

Summer
2010
Newsletter



Hundreds March to Capitol in Honor of ADA Anniversary

The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law 20 years ago.

Individuals with Developmental Disabilities Have New Options for Dental Care

Learn about what Florida is doing.

Executive Director's Message

The 2010 NACDD National Conference is coming to Florida.

Working Toward Success

Do you need help planning a career?

Idelio Valdes Was a Leader and Self-Advocate

The Council honors an outstanding advocate.

Hurricane Season is Here – Are You Prepared?

Start planning now in case a disaster strikes Florida.

News and Notes

Updates on recent and upcoming events.



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ADA March

On Monday, July 26, over 300 people joined in a "March for Opportunity" in Tallahassee to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law on July 26, 1990. Marchers listened to speakers, enjoyed the music of a rock band from Pyramid Studios in Tallahassee, and feasted on lunch from Outback Steak House.

The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in the application and hiring process, requires workplace accommodations for people with disabilities by private employers and state and local governments, and provides access to public places and accommodations.



APD Director Reports on Dental Care for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

In a recent article in the Agency for Persons Disabilities (APD) monthly newsletter, "The Champion", Director Jim DeBeaugrine reported the agency is working on several projects to provide access to quality dental care for individuals with developmental disabilities. Below are highlights from that article.

As we all know, many of the individuals we serve have difficulty finding a dentist to serve them. Often it is due to a lack of willing professionals, even for those who can pay. Some dentists do not feel comfortable serving individuals with developmental disabilities or do not have the capability to accommodate sedation or other special requirements they have. Other individuals simply cannot afford to pay, including those on the waiting list and several thousand waiver recipients who were moved to Tier 4 where adult dental is not available.

In Northwest Florida, APD has developed partnerships for dental services for people with disabilities at little or no cost to them. A dental clinic operated by the Escambia County Health Department in Pensacola will do exams, cleanings, and extractions for APD customers at little or no cost. Pensacola State College (formerly Pensacola Junior College) Dental School will provide exams and cleanings at no charge to customers. They will also assist with referrals should there be an urgent need for further services. In Northwest Florida, there are several dentists that are experienced with clients with developmental disabilities and work very closely with APD to ensure that those with critical needs are given the services they need. The agency is in the process of getting an oral surgeon certified to accept Medicaid patients in this area of the state.

With the recent closure of the Gulf Coast Center, the dental equipment from the center was donated to a Federally Qualified Health Clinic that operates a number of facilities throughout the Tampa Bay area. They have agreed, in turn, to offer outreach and access to the individuals we serve. We are in the process of finalizing a memorandum of understanding with this group that will offer access to individuals on the waiting list and others who would have difficulty making full payment.

The agency also has entered into a partnership with a dentist in South Florida who will serve people on the waiver and on our waiting list at a 70-percent discount from usual and customary fees. Since there are individuals who will be unable to pay even the discounted fee, the clinic is developing a sliding-scale fee structure. I hope to be in South Florida for the grand opening within the next few months.

Last year in Gainesville, APD opened a dental clinic for people with developmental disabilities to receive regular dental care on a fee-for-service basis. The families are very happy to find a dentist that knows how to help their loved ones. The dental clinic on the Tacachale campus served about 600 people from the community last year. This coming year, the dentists are hoping to help about 900 individuals find relief from dental

pain and prevent future oral health problems with preventative care. This project is the result of a partnership between the University of Florida and APD.

All of these efforts have two goals in mind. First, is short term: offer services to people who otherwise would go without. Second, is to increase the number of dentists willing to accept individuals with developmental disabilities as patients. We can do this by working with our schools and professional associations to provide opportunities for dental professionals to become more informed and to experience firsthand the rewards of working with the individuals we serve.

The agency has been working hard to develop community options for dental care for Floridians with disabilities. We look forward to more exciting announcements in the near future as we expand opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to receive quality dental care.

Please visit our Web site at <http://apdcares.org/dental-care> to register your thoughts or suggestions or to volunteer. You can also call us at **1-866-APD CARES (1-866-273-2273)** and ask for Lori Kohler.

Director's Message



We're sweltering in Florida now, but things will have cooled down by the time the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities' 2010 National Conference kicks off in September.

That's right, the conference will be held in Florida this year at the Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld, on September 27-28, and we are really excited!

The national conference is an opportunity to share resources and ideas for developing and sustaining inclusive communities and self-directed services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

This will also be a celebration of the historic 40th anniversary of the creation of the Councils on Developmental Disabilities, which is reflected in the theme of the conference – "Honoring Our Past – Shaping Our Future".

Since last fall, we have been working with the Councils in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina, North Carolina, Mississippi and Tennessee, and of course staff from the national office, to plan this momentous event. You will get all kinds of good information during the two-day event, both from the keynote speakers and during the breakout sessions.

The breakout sessions will include such timely topics as making college an option for persons with developmental disabilities, creative approaches to ending the waiting lists that plague so many of our states, preparing young adults with developmental disabilities to become leaders by building grassroots self-advocacy movements, supporting healthy lifestyles through education and activity, and alternatives to guardianship that will allow for more independence for your family members who have developmental disabilities.

For more information and to register for the conference, go to www.nacdd.org.

Debra Dowds
Executive Director

Moving Toward Success

The Council's Employment Task Force continues to manage some very exciting, innovative and effective projects.

The Project SEARCH High School Transition Program is a one-year educational program for students with disabilities in their last year of high school. It is targeted for students whose main goal is competitive employment.



Robert enjoys filing in the Human Resources Department of the University of Florida/Jacksonville Health Care Inc.

The program takes place in a healthcare or business setting where total immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process through continuous feedback and application of new skills.

