

DDD Today

A Publication of the Division of Developmental Disabilities

Chris Christie, Governor
Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor

Volume VI, Issue V May 2012
dddnewsletter@dhs.state.nj.us

Jennifer Velez, Commissioner
Dawn Apgar, Deputy Commissioner


THE CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION IS EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES AND JOB PROSPECTS FOR NEW JERSEYANS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES


“Everyone should have the opportunity to be productive, earn a living, and feel a sense of personal fulfillment from employment. That’s why we’re working cooperatively with the private sector to ensure that people with disabilities are a seamless part of New Jersey’s workforce, with the independence and sense of community that comes from relationships developed inside and outside of the workplace.”


Governor Chris Christie - April 19, 2012

CREATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW JERSEYANS WITH DISABILITIES

Furthering Governor Christie’s commitment to expand life opportunities and job prospects for New Jerseyans with developmental disabilities, New Jersey will become the 14th state to adopt an Employment First initiative. The initiative embraces a philosophy—implemented through policies, programs and services – to proactively promote competitive employment in the general workforce for people with any type of disability.

 Three State Departments are involved in the effort to advance Employment First. The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports numerous education and employment programs in its Divisions of Developmental Disabilities, Disability Services, and Mental Health and Addiction Services as well as within its Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

 The Department of Labor and Workforce Development’s (LWD) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services solicits private non-profit and for-profit companies to facilitate work training, employment counseling, educational advancement, assistive technologies, and job placement services. Annually, 27,000 people with disabilities are serviced through LWD’s Vocational Rehabilitation Services through its 34 One-Stop Career Centers.

 Additionally, the Department of Education (DOE) utilizes the Vocational Profile as a framework that provides needed information for the customization of community employment opportunities.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST INITIATIVE BUILDS ON RECORD OF EXPANDING JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The Christie Administration Is Making the Resources Available to Enhance Job Opportunities for Individuals With Developmental Disabilities by:

 Protecting funding for Vocational Rehabilitation Services at the enhanced level provided in the fiscal 2012 budget so that providers will have the resources necessary to offer enhanced work activities for a second year;

The Christie Administration Is Expanding Opportunities And Job Prospects For New Jerseyans With Developmental Disabilities

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- ☒ Continuing NJ WorkAbility, a New Jersey Medicaid Buy-In Program that offers full health coverage to people with disabilities who are working and whose earnings would otherwise make them ineligible for Medicaid. Currently, there are more than 9,200 participants in NJ WorkAbility;
- ☒ Contracting with supportive employment agencies through the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Approximately 900 individuals have obtained competitive employment through this process since January 2010;
- ☒ Contracting with supportive employment agencies through the partnership of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Approximately 900 individuals have obtained competitive employment through this process since January 2010;
- ☒ Continuing to provide job training and placement and assistive technology through the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired's Vocational Rehabilitation program to over 2,500 clients since January 2010.
- ☒ In addition, building upon a public/private initiative called 'DiscoverAbility,' the Departments of Human Services, and Labor and Workforce Development, together with hundreds of businesses statewide, will intensify efforts to collaboratively provide the services and training necessary for individuals with disabilities to prepare for, find, and retain employment.

RECOGNIZING THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Governor Christie is committed to a fundamental rethinking of how individuals with developmental disabilities receive services. The Governor has long spoken of the state's moral imperative to recognize the individuality and unique needs of every New Jerseyan with a developmental disability.

Focusing Services on Families, Not Departments:

The creation of the Division of Child Integrated System of Care Services within the Department of Children and Families will finally address the holistic needs and concerns of families with children with developmental disabilities and other complex needs in one place. The reorganization is designed to ensure that families of people with developmental disabilities have access to every possible support that State government provides.

☒ The new Division will become the departmental "home" for children with multiple needs, bringing together programs now scattered throughout State government. This will allow for a more family-centric approach.

☒ Underlying this change is the view that children with developmental disabilities and their families should not be "carved out" of generic supports and/or the systems of care that serve other children and families in New Jersey. Services should be integrated, provided as part of a continuum, and responsive to the whole child and the whole family.

Ensuring Coordinated Services Through Transitions:

The Department of Human Services and DCF will work together to ensure that the transition to this new integrated system will occur smoothly, as children with developmental disabilities who enter the system, regardless of their needs, are referred to DCF for services.

