The mission of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. is to advocate and promote meaningful participation in all aspects of life for Floridians with developmental disabilities.
From The Executive Director

Debra Dowds

As I reflect back on this past year, I have found the theme of our 2014 Developmental Disabilities Day at the Capitol—"Investing In Florida’s Communities"—also conveys the work of the Council. We are investing in new models of services, new thinking of systems, and new opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. What we really are investing in, however, are our Florida communities. We are helping them establish the services, systems and resources to support individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination, be more independent, be more productive and be included in all facets of life. We invest because we truly believe in the future of individuals with developmental disabilities in this state. We are very proud of the work conducted this past year, as well as the enthusiasm of the Council members and staff. We also thank the resource members, contractors and many other stakeholders that made this a reality. To view the year end Program Performance Report in its entirety or to learn more about the many resources we have available and the current work of the Council, please visit our website at: www.fddc.org.

The Council Staff, 2014

*Front Row (left to right):* Margaret Hooper, Deena Miller, Richard Bivins, Safee Broxton, Cindy Tan, Joyce Lubbers, Donna Phillips, Beth Romans-Corsi, Vanda Bowman.

*Back Row (left to right):* Cydeon Trueblood, Holly Hohmeister, Jarl Jackson, Misty Grimm, Carolyn Williams, Debra Dowds, Lisa Taylor, Deborah Lloyd.

(Not Pictured: Sheila Gritz-Swift, Katherine Suarez Espinosa, Patricia Romig and Jennifer Safstrom)
2014 Council Members

Kathy McAllister: Council Chair & Self Advocate, Sarasota, FL
Sylvia James-Miller: Council Vice-Chair & Parent Advocate, Ocala, FL
Shirley Kervin: Council Treasurer, Dept. of Elder Affairs, Community & Support Services, Tallahassee, FL
Rixys Alfonso: Parent Advocate, Pembroke Pines, FL
Pat Archer: Self Advocate, Boca Raton, FL
Ronni Bianco: Parent Advocate, Aventura, FL
Richard Bradley: Non-Profit Member, Gainesville, FL
Conney Dahn: Parent-Advocate, Stuart, FL
Lise Fox, Ph.D: Florida Center for Inclusive Communities, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL
Laurie J. Harlow: Parent Advocate, Tampa, FL
Shevaun Harris: Agency for Health Care Administration, Tallahassee, FL
Cynthia “Marcy” Jackson: Parent Advocate, Tallahassee, FL
Jack Kosik: Parent Advocate, Lakeland, FL
Kathy Leigh: Self Advocate, Starke, FL

Mary Ellen McDonald: Disability Rights Florida, Tallahassee, FL
Aleisa McKinlay: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DOE), Tallahassee, FL
Thomas (TJ) Moon: Self Advocate, Ocala, FL
Bernadette Moran: Parent Advocate, Jacksonville, FL
Barbara Palmer: Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Tallahassee, FL
Margaret Reilly: All Children's Hospital, Bradenton, FL
Tricia Riccardi: Self Advocate, Kissimmee, FL
Sara Robinson: Self Advocate, Lakeland, FL
Jean Sherman, Ed.D., R.N.: Mailman Center UCEDD University of Miami, Pembroke Pines, FL
Casey Stewart: Self Advocate, Pembroke Pines, FL
Louis Towson: Self Advocate, Marianna, FL
Monica Verra-Tirado, Ed.D: Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (DOE), Tallahassee, FL
Victoria Vangalis Zepp, Parent Advocate, Tampa, FL

The Council is composed of 30 members appointed by the Governor. Members represent individuals with developmental disabilities, their family members, agency staff and interested individuals. To learn more about the current Council members go to:

http://www.fddc.org/about/council_members
Council Initiatives

**Child Development/Education**
- Inclusion in Career and Technical Programs-Webinar Development
- Universal Design for Learning Through Technology
- Project Achieve/VERTICAL Training Program
- Postsecondary Replication Manual
- Early Steps Evaluator Credential
- Disability Awareness Through English and Language Arts