Over the past 2+ years Project SEARCH sites have been developed across the state, including Pensacola, Jacksonville, Brevard County, Palm Beach County and other locations.

Even with downturn economy the sites are showing a 54% placement rate. Based on the success of the High School transition program and requests from some of the providers, we are starting an Adult SEARCH project program. The Council will be seeking three (3) to six (6) local collaboratives to participate in a statewide pilot of the Project SEARCH Adult Employment Program. Anyone can apply to develop an Adult SEARCH program through the Council's RFP process.

The FYI Transition web site (www.fyitransition.org) continues to provide a wide variety of information for students, families, educators and other interested parties on school transition. Significant information is available on life after school including employment, living and other post graduation opportunities. The information is presented in a manner that is both interesting and useful. New and updated content is consistently being added. This project is in its fourth year of DD Council funding.

The Supported, Competitive, Integrated Employment Team Training (SCIETT) continues to build and enhance a training and technical assistance system in supported employment/customized employment options. Teams in Pensacola, Panama City, Osceola County, St. Augustine, Daytona Beach, Brevard County, Palm Beach County and Broward County provide training for rehabilitation providers, individuals with disabilities and others in their area.

The One Stop Center Initiative, a new project , will develop strategies that will enhance the utilization of the One Stop System by individuals with disabilities and improve the outcomes of the One Stops by increasing the utilization by this target group. The primary outcome for this initiative is to define issues and develop solutions to these issues.

The Benefits Training & Asset Development project will develop materials, training, sustainability and technical assistance to advance knowledge, understanding, and advocacy strategies for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families while promoting employment and financial opportunities that are available to other Floridians.

A True Leader



*Idelio Valdes
September 15, 1965 - November 24, 2009*

Last November, Idelio Valdes, a Council member and strong self-advocate, passed away. Idelio Valdes was a self-advocate who had a tremendous impact on the people around him and the community in which he lived and worked. His life's journey included many ups and downs but he always stayed the course to self-realization, commitment to service and dedication to the things that were of most value to him. His demonstrated advocacy activities, his belief in building partnerships, his initiative in challenging the status quo and his enthusiasm for life and its possibilities endeared him to all who were fortunate enough to know him.

To honor his memory and his work, the Council created the Idelio Valdes Leadership and Self-Advocacy Award. The first recipient of that award, Frank Shalett, a self-advocate from South Florida, was honored during the Council's 2010 Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day.

Frank Shalett, (at right) the first winner of the Idelio Valdes Leadership and Advocacy Award, spoke about what it meant to win the award:

"I'm so proud to be the first winner of the Idelio Valdes leadership and advocacy award. I'm proud because it's named for one of the best advocates for people with disabilities. It's named for a man who worked hard to help all people with disabilities. It's named for a self-advocate who put others ahead of himself. And most of all, it's named for my friend. I've known Idelio for a long time. He was inspiring. He accomplished so much – and there was so much more he wanted to do. I wish I could do the things he did. I hope I will. And I hope others will be inspired by his memory like I am. I will miss him."



Get Ready

Learn more about disaster preparedness and how to create your own disaster plan by reading, "***Disaster Ready***" - ***An Emergency Preparedness Guide for Floridians with Disabilities***. This publication can help anyone prepare for a disaster, but includes specific information that is important for individuals with disabilities. The "Disaster Ready" guide can be sent to you at no charge. To order copies of the guide go online to <http://www.fddc.org/publications> , email the Council at fddc@fddc.org or call the Council office at 1-800-580-7801. You can also download a PDF version from the Council website.

The FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination has a website, <http://www.fema.gov/about/odic/>, where you can find information on integrating and coordinating emergency preparedness, response and recovery for children and adults with disabilities and others with access and functional needs before, during and after a disaster.

Don't wait – create your disaster response plan today.

News and Notes



*Sarah Romine (above) talks about her experiences as a self-advocate during a Guardianship Workshop in Fort Walton Beach. There were four workshops held statewide, which helped individuals with disabilities and their families learn about options for providing decision-making assistance other than guardian advocacy and guardianship. Workshops also included information on Special Needs Trusts, accessing low-cost legal services and other legal resources, as well as federal and state laws that protect the civil rights of persons with disabilities. Everyone attending the workshops received a copy of **"Lighting the Way to Guardianship and Other Decision-Making Alternatives"**, a document that provides accurate and timely information regarding guardianship and alternatives to guardianship for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. To download a copy of this curriculum guide, go to www.fddc.org/publications. You can also call the Council at 1-800-580-7801 and request a copy.*

You can request a copy of the FDDC 2009 Annual Report, which is also a calendar through April, 2011, by going to <http://www.fddc.org/about/2009-annual-report> or calling 1-800-580-7801.

The Council will sponsor a "Florida Fights FASD" Summit on October 21, 2010, in Tallahassee. The Summit will engage and educate Floridians about the dangers of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) describes the range of effects that can be caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy. The effects include physical, mental, behavioral and learning disabilities. FASD affects one in every 750 infants born in the U.S.

The Council is working on developing its five-year state plan for 2011-2016. We have been compiling information from on-line surveys, interviews and focus groups to aid us in developing the plan. The Council will meet at the end of October to finalize the plan. A draft will be released in the Spring of 2011 for public review and feedback.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities is now on Twitter. News, information, and special features about the agency can be sent out faster than ever. To receive Tweets from APD, to become a follower, or to create a free account, go to <http://twitter.com> and click "Sign Up." After you enter your name, e-mail address, and choose a username and password, your account will be all set. From there, type "Florida APD" in the search box. When the APD profile

comes up, simply click the "Follow" button on the side of the profile screen. That's all there is to it! You are now following APD and receiving the latest, up-to-the-minute information that is available. For general information or questions about Twitter, please visit <http://twitter.com/about>.
