

# Catalyst for Change

SUMMER 2008

NEWS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



## Planning for the storm: Emergency preparedness includes everyone

Despite the above normal number of storms predicted for the 2008 hurricane season, emergency preparedness remains an undervalued aspect of community planning. Its urgency was stressed in a



Brian Parsons presents to NCCDD on Homeland Security.

recent NCCDD forum session with two knowledgeable officials of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Senior Policy Advisor Brian Parsons and Debra Fulmer, an emergency management planner.

Both emergency preparedness experts stressed the need to make plans to cope with such situations, including identifying the nearest

workable exit, being aware of accessible shelter, securing accessible transportation, ensuring adequate communication and medicine.

For people with disabilities, being ready for emergencies

in the community and the workplace is a vital part of personal and public responsibility. Parsons stressed that the key to optimizing resources is to be sure emergency services are provided to individuals in an integrated format.

Parsons also emphasized ways in which civil rights issues affect preparations for emergency situations.

**Emergency prep., cont. on page 2**

## Council hosts policy Summit Focus on future state disability policies

Soon the political landscape in North Carolina will change; there will be a new governor and new members in the General Assembly. With this in mind, NCCDD organized "Looking Forward: A Summit on the Developmental Disabilities System in North Carolina." The Summit pulled

together leading authorities to identify key policies and practices that will foster a contemporary DD system that supports quality of

life for people in communities across our state. These policies and practices will be outlined in a report given to the gubernatorial candidates, potential cabinet members and members of the Legislative Oversight Committee.

The Summit Co-Chairs, North Carolina Senator Katie Dorsett, Representative Verla Insko and NCCDD Chairman Robert Rickelman, will release the document during the August 2008 NCCDD Council meeting. Candidates will be invited to attend the event so that they may respond to the suggestions outlined in the report.

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## College major -- Independence 101

The door to a college experience has opened wider with the start of an innovative program at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. Beyond Academics, an NCCDD funded collaboration between



service provider Charles Hines & Son and

Student Jeremy Donahue, left, and peer mentor Rusty Bradstock

UNC-Greensboro, allows students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to take part in a two-year program that fosters independence, and prepares them for employment, and be integrated into on campus social and recreational aspects.

NCCDD member Robert "Rusty" Bradstock is a big supporter of the program, which has eight students this year and may double in 2009. A peer mentor for Beyond Academics, Bradstock, 26, says, "I love it, the idea of it and the teachers." He notes that such an experience wasn't available to him after high school.

The students, who range in age from 19 to 50, with most in their 20s, live on campus and attend classes together four times a week. While all are seeking more independence in their lives, several also have part time jobs. "I listen, and I talk and I am independent," said Jeremy Donahue.

The program encourages a variety of connections with other college students and important daily living skills, such as managing money, laundry, shopping and cooking, in addition to building lasting friendships. The BA (Beyond Academics) Olympics and pool party were memorable social events of the year.

**College, cont. on page 2**

## 2 BUILDING THE FUTURE OF DIRECT SUPPORT

As concerns grow about the ability of the state, agencies and organizations to recruit and retain sufficient front line support staff, the NCCDD has launched a series of initiatives to meet the challenge.

Though the staff that provide support to people with a range of needs go by many job titles, such as personal care assistant, support services technician or direct support professional, the essence of the work is the same, allowing individuals with disabilities to lead independent, self-directed lives in the community. To achieve these outcomes, high quality support service is vital for people with developmental disabilities.

Responding to the need, NCCDD is funding a broad partnership for continued development of a competent, stable and empowered direct support workforce. One grant went to the NC Providers Council for an online competency-based curriculum for DSPs, while a second grant to the NC Council of Community Programs funded planning for workforce development for the state's DSPs.

The NCCDD is not alone in its concerns about workforce development. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) understood the link between quality service delivery and a well-trained staff, and CMS has made technical assistance on workforce development

available to selected states, including North Carolina. Working with the state's Division of Medical Assistance and other DHHS divisions, the Council helped bring the CMS team to North Carolina for a workshop preceding the October statewide Workforce Development Conference.

Later, under the leadership of Amy Hewitt, Ph.D., of the University of Minnesota, CMS team members worked with stakeholders in creating a development plan for the entire state workforce engaged in serving consumers in the mental health, developmental

disability, substance abuse and long term care service and support system.

NCCDD's funding of Dr. Hewitt secured support for a collaborative effort with the NC Department of Health and Human Services and a diverse group, including consumers, providers and DSPs, to produce the state's first DSP workforce development plan.

NCCDD's work with the state culminated in a spring presentation on the direct support workforce by Dr. Hewitt and John Morris (of the CMS Technical Assistance team, to the Legislative Oversight Committee on Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse.



Amy Hewitt, Ph.D., of the University of Minnesota, led a collaborative effort to create a plan for North Carolina to meet the future need for direct support professionals.



### ADD Commissioner Visits NC Council

Patricia Morrissey, the commissioner of the federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities, toured the NCCDD's facilities in Raleigh on a recent visit to North Carolina. The commissioner complimented the Council on its numerous initiatives and offered great encouragement for continued progress.