**Health Care & Prevention**
- Easing Your Stress: Information for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities
- Oral Healthcare Training for Caregivers
- My Health Care
- Physician Education in Developmental Disabilities
- Nurse Practitioner Training Program
- Help Me Grow Florida

**Community Living**
- Developmental Disabilities Wait List Strategic Plan
- Developing Community Coalitions
- Florida Inclusive Housing Corporation
- Guardianship Alternatives:
  - Training for Individuals and Families
  - Restoration of Capacity
- Abuse and Neglect Stakeholders Work Group

**Public Policy**
- Developmental Disabilities Day At The Capitol
- Legislative Consortium

**Employment & Transportation**
- Project SEARCH
- FYI Transition
- Benefits Planning and Asset Development
- Employ Me 1st
- Rural Routes to Employment
- Employment First Collaborative training
- Employment First Marketing Video

**Self Advocacy Leadership**
- Youth Leadership Forum
- Florida Self-Advocates Network’D (Florida SAND)
- Project SALT—Self-Advocate Trainers on Leadership Skills
- The Route to Self Determination
- Partners in Policymaking

Please visit the FDDC Website at www.fddc.org and follow us on Facebook
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Public Policy</td>
<td>137,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Communications</td>
<td>125,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Self-Advocacy</td>
<td>740,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Health Care</td>
<td>182,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Health Care/Education</td>
<td>211,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Formal &amp; Informal Supports</td>
<td>242,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Housing</td>
<td>123,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Transportation</td>
<td>76,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Quality Assurance</td>
<td>405,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Education</td>
<td>250,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Education/Employment</td>
<td>256,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Employment</td>
<td>339,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Management</strong></td>
<td><strong>413,199</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,506,220</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting Education for Florida’s Students

The Council supports educational initiatives that help children of all ages. Some areas of focus include the following: strengthening early intervention services for young children; promoting inclusive classroom practices for students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade; and expanding postsecondary education opportunities for transition-aged students. The Council’s goal is to assist individuals with developmental disabilities to maximize their educational potential and to be integrated into all facets of student life.


The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) through Technology initiative focuses on the use of UDL principles to facilitate inclusion. Schools in the Indian River School District and Collier County Public Schools have included students with significant disabilities in general education classes. The school districts in Gilchrist and Nassau counties have also launched UDL initiatives in their system. These schools are using electronic microscopes, iPads, smart boards, Apple TVs and a wide variety of software apps to engage and support students with disabilities. UDL uses multiple ways for students to take in information and demonstrate understanding.

A teacher involved in the UDL initiative shared the following, “The biggest difference I have seen in my class since using the UDL materials and knowledge from UDL trainings is the increase in student confidence; they walk taller, smile more, and are building stronger relationships with students from their Buddy Classes. What a wonderful gift to be able to give my students.”

. . . Project Achieve/VERTICAL Training . . .

The Council supports Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) to provide inclusive Career and Technical Education programs for students with developmental disabilities. Students take classes alongside their peers without disabilities in programs such as welding, carpentry, childcare, cosmetology, automobile collision repair, and distribution and logistics (warehouse management). The school districts of Duval and Nassau counties are essential partners in these programs. The project is now in its fourth year and strives to find new and better ways to assist postsecondary students with disabilities to identify their career interests, earn certificates, and prepare for fulfilling careers.

Joshua Duncan, a student enrolled in the Automotive Collision Repair program at FSCJ, recently began working at Jiffy Lube as a lube technician.

For more information on Council Education Initiatives, contact Donna Phillips at: donnap@fddc.org
Supporting Healthier Living

The Council supports healthier living for individuals with developmental disabilities and increased access to a more coordinated health care system. This is achieved by supporting initiatives that promote oral hygiene, child developmental screening as well as webinars and publications that encourage a healthier lifestyle. Additionally, the Council’s projects resulted in the creation of what has become a very resourceful new publication entitled “Stress and What You Can Do About It,” a full color book that takes individuals with developmental disabilities through a graphically attractive and easy-to-read lesson in the basics of stress and stress management.

