

# Catalyst for Change

FALL 2009

NEWS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



## Focus on Jobs



Making a strong commitment to addressing the lack of employment opportunities for people with disabilities, the NCCDD will be a leader in the work of the Alliance for Full Participation (AFP), which seeks to double the number of jobs by 2015. The employment rate for people with developmental disabilities is now just 22 percent. The AFP is a group of 13 national organizations united in seeking full inclusion for people with DD in the American mainstream.

“People with disabilities want to work and can. Their underemployment must be addressed,” Jobs, on page 2

## The New Face of People First

Unfortunately, people often continue to use words and terms that can be demeaning when they refer to people with intellectual or other developmental disabilities. The need for a campaign to change that remains, so the NCCDD will continue its People First effort in hopes of changing both attitudes and behavior.

We haven't met just yet, but...

I'M YOUR NEIGHBOR



To that end, the Council will soon release a new version of its People First language brochure. Aimed at the general public, the brochure presents five North Carolinians who are examples of people benefiting from People First. Readers can see how their experiences are similar, helping them see

the need to see the person before any disability. Look for this publication on the Council's website, [www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org).

## Self-Determination Steps Forward

International Conference and Council Video Energize Effort

“Self-Determination Is...”, a video produced for the NCCDD, has just been released and promises to help educate the public as to the issues of self-determination so important to people with disabilities. The video builds on the Council's major support of the International Conference on Self-Determination held in Winston-Salem earlier this year.



Title of new NCCDD video on Self-determination.

Self-advocates and other leaders of the disability community gathered to urge that decision making be placed

in the hands of people with disabilities, those who primarily are impacted by the decisions made.

“The two biggest issues I see are rethinking what we mean by quality in human services, operating in an astonishingly fragile fiscal environment, and if it is possible to improve the quality of life and

services for people with disabilities cost effectively,” said Tom Nerney, director of the Center for Self-Determination.

An innovation in the self-Conference, on page 2

## Council Website, New and Improved

*Meeting the need for timely information*

After months in the making, the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) has launched its new website, a more accessible, comprehensive and exciting source of information about disability issues and Council activities. With the Internet now the primary source of distributing information on a timely basis, the NCCDD site, [www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org), takes advantage of this potential and rises to the top tier among state agencies.

The new NCCDD website includes several tools to promote

accessibility, including audio and visual formats, with subtitles, and using “people first” language.

A new section will be dedicated specifically to people with intellectual disabilities. In addition, more resources will be included for the general public, together with current information for professionals in the disability field. Video and audio clips on a variety of topics related to the disability field are also featured.

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## 2 JEAN WOLFF-ROSSI REMEMBERED

The NC Council on Developmental Disabilities has renamed the Participant Involvement Fund the Jean Wolff-Rossi Fund for Participant Involvement, honoring the former Council member whose life helped build understanding of the need for full inclusion for all people with disabilities.

Chair of the Statewide Independent Living Council and nationally known advocate, her first NCCDD contact was as an intern in 1994, while still attending North Carolina State University. Working for a number of years as an accountant and



bookkeeper for her family's business, Wolff-Rossi soon became a nationally recognized member of the disabilities community and a forceful advocate.

Named to the NCCDD in 2001, the Louisburg, NC native served as a committee chair and vice chair of the Council until her resignation in 2004. The Council later contracted with her to manage the fund, which now bears her name.

The NCCDD mourns Wolff-Rossi's passing, but recognizes her lasting contributions to the disabilities community.

Conference, from page 1  
determination campaign was a session on inclusion in faith communities. NCCDD's Holly Riddle said the turnout was a sign of a "new willingness to remove all barriers to full participation... so that all may worship."

Keynote speaker Alegario Cantos, vice chair of the President's Committee on People with Intellectual Disabilities, sets his sights high, urging all to follow their aspirations. He suggests that supporters use their social capital, a network of relationships, to promote full inclusion for people with disabilities.

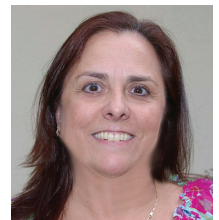
As a major sponsor, the NCCDD did much to make the event a success, including assistance with arrangements and communications.

