



District of Columbia
Developmental Disabilities Council

Herald

Self Determination "Nothing About Us – Without Us"

LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

My Fellow Community Members, Friends, and Colleagues:

As the Executive Director of the DC Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), I am proud to say that the Council had an extremely productive year in 2012. Fifteen advocates, parents, and family members participated in a nine-month leadership development program and became the first group of Partners in Policymaking graduates in the District. Get Involved DC! offered accessible and integrated community service and recreational opportunities to many advocates and their family members. Young adults and high school students with disabilities learned the importance of utilizing their voices to present their own needs and desires while becoming young advocate leaders through the Self Determination and Advocacy Program. Through these three DDC-funded programs, District residents with developmental disabilities and their families strengthened the common belief that we can all be viable, contributing leaders and productive members of society if we are given the proper supports to succeed.

Yet, we did not stop there. Our community partners and the DDC met with several DC Councilmembers and other government agencies throughout the year in support of more integrated services within the community, affordable and accessible housing, and supportive employment opportunities. In partnership with the University Legal Services and the Georgetown University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (our esteemed TRIAD partners), we hosted the Contemporary Practices in Early Childhood Intervention Conference. In a truly collaborative effort, SchoolTalk, the DDC, and several other community and government organizations recently hosted the 4th Annual Moving Forward Together Secondary Transition Community Fair and Forum and nearly 300 students, teachers, and community members benefited from the event. Most importantly, the DDC continued to support the professional and leadership development of several advocates and their families by sponsoring their attendance and participation at national conferences, including SABE, APSE, TASH, and the National Conference on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Against People with Disabilities. The DDC will be funding at least two new programs involving employment and financial literacy so you can expect great things from the DDC in 2013.

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In light of the recent tragedies in Oregon and Connecticut, we are reminded to always cherish our family and loved ones. We must constantly be aware of those experiencing difficult and challenging times and be willing to support them in their time of need. With that said, may you, your family, and loved ones experience happiness and tranquility this holiday season and throughout the New Year.

With the greatest respect and sincerity, Mat

DC ADVOCACY PARTNERS PROGRAM GRADUATES ITS FIRST CLASS

“*DC Advocacy Partners*” (DC AP) is a FREE leadership training program designed for self-advocates and family members of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. A developmental disability is a significant and lasting mental and/or physical impairment that occurs prior to age 22 and substantially limits a person in three or more major life activities such as: learning, speaking, self-care, mobility, understanding language, ability to make decision and financial independence. Through this program, you gain leadership skills and techniques to help develop positive partnerships with elected officials, school personnel, and other community leaders. You become a policy influencer and interact with policy makers and policy implementers regarding services that you and/or your family may use. You are given opportunities to engage in interactive learning experiences and gain valuable information about current issues, services and strategies, as well as policymaking and legislative processes at local and national levels. As a part of this nine-month program, you become a member of a DC network of community advocates working together to improve opportunities for Washingtonians with disabilities.

DC AP is modeled after the nationally and internationally recognized “*Partners in*

Policymaking” program, which has graduated more than 23,000 people worldwide since 1987.

The DC AP Class of 2012 is the first of its kind in the District of Columbia. DC AP is funded by a grant from the DC Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), which seeks to strengthen the voice of people with developmental disabilities and their families in DC in support of greater independence, inclusion, empowerment and the pursuit of life as they choose. The 15 graduates are a combination of youth, emerging disability community leaders, self-advocates parents and grandparents of individuals with disabilities. The graduates of DC AP Class of 2012 are residents from across the District and represent the diversity of the District of Columbia.



Partner Graduates (PG) and IEL Staff (S) pictured from left to right bottom row – Thomas Mangrum, Jr. (PG), Diandra Garnett (PF), Rossene Minard (PG), Joseph Stewart (PG), and Suzanne Ripley (S). Left to right second row – Margie Hatch (S), Curtis Ricards (S), Ricardo Thornton (PG), Lindsay Wilkes (PG) Samone Hemphill (PF), Linda Stewart (PG), and Sherri Coles. Left to right third row – Jason Farr (S), Nathaniel Feingold (PG), Tiffany Smallwood (PG), Phoebe Hathaway (PG), and Peggy Hathaway (PG). Other PG not shown include Madison Carter and Mathew McCollough.