Out of all the Council’s accomplishments, the Help Me Grow Program moved from a vision to a reality in 2014 and is quickly moving towards statewide expansion. The program is a system that links families with local resources to address parents’ concerns about health, development, behavior and learning of their young children. HMG is a system that builds collaboration across sectors, including early care and education, health care and family support. On a statewide level, what originally started as the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Child Development Screening initiative, has since adopted the broader mission of the Help Me Grow initiative and is working toward expansion throughout Florida. The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council serves as the fiscal agent for this statewide initiative.

“Stress and What You Can Do About It” includes visual supports to help demonstrate stress reduction techniques. This publication is located on our website in both English and Spanish.

Help Me Grow Florida welcomed 2-1-1 representatives and community partners from all across the state to further the work of the HMG system on behalf of all children and families in Florida.

For more information on Council Health Care and Prevention Initiatives, contact Holly Hohmeister at: hollyh@fddc.org
Supporting Community Living Initiatives

The Council has undertaken initiatives for building capacity in the general community to offer more resources and supports for Floridians and families of persons with developmental disabilities. To effectively support individuals living in the community of their choosing, there must be available and accessible supports and services through formal or informal ways. By knowing the current resources available and finding creative methods to developing new resources, the Council hopes to assist individuals to live, learn, work and enjoy life while assuring that their decisions are honored and supported.

...Florida Inclusive Housing Corporation...

The FDDC helped to create a non-profit housing organization that will provide housing information, referral services, and advocacy to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The newly formed Residential Options of Florida (The ROOF) organization was developed with a mission of empowering individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to successfully obtain and maintain affordable and inclusionary housing of their choice. Year Two of the project has focused on incorporation and strategic planning for the new organization. The ROOF has a governing board, Advisory Council and standing committees, with a general goal to provide housing information, referral services, and advocacy for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families on housing related issues.

...Developing Community Coalitions...

The Council developed a partnership with the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to develop sustainable coalitions in Florida that will eventually support the development of informal and volunteer services available in their area. During the first year of this project, four coalitions were formed: Project Empower (serving Escambia, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa Counties); Project CARES (serving Madison, Jefferson and Taylor Counties); Project Enable (serving Alachua, Bradford and Levy Counties); and, The Pasco Coalition for Developmental Disabilities (serving Pasco County). Over the past two years, the coalitions have developed their membership, established the mission for each group, and identified community projects or organizations to support.

For more information on Council Community Living Initiatives, contact Cydeon Trueblood at: cydeont@fddc.org
The Council undertakes a comprehensive set of activities that effectively educate and advocate for issues that impact individuals with developmental disabilities. Council staff and members educate lawmakers on the Council’s legislative priorities and encourage them to support the Council’s issues.

For 2014, the Council identified seven Legislative Priorities to focus its legislative education and advocacy: Protecting the Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Based Services (DD/HCBS) Waiver (Reducing the DD/HCBS Waiver Waitlist and keeping the iBudget), Transportation, Employment First, Guidelines for Restraint and Seclusion in the School System, Supporting Florida’s Part C/Early Intervention Program, Medicaid Expansion, and Children with Disabilities Who Have Medically Complex Conditions.

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day 2014 brought over 350 individuals to the Capitol to advocate for issues important to those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. FDDC along with the Arc of Florida, sponsored the all-day event that highlighted advocacy efforts around the following four point plan:

- **Medicaid Waiver Waitlist Funding**—Florida must invest in Medicaid Waiver Waitlist Funding by supporting Governor Scott’s and lawmakers’ recommendation for 20 million dollars in funding for the 2014–2015 fiscal year.

- **Increased Rates for Services**—Florida must increase provider rates by five percent for the 2014–2015 fiscal year.

- **Community-Based Services**—Florida must support the request to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to create and implement a comprehensive five-year plan to reduce the number of people with I/DD living in institutions.

- **Alternative Family Homes**—Florida must invest in alternative family homes for medically fragile children so they do not have to live in nursing homes.