The 16-minute video, "Self-Determination Is..." can be viewed on the NCCDD website and DVDs can be obtained by contacting the Council. It will be distributed in North Carolina and to disability groups across the nation.

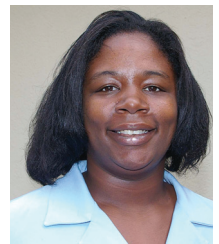
Self-determination includes making people a full part of the community, able to choose where they live and work, and to pursue their own interests. The story is told through the experiences and feelings of people with disabilities in their own words, together with the views of leading advocates for self-determination.

## New Staff Members

Tara Heasley has joined the Council as a program manager, moving from the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services. Heasley brings with her considerable experience in the disabilities field, including almost 20 years in case management in Erie, Pa.



Another great addition to the staff is Candice Bailey. Bailey is now the office assistant at the Council offices on Lake Boone Trail in Raleigh.



Jobs, from page 1

said Holly Riddle, NCCDD's executive director. "We are determined to be a strong partner of the AFP in pushing this effort in North Carolina."

Led by the AFP, planning is underway for an October 2011 Summit meeting to address the need for greater employment opportunities. State efforts will clearly focus on finding and creating real jobs for individuals with disabilities. The gathering seeks to ensure that tangible strides are being taken toward inclusive employment opportunities.

"Employment is a fundamental component in realizing the American Dream. As such, greater options for full, inclusive employment must be available to people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities for full participation to be realized," said Riddle.

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities and the North Carolina Developmental Disabilities Consortium will share leadership responsibilities in this effort. Quarterly meetings are planned at the state level to set priorities around employment. Among the issues to be covered are services and service innovations, learning from employers, and self-advocates, creating incentives, and interagency collaboration.

Speaking of doubling jobs within five years, Chester Finn, the head of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, said people with disabilities want to work, earn money, and achieve their aspirations. Furthermore, he said, "when we work we're contributing valuable skills and assets to our communities."

## PUBLIC INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN ADVANCING STRONG LEADERS SEMINARS:

DECEMBER 10, 2009 --SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LEAD LIVES THEY CHOOSE: THE REAL CHALLENGES OF OFFERING REAL LIVES, PRESENTED BY LYNNE SEAGLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HOPE HOUSE FOUNDATION, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

MARCH 25, 2010-- USING PERSON-CENTERED THINKING TO DEVELOP PERSON-CENTERED ORGANIZATIONS, PRESENTED BY MICHAEL SMULL, SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND.

*"These outstanding presenters are leaders in the field"*  
*Nancy Weiss, Advancing Strong Leadership's program director.*



Advancing Strong Leadership  
For North Carolina DD Professionals

SEMINARS ARE HELD FROM 9 A.M. TO NOON ON AT THE ROYAL CONFERENCE CENTER IN RALEIGH.  
COST IS \$45. GO TO WWW.NCCDD.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION DETAILS.





In September, the Council's Partners in Policymaking 2009 program honored a record 25 graduates, individuals with disabilities and parents of young children with disabilities. Through eight monthly, weekend training sessions with nationally known presenters in the DD field, the group benefited from audio files of

each presentation uploaded to the NC Partner's website.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2010 Partners in Policymaking class. The program is appealing to individuals and family members who want to take a leadership role in improving services and supports for people with developmental disabilities.

The application can be found at [www.ncpartnersinpolicymaking.com](http://www.ncpartnersinpolicymaking.com)

and submissions are due December 1, 2009.



In mock testimony to legislators, one of the training exercises of the Partners in Policymaking program, Samuel Volk of Holly Springs expressed his concern for the lack of transportation for individuals with disabilities.

## New Council Members Bring Fresh Perspective

The NCCDD is welcoming 10 new members who can bring new perspectives to determining the policies and initiatives that may best serve the needs of people with intellectual disabilities in North Carolina.

Crystal Lee Foreman, an experienced businesswoman, joins the Council as a Self-Advocate. The Raleigh resident uses her own experiences and education to help others through her business, Freedom Consulting. Another new member from Raleigh, Caroline Ambrose, works with the Alliance of Disability Advocates and is also a Self-Advocate.