The Christie Administration Is Expanding Opportunities And Job Prospects For New Jerseyans With Developmental Disabilities

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☒ At age 16, the Division of Developmental Disabilities will assess each child and begin to provide transitional planning services. All direct services will continue to be provided by DCF until age 21.

☒ Thus, a child will be dually served by both systems between the ages of 16-21, ensuring the opportunity for meaningful and coordinated transition planning so that children and their families can make a seamless transition into adult services. All services after 21 will be provided by DDD.

THE CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO HELPING NEW JERSEYANS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES LEAD RICHER LIVES

Governor Christie's Fiscal Year 2013 budget reflects a commitment to provide critical programs and services for individuals with developmental disabilities or mental illness and their families by:

☒ Increasing funding for placement services. Governor Christie's fiscal year 2013 budget provides \$24.7 million of new funding to develop additional community placements and services, allowing for 130 people to move off of the Community Services Waiting List and individuals and families to receive necessary residential and day services.

☒ An additional \$4.6 million is provided to pay for the 600 placements that occurred during fiscal 2012.

☒ A total of \$9.7 million will support the Department of Human Services' Olmstead initiatives and transition individuals from the seven developmental centers into the community. In addition to funding the 125 placements created during fiscal year 2012, an additional 175 consumers will transition from the institutions to community residential settings.

☒ Identifying Children with Autism. More than 6,000 children with autism have been registered, and it is expected that approximately 1,200 children will be registered each year. Once registered, families are referred to a county case manager who works with the family and helps them to access available services.

☒ In Fiscal Year 2013, \$500,000 is protected for the Autism Registry, which makes it easier for families to be connected to the appropriate diagnostic treatment and support services in their community.

☒ Making Autism Outreach a Priority. In August 2010, the Christie Administration established the Office on Autism within the Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities, creating a centralized location to coordinate autism-related information. The Office has organized an Interdepartmental Work Group to enhance coordination among agencies charged with providing services to persons with autism spectrum disorders.

☒ Funding Early Childhood Intervention. The Christie Administration will continue to provide support to families with children with developmental delays and disabilities from birth to age three. The Early Intervention Program services include developmental intervention, speech, physical and occupational therapy, and other services necessary to achieve their full potential. \$88.4 million is budgeted in Fiscal Year 2013 for the program.

The Christie Administration Is Expanding Opportunities And Job Prospects For New Jerseyans With Developmental Disabilities

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☒ Providing Transition Services for Adults. The Christie Administration has dedicated funding for young adults with developmental disabilities who age out of the Department of Education's special education entitlement by ensuring a seamless transition to the Department of Human Services' adult day programming.

☒ Protecting the Dignity of Those with Developmental Disabilities. In 2010, Governor Christie signed into law the "Central Registry of Offenders Against Individuals with Developmental Disabilities." It requires DHS to maintain a central registry--a confidential list of caregivers working in these programs who have been determined to have abused, neglected, or exploited an individual with a developmental disability.



WHAT FAMILIES NEED TO KNOW (ABOUT AUTISM)

In response to the countless families who have wondered if their child had autism and have been overwhelmed with worry and the sea of information available today, Autism New Jersey updated its primer for families. Written in an easy-to-understand format, this publication provides accurate and comprehensive information on what families need to know about autism, effective treatment, service providers, navigating state services, and more.

"This publication could save families precious hours by giving them the essential information all in one place. We've combined our treatment and advocacy experience with the lessons learned by families. Parents, reading this booklet will save you months of your own research and help you connect to services right from the start," said Dr. Linda Meyer.

LOOK FOR THIS NEW FREE PUBLICATION FOR ORDER AND DOWNLOAD IN MID-MAY.

Funding for the development of this publication was generously provided by a grant from the Fred C. Rummel Foundation, which supports non-profit healthcare, human service, and education entities throughout New Jersey.

HUNTERDON DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER NEWS



After two years in the making, another step in the gym/auditorium restoration at Hunterdon Developmental Center (HDC) that JoAnne Simonetta, former director of Recreation, spearheaded before she retired is almost complete! A team of four HDC departments and the Parents Association have brought a new level of performance to our facility with a new state of the art stage lift. The Inclined Platform Lift is now in place behind the stage in the HDC gym. This brings a new level of performance capability for individuals who use wheelchairs. Now, they will all feel part of the production, being able to enter and exit from behind the stage like the rest of the performers. It brings a more equal experience to more clients.