The Council’s legislative agenda is developed with input of advocates and stakeholders at the Council sponsored Consortium 2014 for advocates with developmental disabilities. Advocates shared their organizations legislative priorities and attendees looked to see how they could work together.

For more information on Council Public Policy and Advocacy Activities, contact Margaret Hooper at: MargaretD@fddc.org
Supporting Employment

The Council has made significant progress toward its goal of providing competitive, integrated employment opportunities and developing a range of customized employment services for individuals with disabilities.

In 2014, Florida’s Employment First Interagency Cooperative Agreement went into effect representing a cross-agency commitment to improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Through Florida’s collaborative efforts, three associated workgroups were formalized, including the Employment Partnership Coalition, the Employment First Collaborative Team, and the Employment First Florida Grassroots Group. The state’s Employment First Collaborative Team, developed a collaborative interagency agreement and strategic action implementation plan to support provision of quality employment services that promote integrated competitive employment outcomes for the persons whom they serve. The Partners identified the following three areas as top collaborative priorities for 2014:

1) ensuring that Florida has a comprehensive training program that fosters quality integrated competitive employment for all individuals with disabilities
2) ensuring that state level policies and procedures support employment as the first option available for people with disabilities
3) ensuring that Florida has a strong network of partners that work collaboratively to promote employment as the first option for individuals with disabilities.

The intent of Employment First is to raise expectations that employment should be prioritized for all individuals with disabilities.

David Darm, Executive Director of The Governor’s Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities, spoke to the Cabinet on Florida’s Employment First efforts.

For more information on Council Employment & Transportation Initiatives, contact Beth Romans-Corsi at: bethrc@fddc.org
Supporting Florida’s Self-Advocacy

In partnership with individuals with developmental disabilities, families and other community partners, the Council provides training, technical assistance and support to build capacity of individuals with developmental disabilities for self-determination, independence and meaningful participation within their Florida communities.

... Grassroots Self Advocacy ...  
The Florida Self-Advocates Network’D (Florida SAND) is comprised of thirteen local grassroots self-advocacy groups throughout Florida that have come together to form a statewide network. Florida SAND is governed by a Board consisting of one representative from each local group. The purpose of the Board is to support local grassroots development, expand the Florida self-advocacy movement, provide a united voice for statewide issues and topics that are important to Florida’s self-advocates, create community awareness and promote inclusion for all.

Grassroots groups advocated for change in their communities throughout 2014 and expanded their message of full inclusion nationally through a partnership with Self-Advocates Becoming United (SABE). Florida SAND members published blogs on children with medically complex needs in nursing homes, presented a webinar on grant-writing and conducted a survey of self-advocates’ 2014 election day experiences for SABE’s Project Vote campaign.

... Partners In Policymaking ...  
Partners in Policymaking, a leadership and advocacy training program, teaches self-advocates and their family members to be community leaders. The goal is to develop productive relationships between people who need and use services, with those in a position to make policy and law. One Florida Partners in Policymaking graduate became active in the autism community. She has helped to create inclusive, sensory-friendly movies, surf clinics, library programs and more. She is also the Vice Chair for the Autism Committee for Exceptional Student Education Advisory Council of Broward County (ACE).

Another PIP Graduate, a Parent Coordinator and Educational Advocate, works with parents and reaches out to public and private schools in her county to set up Parent Engagement Workshops. The workshops serve as a facilitator to schools helping parents. She credits Partners in Policymaking for enhancing her advocacy skills. She is also an active member of Coalition of Parents Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA), serves on the executive board of the Florida Chapter Learning Disabilities Association (LDA), and is active in the Broward County Public School’s Advisory and Parent committees.

In 2014, another PIP graduate advanced her major advocacy goal of creating resources for parents of children who are hard of hearing by joining Bay Area Early Steps as a Family Resource Specialist. In this role, she spearheaded the creation of the Family Advisory Council for Bay Area Early Steps (FAC-ESP).

For more information on Council Self-Advocacy Initiatives, contact Safee Broxton at: Safeeb@fddc.org
Congratulations Partners in Policymaking, Class of 2014