could assist people to leave nursing facilities, group living settings, and other restrictive settings. This will be a three-year pilot funded at approximately \$2.1 M. The Governor has accepted the recommendations and planning has begun.

A rental assistance pilot project will be developed for individuals with disabilities and funded at \$2.1 Million.

Home-Access Project

National Cooperative Bank Development Corporation

www.home-access.org

The Home-Access project conducted a Leadership Academy for 19 new housing advocates and provided ongoing technical assistance and support to 20 individuals trained last year to impact local and state housing issues. Local action plans were developed. Home-Access worked with developers to identify ways to include housing for people with disabilities at SSI-level income in their projects. The project also facilitated linkages between developers and local services providers to assist people with disabilities in finding affordable and accessible housing and began holding regional forums that trained and networked the housing and disability communities. Through a variety of activities, 175 people were trained.

More Doors to Open

The Arc of Anne Arundel County

www.arcofannearundel.org/programs.htm

More Doors to Open researched the feasibility and impact of numerous strategies that would allow service providers to divest themselves of the housing they own in order to separate housing from services. The intent is to increase the choice and control individuals with disabilities have over their housing and services. The project will be developing a report of its findings. More Doors also researched the feasibility and affordability of transferring property ownership from provider organizations to individuals served, but found more barriers than opportunities. The project informed and trained 92 people about housing choices aimed at increasing self-determination.

- 19 new housing advocates trained
- 20 additional advocates provided support & technical assistance
- 175 people trained in a variety of forums
- Regional forums begun to network housing & disability professionals

Other Highlights from the MD DD Council in 2004

- Supported the inclusion of children with disabilities in the after-school program at the YMCA of Talbot County.
- Co-sponsored the annual Respite Awareness Day Conference hosted by the Maryland Respite Care Coalition.
- Supported active participation of people with disabilities in the Medicaid Matters! Maryland coalition through funding to the Public Justice Center.

- Partnered with Kennedy Krieger Institute to provide two one-day workshops on cultural competence - working with individuals and families with varied backgrounds, language, and values. The workshop, developed by family members from real-life experiences, offered an opportunity to develop sensitivity to cultural issues.
- Supported individuals with developmental disabilities and parents to attend and participate in conferences through the Council's small grant program
- Supported individuals with developmental disabilities to participate in the legislative process through the Council's Legislative Advocacy Support Fund.

Watch For These Exciting New Projects in 2005:

Youth Empowerment Alliance

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

Funded by the federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD), with an additional \$40,000 from the DD Council and \$10,000 from the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). This new three-year project addresses youth advocacy, empowerment, training and information dissemination.

Immigrant to Professional: New Approach

Office of Adult Education Office, Frederick County Public Schools

Multi-lingual information will be developed and foreign-born learners will be recruited for instruction offered at the Career and Technology Center training participants to be Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) and preparing them to work successfully with people with developmental disabilities.

Leaders in Disability Policy

The Coordinating Center, Abilities Network, Maryland Association of Non Profit Organizations, and Leadership Anne Arundel

Activities of this new project will maximize the impact of people with developmental disabilities and their families by tapping into the expertise of organizations that have demonstrated success in developing advocacy and leadership skills in people who use those skills to influence policy. A leadership development curriculum and learning process will be developed with attention to different learning styles and technology.

Inclusive After-School Care for Middle School-Aged Children with Developmental Disabilities

East Baltimore Mental Health Partnership (EBMHP)

Lombard Middle School in Baltimore City will serve as host to an inclusive after-school program developed by EBMHP in conjunction with their new status as a Supplemental Educational Services provider.

Transportation Training for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and Transit Providers

A new project will be selected to develop transportation curriculums that will provide people with developmental disabilities the skills needed to use the transit system and provide public transit providers the skills to effectively serve people with disabilities. The project will lead to long term change and facilitate coordination of services to provide consistent, regular training for individuals with developmental disabilities and transit providers.

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

Council Members

Jeff Rives, *Chairperson*

Howard County

Elizabeth Obermayer, *Vice Chairperson*
Montgomery County

Naznin Adams
Prince George's County

Michael Aronin
Anne Arundel County

Carol Ann Baglin
Division of Special Education, MSDE

Diane Coughlin
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Working for communities that include and support everyone

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WWW.MD-COUNCIL.ORG

The Council advocates for public policy and supportive practices and opportunities that promote the full inclusion of all people with developmental disabilities in community life.