Frank Molnar and his engineering staff have been working hard to bring one of Simonetta's ideas to fruition. Molnar wanted to finish what she started. He says, "It's been a long process, but we wanted the clients to be back on stage." The Engineering Department deserves a pat on the back for all the custom fabrication that was done to bring the best quality and safety to this installation. They dealt with numerous international companies, pushed through many obstacles, and underwent three different safety inspections to get the best product for the clients. Although it was tedious, Molnar and his team are happy to do it. "For the clients, seeing everything from chair level, to be up on stage and see everything from a new commanding angle, they were elated. It's a spiritual thing to see them smile," says Molnar.

The Rehabilitation Services Department has been working with Engineering and the Safety Officer to enhance safety with the use of the stage lift. This includes the ongoing development of a protocol for safe lifting and a training protocol for lift operators. Rehabilitation Services has also made some suggestions for enhancing safety through improvements to the stage environment. These include the addition of a physical stage guide to prevent accidents when entering the lift platform from the stage and a stage rail to prevent wheelchairs from rolling off the stage.

Speaking with Steve Heineman and the HDC Choir, it was easy to see that this is exciting for everyone. "I never saw them light up the way they did when they were all on stage together," says Heineman. Prior to having the stage lift, the choir would have to set up on the floor next to the stage. This was not always ideal. For larger performances it could get very crowded and brought anxiety and frustration to the choir members. Now, being able to sing on stage together, they feel like real performers. It brings a level of respect to the performance. The choir group was unanimous, "It's fun to be on stage....we all sang on stage." Having this new space now opens up new ventures for the choir-like collaborations and joint performances with the HDC house band and performing for more people.

Thanks to the caring staff at HDC and the generosity of the Parents Association, achievements like this are possible.

NEWS FROM REGIONAL FAMILY SUPPORT PLANNING COUNCIL #10 OF CAPE MAY COUNTY

MONTHLY MEETINGS:

The Regional Family Support Planning Council (RFSPC) #10, representing Cape May County, meets every third Thursday of the month. Meeting date is as follows:

- Thursday, June 14th at the Cape May County Special Services School District in the Board Office

Information can be obtained by calling Annie Mullock, Council Vice Chair, at (609) 898-1880.

FORUM:

There will be a forum at the ARC of Cape May County on Saturday, June 2, from 2 - 4 PM.

The following speakers will be there:

- Dawn Apgar, DHS Deputy Commissioner, Interim Director of DDD
- Joseph Amoroso, Director of the NJ Division of Disability Services (DDS)

More details on the next page.

STORY IDEAS?

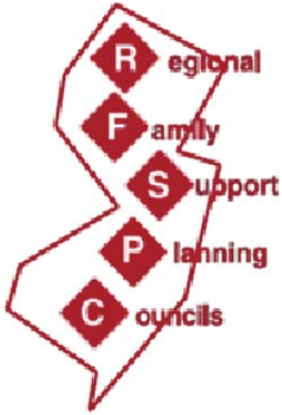
E-MAIL US AT:

DDDnewsletter@dhs.state.nj.us

We will happily consider your request!

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REGIONAL FAMILY SUPPORT PLANNING COUNCIL #10



PUBLIC FORUM
FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS

Saturday, June 2, 2012, 2 - 4 PM

The ARC of Cape May County
822 Route 47 (Delsea Drive)
South Dennis, NJ 08245
(609) 861-7100

Guest Speakers:

Dawn Apgar, DHS Deputy Commissioner, Interim Director of DDD

Joseph Amoroso, Director DDS

Learn about upcoming changes to the DDD family support system
The role of DDS

Speak with Family Support Council #10 members and network

Refreshments provided

RSVP by May 28, 2012 to: RFSPC10@yahoo.com

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FROM POINTS NORTH/SOUTH

From the NORTH

Route 47 -take Route 47 South into South Dennis. The ARC is on the left side of the roadway.