New Council member Tracey Parker Willets from Wilmington is the mother of a son with a disability. She is also the vice chair of the NC Disability Action Network, building on her work with an area organization, First in Families.

Lourdes Fernandez, an attorney and a resident in Raleigh, joined the Council this spring. She is the mother of a child with a disability.

Also welcomed to the Council is Walter L. Ruff, III, who is also a parent of a young man with a disability. From Sylva,

in far western North Carolina, Ruff is associated with Pathways for the Future Center for Independent Living.

federally funded parent training and information center for North Carolina. Knowledgeable of special education

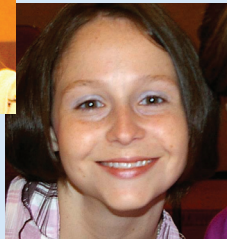
services and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Reeves recently served on the NC Institute of Medicine Task Force on Transitions for People with Developmental Disabilities.

Dr. Paul Sagerman, a pediatrician, is the parent of a daughter with physical disabilities. He has worked on a number of initiatives to offer training to medical staff regarding DD and self-advocacy skills for their patients. Dr. Sagerman is on staff at Baptist Medical Center, Winston-Salem.

Self-Advocate Lisa Byrd, a new member from Durham, has served on the board of the Association of Self Advocates of North Carolina Inc, an organization housed with the NCCDD. Byrd has demonstrated her advocacy skills at the state and local level on behalf of those with disabilities.

By law, 60 percent of the Council's membership must be composed of people with developmental disabilities or family members.

All will contribute the wisdom gained from their experiences to the work of the Council.



New council members, clockwise from top left, Crystal Lee Foreman, Tracy Parker Willets, Carrie Ambrose, Lourdes Fernandez, Amanda Wagoner and Walter Ruff; not pictured are Desiree Peterson, Inett Azell Reeves, Dr. Paul Sagerman and Lisa Byrd.

A parent with a child with a disability, Amanda Wagoner of McGrady, located in the northwest part of the state, has joined the Council.

Desiree Peterson is a Self-Advocate from Wake County. At the local and state level, she has been active on behalf of people with developmental disabilities as a board member of the NC Arts Access and team member for First in Families of Wake County.

Inett Azell Reeves of Greenville is the parent of a young adult with a disability and serves on the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center Board, a

# 4 An Era of Change, State and Federal

The policy pot continues to simmer in both Washington, D.C. and Raleigh, with further discussion of new directions in health care and ongoing work on setting spending levels. All of this, together with specific budget decisions on supports, will have a significant impact on people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

By law, the mission of the NCCDD encompasses being an advocate for policies that will help people with disabilities lead full lives, access needed services, and be participating and contributing members of the community. A major component is full inclusion in all facets of society.

This should help explain why we feel that increasing employment opportunities and the ongoing campaign for self-determination are so important. It is vital that we rise

above basic access to community activities and services and achieve true inclusion.

We were pleased to be a lead sponsor for the International Conference on Self-Determination held in Winston-Salem. The Council believes that such activities help move the campaign forward, and will contribute ultimately to a society of opportunity.

We are also gratified that the video we produced, "Self-Determination Is ...," has been well received and even won an award. It is another aspect of our effort to inform people of the reasoning behind the self-determination movement and its importance to people with disabilities.

Progress is being made on another front, as well, with the production of a new People First brochure. It seeks to help the public

understand how hurtful and demeaning cruel language can be to people with disabilities.

Lastly, both the Council and I have suffered a great loss with the passing of Jean Wolff-Rossi. As a youth leader, self-advocate, Council member, and contributor to the public dialogue on disabilities policy, she leaves a legacy of accomplishment. She will be missed.

Sincerely,

Holly Riddle, J.D., M.Ed.  
Executive Director



**"Catalyst"-An instrument for change**

If you would like a name to be added or removed from this mailing list, contact Cora Gibson at (919) 420-7901, or e-mail [info@nccdd.org](mailto:info@nccdd.org).

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



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