The grantee for the **DC Advocacy Partners** is the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL). To learn more about IEL and the DC Advocacy Partners Program, please visit <http://www.dcpartners.iel.org>.

GET INVOLVED DC!

Get Involved DC! is a program that supports people with developmental disabilities and their families and gives them opportunities to become more involved in the District of Columbia community through service and recreation. Individuals are trained to independently find and attend community service and recreation events. Training includes event planning, budgeting and the use of public transportation (Metro Rail and Bus) to get members to and from the activities versus relying on Metro Access.

The monthly activities are held in an accessible and integrated setting and the members choose which activities they desire to participate. They can also recommend activities they think may be of interest to the group. The members are invited to participate independently, with friends and with the entire group. The overall goal is to empower them with tools needed to gain access, while enjoying themselves and giving back to the community.

The grantee for the Get Involved DC! Program is the Inclusion Research Institute (IRI). The first year was a success! Some of the activities occurred at the Kite Festival on the Mall, Spy Museum, Kennedy Center, Sharpe Health School and Lifeline Partnership. All activities were fun and enjoyable. There were 45 registered participants and 35 others/support people who also participated in the service and recreational activities. To learn more about IRI and the Get Involved DC! Program, please visit <http://www.getinvolveddc.info>.

EXCERPT FROM 2012 PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Since our earliest days, America has measured its progress not only by the growth of our borders and the breadth of our economy, but also by how far we reach toward fully realizing the fundamental rights,

protections, and freedoms afforded to each of us by our Nation's founding documents. For generations, many Americans with disabilities lived as second-class citizens who were denied those most basic opportunities. Not content to accept the world as it was, they marched and organized and testified, coupling quiet acts of persistence and perseverance with vocal acts of advocacy. And step by step, progress was won. Protections were put into law. And a wave of change swept across our country, tearing down the barriers that kept persons with disabilities from securing their fullest measure of happiness.

Today, we mark the 22nd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) -- a historic piece of civil rights legislation that affirmed Americans with disabilities are Americans first. When many wrongfully doubted that people with disabilities could participate in our society, contribute to our economy, or support their families, the ADA asserted that they could. Under this landmark law, America became the first Nation to comprehensively declare equality for its citizens with disabilities -- an accomplishment that continues to guide our country toward fulfilling its most essential promises not just for some, but for all.

--Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, July 20, 2012

2012 DISABILITY MENTORING DAYS



Disability Mentoring Days is a national program coordinated by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) that promotes critical career development for students with disabilities by direct job shadowing and mentoring activities. The Office of Disability Rights (ODR) and the DC

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Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) led the efforts for the District of Columbia's participation in a series of Disability Mentoring activities to bring student mentees and employers from local businesses, Federal Government and District Government together. This was an important way to introduce high school and college students with disabilities to employment possibilities within the District of Columbia. Through this Program, students spent a day shadowing staff, being part of a group visit/information tour of worksites and job-training activities. Students learned about the variety of work that one does; and the staff learned about the experiences and capabilities of students with disabilities in the District while gaining access to a pool of potential employees.

The District of Columbia celebrated Disability Employment Awareness Month by participating in Disability Mentoring Days. This year the Disability Mentoring Days began on October 17th and ended on November 14th with 62 high school and university students participating. Thirteen private companies and government agencies participated.

speaker was the spoken-word poet, entrepreneur and disability advocate, LeDerick Horne. He shared how he rose above his disabilities to become the man he is today. Advocates for Justice and Education, Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities and The Arc of DC hosted a General Transition Workshop. Students participated in an interactive transition passport exercise with exhibitors to learn about the transition-related services, including opportunities in post-secondary education, employment, independent living and healthcare services to support their successful transition. The exhibitors included community organizations, government agencies, employers and colleges.