From the SOUTH (the Cape May Court House area)

Continue on Court House South Dennisville Road. Then turn right onto NJ-47 N/N Delsea Drive. The ARC of Cape May County will be on the right side of the road.

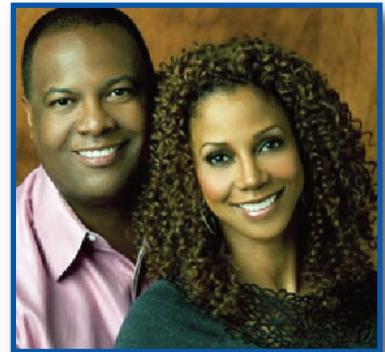
From ROUTE 9 (South or North)

Take Route 83 West to the traffic light at NJ 47 Delsea Drive. Make a left at the light and the ARC of Cape May County will be located on the left side of the roadway.

For additional directions, go to: <http://www.arcocapemay.org>

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Autism New Jersey's 30th Annual Conference October 10-12, 2012



Organizers of Autism New Jersey's 30th Annual Conference, one of the nation's largest autism symposiums, are proud to announce that Rodney and Holly Robinson Peete and Mark Mautone will be the keynote speakers October 11 and 12, 2012, in Atlantic City, NJ. Details follow:

One Family's Journey with Autism

Presented by Rodney Peete and Holly Robinson Peete; facilitated by Mark Roithmayr, President, Autism Speaks

Prestigious Keynote Speakers
*Rodney and Holly Robinson Peete
and Mark Mautone*

iPads and Autism: Best Practices in the Educational Environment

Mark Mautone, President of ITPADD-Integrated Technology for Persons with Autism and Developmental Disabilities.

This keynote presentation will provide a comprehensive insight on using iPads to educate individuals with autism spectrum disorders in the school and community environment. Mark will discuss current research on iPads, selection, and implementation of iPad applications across various educational domains.

Autism New Jersey's Annual Conference is expected to attract more than 1,200 top autism professionals and families affected by autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). One of the nation's largest autism forums for three decades, this acclaimed Conference affords educational opportunities and accurate autism information for parents, professionals, policy makers, and the media.

Autism is the fastest growing neurologically-based developmental disability characterized by atypical, repetitive behaviors and deficits in social and communications skills. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ASDs affect 1 in 110 children nationally and 1 in 94 in New Jersey, making it a top public health concern. Accurate, evidenced-based information is needed more than ever to meet the critical needs of NJ's autism community. The Conference meaningfully addresses important topics via an array of quality workshops, exhibits, two keynotes presentations, a poster session, ample networking opportunities and a pre-conference symposium presented by *James W. Partington, Ph.D., BCBA-D* and *Michael M. Mueller, Ph.D., BCBA-D* on The Assessment of Functional Living Skills. (The AFLS), held at the Sheraton Atlantic City, October 10.

To register: <http://www.autismnj.org/AnnualConference.aspx>

College Uses iPad Technology to Teach Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Submitted by: Rick Blumberg, Ph.D., Associate Professor at The College of New Jersey



A pilot study of video modeling (VM) using iPad technology to teach career and related social skills to college students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) was conducted at The College of New Jersey recently.

About the Pilot Study: To get some experience with video modeling and its application to college students with IDD, Dr. Blumberg and a team of graduate research assistants (Rachel Adelman, Kristen Lewis, Theresa Lombardi, and Danielle Travisano) conducted a pilot demonstration during the Fall 2001 semester. The researchers wanted to see how iPad technology could be used to help students learn job skills and the social skills.

Background: Video modeling typically involves a person viewing a clip of someone performing the steps of a task/skill and then performing that task themselves. It involves visual and auditory prompting. Recent research suggests that VM can be used to successfully teach a variety of skills (academic, career, social, self-care, etc.) to individuals with IDD (Rehfeldt et al, 2003; Mangiapello & Taylor, 2003; & Nikopolous & Keenan, 2003). VM appears to improve the pace of learning as well as task accuracy, quality, and generalization, and it can increase independence (Van Laarhoven et al, 2009). Students may prefer VM to traditional forms of systematic instruction (Hume, Loftin & Lantz, 2009). It does not appear to matter if the student views him/herself or others modeling the task/skill.