### Emergency prep, from page 1

"Upholding the civil rights of individuals during emergencies is not just a matter of compliance, it is a matter of safety and security," says Parsons.

Since 9/11 and Katrina, great strides have been made to ensure the needs of individuals with disabilities are not overlooked. Both Parsons, who previously served as executive director of the Virginia Council on Developmental Disabilities, and Fulmer shared information on how to shape an effective preparedness plan. They recommend regular practice and updating for the plan to remain effective. A new tool, the Emergency Management Planning Guide for Special Needs Population, a collaboration between Homeland Security and FEMA, is expected to be released shortly.

### College, from page 1

Bradstock observed that students gained more confidence and matured as they were "trying their best to live out on their own." Two individuals will move to their own apartment next year, where their involvement with the program will focus on greater independence and preparation for life after school.

## NCCDD Grant Awards

The Seeing is Believing grant was awarded to Community Resource Alliance to assist community providers in transforming their services and supports from congregate care models to individualized services and supports for people in their own homes.

The Comprehensive Communications Grant was awarded to The Wallace Group to increase statewide public awareness of the council and its projects.

# Mr. Ellis goes to Washington

The number of low-income people with disabilities benefiting from the Real Economic Impact Tour (REIT) is continuing to grow, as even more people filed their returns this year with assistance from the Volunteer Information Tax Assistance program (VITA). A member of the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities, Jonathan Ellis, played a significant role in bringing about that result.

Ellis was the keynote speaker at the start of a nationwide tour last October at the National Press Club in Washington, sharing his experiences to help others see the power of financial education.

"This has given me hope that we can save money, and has provided me with the chance to have more than \$2,000 and not affect benefits," said Ellis.

Along with 300 other self-advocates, Ellis gained the tools for financial independence at the North Carolina Individual Development Accounts &

refund from the popular Earned Income Tax Credit can range from \$230 to \$412 and yield investment income of up to \$2,800, through the use of individual development accounts (IDAs).

The national tour provides free tax preparation assistance and financial education to low-income workers with disabilities through the IRS Service-Stakeholder Partnerships, Education and Communication organization and local tax preparation firms.

In its first year REIT assisted 7,800 people with disabilities with free tax preparation, and that number jumped to over 17,000

individuals in 30 major cities in 2006. For the 2007 tax season, tour coverage expanded to 54 cities across the U.S.

photo courtesy of Michael Morris



NCCDD Member Jonathan Ellis told the National Press Club about help given by a Council partner, the NC Asset Building Collaborative, in financial planning and in explaining how people may be assisted with the popular Earned Income Tax Credit.

Asset Building Collaborative's second annual conference.

According to Michael Morris, a Council partner in the Collaborative, a

## DAVID TAYLOR FINDS THE WATER IS FINE

On scorching summer days thousands of NASCAR fanatics flock to the Lowe's Motor Speedway north of Charlotte, and many thirsty patrons will be on the lookout for Council member David Taylor. He is better known at the track as the owner of RaceCAR Waterboy, the prime source of ice cold bottled water.

A longtime NASCAR fan, Taylor saw the business opportunity that was available at the racing mecca, and went about starting his own business.

Through a 2003 Council initiative, NC Changing the Rules, Taylor started his micro-enterprise as a means to earn income while doing what he loves.

"Micro-enterprise customized employment allows me to work when I want to work, and close up and go to the race," said Taylor. With

some assistance from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in purchasing equipment and an initial stock of water, his business began serving customers in 2006 at racing events, as well as smaller venues.

Since then, Taylor's firm has become an ongoing third party vendor at the speedway by gaining a contract to sell Dasani water. Taylor filed for incorporation in early 2007, officially forming RaceCAR Waterboy, LLC, helping to assure that racing fans will never be left high and dry.

photo courtesy of David Taylor



NASCAR enthusiast David Taylor puts business and passion together with his RaceCAR Waterboy business. He is with Erin Crocker, NASCAR driver with a Bush series car and the Craftsman truck series.

# 4 Making changes-- big and small



NCCDD Annual Report

Welcome to the first issue of Catalyst for Change, the new information source of the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities. A main goal of the Council is to build bridges to the community, acting as a vehicle to introduce new standards of practice for meeting needs for disabilities support that previously went unaddressed. As the Council's executive director, I invite you to explore some of our emerging areas of focus.

In this issue you will find articles on key programs that promote full community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities, demonstrating viable alternatives for policy and practice.

We are also proud to highlight the continued success of Council members in becoming leading examples for inclusion in North Carolina and beyond. Among those

featured in this edition are David Taylor and his success with micro-enterprise, Jonathan Ellis and his experience with the Real Economic Impact Tour, and Rusty Bradstock and his work with the Beyond Academics program. Also discussed are emergency preparedness and the Direct Support Professional Workforce project.

I also wish to alert you that the Council's 2006-2007 Annual Report is now available. We are proud of our grantees' accomplishments and take delight in sharing these successes with you. For copies of the report, please contact our office at (919) 420-7901.

Sincerely,

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



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