Keynote speaker, the spoken word poet, entrepreneur, and disability advocate LeDerick Horne.

4th ANNUAL MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER SECONDARY TRANSITION COMMUNITY FAIR AND FORUM

On November 2 and 3, 2012 the DC community came together for the *4th Annual Moving Forward Together Secondary Transition Community Fair and Forum* at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Public Library to support youth and young adults with disabilities transitioning into employment, education, and independence.

On Friday, November 2nd, over 260 students, teachers, community organizations, government agencies, colleges, employers and volunteers participated in a range of activities designed for DC students with disabilities. This year the keynote

The Saturday program was a Secondary Transition Community Forum for DC youth and young adults with disabilities, parents/caregivers, educators, employers, community organizations, government representatives and community members. Approximately 100 individuals participated. Participants enjoyed a poetry reading from keynote speaker, LeDerick Horne, and heard from two local young adults with disabilities about the importance of self-advocacy and their experiences with transition. The youth attended an interactive workshop on self-advocacy with LeDerick Horne. The participants had the opportunity to select from several different workshops related to transition and interact with the exhibitors and learn about the different transition services offered.

**EXCERPT FROM
PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES, 2012**

Americans have always understood that each of us is entitled to a set of fundamental freedoms and protections under the law, and that when everyone gets a fair shot at opportunity, all of us do better. For more than two decades, our country has upheld those basic promises for persons with disabilities through the Americans with Disabilities Act -- a sweeping civil rights bill that moved our Nation forward in the journey to equality for all. And from making health care more affordable to ensuring new technologies are accessible, we have continued to build on that progress, guided by the belief that equal access and equal opportunity are common principles that unite us as one Nation.

On the 20th International Day of Persons with Disabilities, we reaffirm that the struggle to ensure the rights of every person does not end at our borders, but extends to every country and every community. It continues for the woman who is at greater risk of abuse because of a disability and for the child who is denied the chance to get an education because of the way he was born. It goes on for the 1 billion people with disabilities worldwide who all too often cannot attend school, find work, access medical care, or receive fair treatment. These injustices are an affront to our shared humanity -- which is why the United States has joined 153 other countries around the world in signing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which calls on all nations to establish protections and liberties like those afforded under the Americans with Disabilities Act. While Americans with disabilities already enjoy these rights at home, they frequently face barriers when they travel, conduct business, study, or reside overseas. Ratifying the Convention in the Senate would reaffirm America's position as the global leader on disability rights and better position us to encourage progress toward inclusion, equal opportunity, full participation, independent living,

and economic self-sufficiency for persons with disabilities worldwide.

--Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, December 3, 2012

**NASA TO MENTOR STUDENTS
WITH DISABILITIES**

By [Michelle Diament](#)
December 18, 2012

A unique partnership kicking off early next year will allow students with disabilities a firsthand look at what it takes to work for NASA. The space agency will provide mentors for a handful of high school students who have autism, learning difficulties or multiple disabilities through an agreement with the District of Columbia Public Schools' transition program.

The collaboration is designed to encourage careers in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math, NASA officials said. "We particularly want to encourage students who are underserved or underrepresented in STEM to explore the many opportunities that pursuing this course of study can offer.

This partnership will help us do just that," said James Stofan, the agency's deputy associate administrator for education program integration. Ultimately, the mentoring opportunity could lead to summer internships at NASA for some participants, officials said. In addition to the space agency, D.C. Public Schools has agreements with organizations including Northrop Grumman and the Architect of the Capitol to provide career mentors for students with disabilities.

*Developmental Disabilities Council
Next Meeting Date
January 17, 2013*

MISSION STATEMENT

The Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) of the District of Columbia seeks to strengthen the voice of people with developmental disabilities and their families in DC in support of greater independence, inclusion, empowerment and the pursuit of life as they choose. We strive to create change that eliminates discrimination and removes barriers to full inclusion through our advocacy.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

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