Methods: To conduct the study, the following methods were used: 1) task analyze on-campus work experiences and related social skills; 2) demonstrate the tasks for students; 3) direct students to perform the tasks; 4) provide a hierarchy of prompts until students complete the task (gestural, verbal, physical with verbal direction, and modeling with verbal direction); 5) take observational data on the types of prompts needed.

Once a baseline measure of student skills was established, the team followed the following procedures: 1) create film clips of the task analysis using graduate student models; 2) provide visual and verbal directions within the video; 3) have students view the video prior to performing the task; 4) remind students that they can view the video as needed; 5) take observational data on the number of times students view the video to independent task completion.

Results: We learned the followings things about video modeling: 1) students were able to learn tasks quickly and with more independence; 2) students displayed good task quality and accuracy; 3) students liked using the iPad, felt more confident, and expressed motivation to learn; and 4) they were less reliant on mentor support.

The pilot also informed the development of a more controlled, systematic study conducted this Spring.

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FREEDOM'S WINGS INTERNATIONAL FLYING FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

SUBMITTED BY RICHARD FUCCI, PRESIDENT



Freedom's Wings International is a non-profit organization which provides the opportunity for persons with physical disabilities to fly in specially adapted sailplanes. On Saturday, June 2 and Sunday, June 3, Freedom's Wings will offer free introductory rides to interested individuals with disabilities. The event will be hosted by the Philadelphia Glider Council at their airport in Hilltown, PA, which is located approximately 40 miles North of Philadelphia. Additionally, there will be a cookout Saturday afternoon for all participants and their families.

Interested participants should call the toll-free number to reserve a time slot for a 20-minute ride. There are only a limited number of flights available, so call now if you want to experience the thrill of soaring. Check out the pictures and comments from last year's participants at our website under the tabs Member Experiences and Video Gallery.



FREEDOM'S WINGS INTERNATIONAL
1-800-382-1197

www.freedomswings.org

THE PHILADELPHIA GLIDER COUNCIL

www.pgcsouaring.org

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' LAUNCHES ADOLESCENT HOUSING HUB



Submitted by:
Allison Blake, PhD LSW
Commissioner NJ Department of Children and Families

It is with great pleasure that I announce that the New Jersey Department of Children and Families' (DCF) new Adolescent Housing Hub – an online reservation system and electronic database of housing options for youth and young adults – has gone live, providing comprehensive coordination between DCF and our providers of this vital service.

“The Hub,” as it will be referred to, was created in collaboration with DCF’s Office of Adolescent Services and PerformCare to provide a more standardized and efficient referral and discharge process for youth housing throughout the state. With the deployment of The Hub, housing programs for youth ages 16 – 21 are now accessible to all DCF-involved youth and youth that are homeless but non-DCF involved. We believe this pilot program will not only improve services for our youth, but also provide valuable information regarding housing service delivery and utilization.

To secure a youth bed through The Hub, a DYFS worker, DCBHS care manager, a DCF-contracted housing provider or the youth themselves can call PerformCare at 1-877-652-7624 and press “4.” Other referents can also call on behalf of the youth with their permission. Although it is not required, if DCF (DYFS or DCBHS) is involved with the youth, we highly recommend that DCF make the call to PerformCare.

Once a call is placed to PerformCare and the youth is registered in the system, a referral will be completed and housing programs will be identified for the youth that meet criteria related to age, gender, location and other specifics. The names of up to three housing providers will be offered to the caller and housing providers will be able to immediately implement outreach to youth who meet eligibility criteria for their program who are registered in The Hub.

Providing supportive services to our youth is crucial as we help them make a successful transition into adulthood, and I believe the Adolescent Housing Hub, teaming together with our housing provider agencies and other youth advocates will ultimately streamline the process of finding appropriate and readily available housing for our youth – a goal I know we all strive for together.

Should you have any questions about the Housing Hub or ways in which to improve this service, please contact the DCF Office of Adolescent Services at dcf_adolescentservices@dcf.state.nj.us or (609) 888-7100.

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Advocacy, Community Organizing and Social Movements: Relevant to the Lives of People with Disabilities?

Monday, May 21, 2012

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Community Access Institute
88 West Grand Street
Elizabeth, NJ 07202

Registration: \$25.00 (includes lunch)

(You can order the book, *Contesting Community*, when you register or it will be available for purchase at the workshop. The cost for the book is \$27)

Make check payable to NJAIDD and mail to
c/o CAI, 88 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202

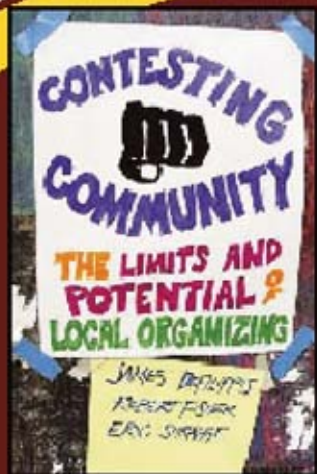
Sponsored by: Community Access Institute and NJAIDD
To register please call Doienne Saab (908) 354-3040 ext 357
or email dsaah@cainj.org

Presenters:

Robert Fisher, Ph.D., Author, Director, Urban and Community Studies and Professor of Social Work, University of Connecticut
James DeFilippis, Ph.D., Author, Associate Professor, Blaustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University

Panelists:

Thomas Baffuto, Executive Director, NJ ARC
Walter Kalman, Executive Director, NASW, NJ
Sid Katz, Advocate, Chair of Council 2, NJUSA
Alison Lozano, Executive Director, NJDDC
Sidney Blanchard, Executive Director, CAU, Moderator



"Contesting Community is an excellent historical analysis of the evolution of community practice. This book is valuable reading for scholars, graduate students and practitioners in sociology, social work, public administration, public health or political science."
(*Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*)



JAMES DeFILIPPIS, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University. He is the author of *Unmaking Goliath*, named Best Book in Urban Politics by the American Political Science Association.



ROBERT FISHER, Ph.D., is a Professor of Community Organization. Bob teaches courses in community organizing, macro foundation methods, and urban and community studies. Bob's areas of specialization include community organizing, urban policy, social movements and theory, and social welfare history.

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CONTINUING EDUCATION



THE SUMMER INSTITUTE ON AUTISM



**June 20, 21, & 22
at The College of New Jersey**

We are pleased to announce the Summer Institute on Autism at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ). The Institute will consist of three days of capacity building workshops for educators, allied professionals, and family members. Featured topics for the 2012 Institute will include Inclusive Practices, Social Skills Development, and Innovative Uses of Technology for learners with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The Institute will bring nationally recognized experts in the field to the TCNJ campus for three intensive days of interactive learning and networking.

The Institute will sponsor three full days of capacity building workshops for:

Educators and allied professionals

Family members

Individuals with autism

Featured topics include:

Inclusive Practices

Social Skills Training

Assistive Technology

Mission: To improve the lives of individuals with autism and their families by: providing innovative services; providing continuing education programs for families and professionals; conducting field based research to evaluate promising practices in academic, career, and social supports; and by training professionals in the areas of applied behavioral analysis and positive behavioral support.

To learn more about the Center for Autism at TCNJ, visit our website at:

centerforautism.pages.tcnj.edu/

Download the registration form to pay by check or purchase order. All completed forms can be e-mailed to cfa@tcnj.edu or faxed to 609-637-5144.

Details on programs on the next page.

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Innovative Services: The Transition Academy

This is a three week summer residential program (Monday-Friday) for youth with autism (ages 18-21). It provides extended school year services and comprehensive transition/vocational assessment, with an emphasis on:

**Career Development
Social Skills
Independent Living**

Youth that have separated from their local school districts may also benefit from this summer program and are encouraged to apply.

Certificate Program in Applied Behavioral Analysis (Proposed)

This program will help individuals provide behavioral support to individuals with behavioral problems in home, school, and community settings. Applicants must have completed a baccalaureate degree in Education, Psychology, or a related discipline. The proposed ABA Certificate Program must be approved by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board to enable participants to sit for the BCBA Certification Examination.

Professional Development

The Institute provides an ongoing series of professional development programs designed to meet the continuing educational needs of:

**Educators
Counselors
Social Workers and Other Professionals**

Programs will include:

**Inclusive practices
Social skills training
Post-secondary education
Career development
Applied behavioral analysis & positive behavior support**

THREE STUDENTS UTILIZE SEIZURE FIRST AID TRAINING TO HELP RESTAURANT GUEST

Submitted by: Jillian Daidone, of The Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey

WEST ORANGE - Three fifth grade students from Pleasantdale Elementary School recently assisted a restaurant patron having an unforeseen seizure with knowledge gained from a school presentation on seizure first-aid by the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey (EFNJ).

The three girls, Emily Lux, Mariange Charles-Antonio and Sarah Salazar, were eating lunch at a restaurant when a woman sitting next to them began having a seizure. The students saw that the woman's husband did not know what to do, so they took action. They saw that her head was on the floor unprotected and directed him to place a coat under her head. They also realized her mouth was not cleared of food and advised the husband to remove the dumpling from inside her mouth.

The following day, the girls reported the incident to the Pleasantdale School Nurse Nancy Feldman and told her that "because of what we learned from the presentation, we knew what to do." The free presentation, made in November 2011, titled, "Thinking About Epilepsy" aims to change perceptions of epilepsy at an early age by teaching tolerance and compassion for their peers with epilepsy.

EFNJ originally made contact with Pleasantdale Elementary School by request of a student living with epilepsy who wanted to feel secure that her classmates and teachers knew how to react in case she suffered a seizure while in class. Trained staff from EFNJ educate students on how the brain works and what causes seizures, in coordination with the fifth grade science curriculum. They provide students with simple tips to detect seizures and how to provide simple first aid to their peers to empower the class to be active, compassionate participants.

"It's invaluable for kids with epilepsy to know that their teachers and classmates understand their seizures and how to help them," explains Andrea Racioppi, Associate Director of EFNJ. Almost 25 percent of all epilepsy diagnoses each year in the United States involve children under the age of 15. Because of stigma and lack of understanding, children with epilepsy often face ostracism and bullying from their peers, which may produce lasting effects of low self-esteem and depression throughout adulthood. EFNJ hopes to stop the continuation of the outdated stigma by teaching students the necessary facts about epilepsy before leaving elementary school.

The students at Pleasantdale Elementary School not only gained the knowledge and confidence to potentially assist a classmate in case of a seizure, but also applied that education to help a distressed stranger while other adults and employees stood by. The Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey will continue their statewide workshop in Essex County this spring by joining fifth grade students at Grove Street School in Irvington on May 25 and at Belleville PS 4 on May 27.

EFNJ joined forces with the Anita Kaufmann Foundation in 2007 to bring this empowering educational program to New Jersey schools. To date, EFNJ has trained fifth grade students at nearly 150 elementary schools across New Jersey and last year reached over 9,000 students. Schools interested in participating in the "Thinking About Epilepsy" program may contact Jenna Andolora at 800-336-5843 or via email at jandolora@efnj.com.

The Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey (EFNJ), an affiliate of the National Epilepsy Foundation and The Family Resource Network, provides programs for families living with epilepsy, such as a residential summer camp, support groups, scholarships, referral programs and respite care. EFNJ also institutes free educational presentations about seizure first aid and police training. To learn more, please visit www.efnj.com

NEW LISBON DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER TO CELEBRATE MILESTONE



New Lisbon Developmental Center (NLDC) will celebrate its 100th anniversary next year. In preparation, NLDC is looking for ideas on how to mark the occasion in a special way. If you have an idea, call the Community Relations/Volunteer Department.

Contact Claudette Keegan at (609) 894-4019 or Claudette.keegan@dhs.state.nj.us or contact Jacqueline Kulsick at Jacqueline.kulsick@dhs.state.nj.us or (609) 726-1000 x4205.

DDD Today

Contact us at:

Division of
Developmental Disabilities
P.O. Box 727
Trenton, NJ 08625-0726

**DDD Information and DHS
Central Registry Hotline:
1-800-832-9173**

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) was created in response to the need for better and more effective services for state residents with developmental disabilities. Advocates for those services included many parents and other family members who wanted community-based alternatives to the institutional care that had been their only option for many decades.

Today, more than 43,000 individuals are eligible to receive services funded by the division, including a growing number who are under the age of 22. Most DDD-eligible individuals live in the community, either with family or in a community residence such as a group home or supervised apartment or in a Community Care Residence with a family caregiver. Almost 2,600 individuals reside in one of the seven developmental centers now administered by DDD.

Visit us on the Web at: www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd