



Director's Message

Fred Orelove
Executive Director



Remarkable. There is no other word that quite captures the period in which we are living. Everywhere we turn, there appears to be a replay of "Us Against Them." Republicans vs. Democrats. Pro-war vs. anti-war demonstrators. And, especially, as portrayed vividly in New Orleans, the haves and the have-nots.

Within the world of people with disabilities and their families, competition for an assumed amount of fixed resources has also, unfortunately, created its own version of "Us Against Them." This past September 22 and 23, over 2,000 citizens who live with lifelong disabilities, their family members, and the people who work alongside them, met in Washington, D.C. in an Alliance for Full Participation Summit. (More information on the Summit is provided in the article, "From the Virginia DD Network," on page 2.)

In a three-page statement issued shortly after the Alliance meeting concluded, Summit leaders wrote, in part, "People with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families are often pitted against people with other severe, chronic and lifelong disabilities in American politics at all levels. We want to work toward the same ends as other people with disabilities. Together, we speak for ourselves and welcome positive coalitions with others."

The Partnership for People with Disabilities applauds this philosophy and approach. We are about linking people and creating coalitions. For years, disability groups have diluted their power by circling the wagons and shooting inward.

How great it will be when we can say that we live in a time that is remarkable, not for its divisiveness, but for its inclusiveness.

AN INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE SUCCESS STORY – GAVIN COX

Gavin Skyler Cox – a name often mentioned in discussions about the benefits of inclusive child care at the Partnership. Gavin's story is important to the Partnership because it represents one more step toward providing inclusive early childhood education for children with disabilities.



Gavin was born after a fairly short labor two weeks before his scheduled due date. At birth, he weighed 5 pounds, 5 ounces and was 19 inches long. Gavin was subsequently diagnosed at six weeks of age as having a rare chromosomal abnormality. Some of the obvious effects were hearing loss, impaired vision, kidney reflux, a smaller than normal pituitary gland, and some mild deformity of his ear lobes. However, with the help of a hearing aid, glasses to correct his nearsightedness, and a healthy dose of growth hormone, Gavin has continued to make progress toward a full and independent life.

It is clear to an outside observer that much of Gavin's success can be attributed to "full immersion" in traditional family and preschool activities. At his parent's insistence, he was enrolled in an inclusive child care setting at three months of age. Twenty-four months later, he remains an integral part of an inclusive child care setting at the Robert L. Taylor Friends Association child care facility in Richmond, Va. The success of this initiative is due in large measure to the tenacity of his parents and the ability of his therapist to follow him to the classroom where parents, teachers, and providers work together toward shared goals.

Ms. West, a teacher at the Friends Association child care facility recalled, "My first impression of Gavin was one of nervousness, because I was not sure that I could respond to him at the depth that he needed. Presently, I am amazed! He has made a lot of progress in his development and now his actions are

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From the Virginia DD Network Full Participation in Virginia?



The three of us, along with several dozen other Virginians, attended the Alliance for Full Participation Summit on September 22-23. The Summit's purpose was to bring together many voices from every state and every walk of life and to conclude the meeting with one vision: "We want dignity and respect for all. We want full participation for all."

In an Agenda for Full Participation released after the meeting concluded, Summit leaders listed 12 steps necessary to make the vision a reality. The first step was: "For states that still fund public and private institutions, we want to see a plan to close them over the next few years, and people with lifelong disabilities helped to live in communities, in regular houses and regular neighborhoods. Starting today we expect all states to stop placing children in institutions and segregated residential schools."

Do the leaders in Virginia share the same vision as thousands of Virginians with developmental disabilities? Are we supporting people with disabilities in the Commonwealth so that they can convey their hopes and dreams of full participation and citizenship, with all of its benefits and responsibilities, to elected and appointed officials who have the authority and responsibility to determine public policy?

The State of the States in Developmental Disabilities summarizes data on the amount of funding that each state provides to support individuals with disabilities and their families in community and institutional settings (Braddock et al., 2005). Where does Virginia stand based on the most

recent data? Near the bottom in almost every category. According to the Braddock et al. report, Virginia ranks 39th nationally in terms of its per person utilization rate of facilities (16+ beds) versus community based settings. Virginia ranks 48th in terms of its per person utilization rate of facilities with 1-15 beds. Our state is 41st in per person spending on Home and Community Based Waiver Services, and ranks 44th in spending on family support (based on spending per family). Finally, Virginia's state fiscal effort ranking for community supports dropped two places from 2002, and now stands at 47th nationally.

Virginia's low rankings are the result of its historical bias towards institutional services and its failure to commit sufficient resources to individuals with developmental disabilities or their families. We cannot develop a strong system of community supports while continuing to finance large congregate facilities and expand institutional slots.

In the words of leaders following the Summit: "We are Americans too! We want to be included in all communities in our great nation and to have all the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship. We need to be safe and free at the same time."

Fred P. Orelove

Partnership for People with Disabilities

Heidi Lawyer

Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

Colleen Miller

Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy

New Class of Va-LEND Trainees and Fellows

The faculty of the Virginia Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Program (Va-LEND) have successfully recruited a talented group of eight trainees and the first fellow in Pediatric Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. They began their training program in late August. This is the 11th class of students enrolled in the interdisciplinary leadership training program. The trainees and their disciplines are listed below:

Maria Gyure, Genetic Counseling

Katharine Hanger, Physical Therapy

Mary Leffler, Occupational Therapy

Samantha Marsh, Special Education

Courtney Roberts, Physical Therapy

Suzanne Stevens, Research

Meghan Strenk, Genetic Counseling

Julie Williams, Genetic Counseling

Colleen Wunderlich, Pediatric Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation



New Voices Planning Committee



OUR LIVES, OUR VOICES – SELF ADVOCATES SPEAK OUT



Statewide Conference held at Marriott Hotel, Richmond, Va. on October 6-7, 2005

With funding from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, the Partnership joined with the New Voices Planning Committee to organize a unique gathering of more than 200 individuals, including state agency heads, policy makers, service providers, family members, and individuals with disabilities, to discuss issues that are important to their lives. The conference featured national and state speakers who offered timely information in the areas of housing, employment, personal assistance services, transportation, and adult education. The conference also featured demonstrations of innovative and practical materials and technologies that can increase individuals' independence and quality of life.



Please check the New Voices Web site (www.vcu.edu/partnership/nv) for more information about the conference or to learn about the next New Voices Planning Committee, 2005-2007.



New Grants:



SYNERGY

In July, the Partnership for People with Disabilities received a three-year award to improve the integration of genetic information into leadership training programs, and to prepare a diverse workforce of genetic counselors with interdisciplinary leadership training to serve children with special health care needs and their families. The program, entitled SYNERGY: Virginia LEND and Genetic Counseling Working Together, is a collaborative effort between the Virginia Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (Va-LEND) Program at the Partnership, and the Genetic Counseling Program in the VCU School of Medicine. The program is one of three national awards.

SYNERGY provides supplemental funding to support genetic counselor training in leadership and disabilities, enhance multicultural recruitment to LEND training, disseminate learning modules in genetic awareness, family history and newborn screening, and provide a focus for enhancing the genetic component of LEND programs nationally. Joann Bodurtha, MD, MPH, LEND Director, is the PI for this project. Lauren Vanner-Nicely, MS, LEND core faculty in Genetic Counseling, is the SYNERGY Project Director. SYNERGY is funded by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities through a contract with the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration.

New Products

Curriculum: Violence Against Women: The Response of the Criminal Justice System

Because of the startling rate at which people with disabilities become victims of crime everyday, it is critical that professionals within the criminal justice system understand how to best accommodate them. In collaboration with the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, this initiative has trained over 125 judges, prosecutors, police officers and other professionals within the criminal justice system to respond to women with disabilities in a respectful and effective manner and to recognize their special needs.

A curriculum, entitled Violence Against Women: The Response of the Criminal Justice System, provides vital information on sexual assault, domestic violence, and "red flags," which are strong indicators that abuse or neglect may be present. It also provides information on specific disabilities and resources for follow up assistance.

For more information, contact Molly Dellinger-Wray at (804) 828-6926 or mdwray@vcu.edu.

Our Lives, Our Voices

This CD-ROM brings to life insightful first-person accounts by individuals with disabilities regarding issues that are important in their lives. Through the voices of individuals with disabilities, you will hear stories of successful and unsuccessful community inclusion. This video shows you many of the issues and how you can help individuals achieve their goals.

Length: 20 minutes

Produced by the Partnership for People with Disabilities, with funding from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities.

To order, contact Valerie Luther at (804)827-0195 or visit our Web site:
<http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/products>



Partnership Seeks Donations to Promote Inclusive Preschools

A
Preschool Inclusion
Resource Center to provide
training and technical assistance to
child care centers in the Greater Richmond
Metro Area is the focus of a new
fundraising campaign underway at the
Partnership. The effort is the first step in a
statewide effort to increase the number of
centers capable of providing quality
child care to children with
disabilities.

If you desire more information on how your gift can change the lives
of children with disabilities, please contact:

Bill Tinsley
Partnership Development Office
804-828-8243 - E-mail: watinsley@vcu.edu

By supporting the campaign for inclusive preschools for children with
disabilities, you are making an important investment in the future of Virginia's
children. Don't delay - call or write today. You'll be glad you did!

Continued from page 1

those of a typical two-year-old." She added, "I think that inclusive classroom settings are awesome. The other children learn a lot from Gavin and he has learned a lot from them. They are very protective of him and go out of their way to include him in class activities. He has some difficulty walking, but they are very patient and insistent that he has a place in the group."

Gavin's service coordinator, Kendall Lee, at Children's Hospital in Richmond, is also an outspoken advocate for inclusive early childhood education for children with disabilities.

"As someone who works with children every day, I firmly believe that children with disabilities perform better when educated with their peer group. They not only get an early start on their ABCs, they also learn social and verbal skills at an accelerated pace. In the relatively short time that I have known Gavin, he shows continuous improvement at many levels. However, much of his success is due to parental support and the therapeutic supports provided for him by the Infant and Toddler Connection of Richmond," Lee said.

The Infant and Toddler Connection, a program administered by the Partnership, coordinates early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Gavin receives professional services through an interagency agreement with Children's Hospital.

Leslie Snead, a Service Coordinator for the Infant and Toddler Connection of Richmond, maintains records on all children receiving services including Gavin, and considers him to be an example of what's possible when families, providers, and educators work together and reinforce each other. "Our office is the lead agency in the city of Richmond with the mission to ensure that children with disabilities receive services in compliance with state and federal regulations," Snead said. "Our working relationship with Children's Hospital has been excellent and Gavin's parents are active members of the parent support group."

One lesson that is clear from Gavin's story, is that children with disabilities benefit from early childhood education in classrooms alongside their same-age peers. For this reason, inclusive child care — placing children of all physical, emotional and academic abilities in the same learning environment — deserves to be supported, promoted, and practiced in communities across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

NOW AVAILABLE



Events

Abuse and Neglect of Children and Adults

with Developmental Disabilities:

A Problem of National Significance

A Comprehensive Web Course for
Professionals Serving Persons with Disabilities

Continuing Education Credits Pre-Approved

for nurses, social workers, rehabilitation
counselors, certified counselors,
psychologists, and other professionals.

Ongoing Registration

Self-paced Instruction

Nationally Tested, Comprehensive Curriculum

Individual and Group Rates

Complimentary Seminar Discussion Guide for
groups of 5 or more.

This curriculum was developed by the Partnership for People with Disabilities, A University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), with funding from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities as a Project of National Significance, in collaboration with seven UCEDDs and five Protection and Advocacy agencies across the country. For more information, visit the course website: <http://www.maltreatment.vcu.edu/info> or call the Partnership at (804)828-3876.

Adolescence and Autism Spectrum Disorders

December 6, 2005

Sheraton Park South, Richmond, VA

Fee: \$85 (includes lunch)

To register, contact Tracy Gravely at (800)649-8481

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The Virginia Transition Forum: Leadership Through Change

March 20-22, 2006

The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, Roanoke, VA

For information, contact Dale Matusевич at (540) 831-5357 or e-mail: dmatusev@radford.edu

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From Icon to I Can: Visually Based Strategies for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

April 3-4, 2006

Sheraton Park South, Richmond, VA

For information, contact Cheryl Bishop at (804) 828-6947 or e-mail: cebishop@vcu.edu

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Fourth Annual Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia Early Intervention Conference

Theme: Creating Connections: Navigating Toward Success

April 25-26, 2006

The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, Roanoke, VA

For information, contact Deana Buck (804) 827-0198 or e-mail: dmbuck@vcu.edu



Welcome Aboard



Susan Murdock

Sue Murdock comes to the Partnership for People with Disabilities after nearly 22 years at the Virginia Department of Social Services, where she worked primarily in the Office of Research conducting research and program evaluations, as well as in the Adult Services / Adult Protective Services program, and in the Division of Child Care and Development. She earned an MSW with a concentration in Planning and Administration and is currently working on her dissertation at the VCU School of Social Work.



Renee Bullano

Renee Bullano joins the Partnership as a Program Specialist in Secondary Curriculum Instruction and Transition Planning with the T/TAC. She formerly worked for the Chesterfield County School System.



Mark A. Campano

Mark joins the Partnership as the Director of the Virginia Deaf-Blind Project (Together We Can). His previous assignment was Deaf-Blind Consultant for the State of Washington's Deaf-Blind Project.



Shari Johnston

Shari Johnston joins the Partnership as Service Coordinator for the Infant and Toddler Connection, Early Intervention Program. Previously, Shari worked in a violence prevention program at the University of Minnesota.



Melinda DeBrew

Melinda DeBrew joined the Partnership as a Grants Specialist. She comes from VCU's School of Education Dean's Office where she worked as a Grants Administrator. She holds an undergraduate degree in mathematics from Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Va.



Tonya Price

Tonya Price joins the Partnership as a Program Specialist with the Training and Technical Assistance Center at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU T/TAC). Ms. Price works with school systems located in Superintendent's Regions 1 and 8. She also collaborates on the State's Effective School-wide Discipline priority project and the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM). She earned a bachelor's degree in history from Virginia State University (VSU) and a master's degree in educational administration and supervision, also from VSU.



Kristi Bond

Kristi Bond joins the Partnership as a service coordinator, Infant and Toddler Connection. She earned a bachelor's degree from Roanoke College in Spanish (minor in education), and a master's degree in liberal studies with concentrations in Spanish and philosophy from Hollins University. Her most recent assignment was as a Spanish Teacher at Moody Middle School in Henrico County.

KUDOS

Congratulations to **Kathleen B. Lynch, Ph.D.**, on her new position as Research Specialist for the Partnership. Her responsibilities include defining new research initiatives, establishing collaborative relationships with the university community, and disseminating research results to appropriate audiences.

Congratulations to **Bernice Allen**, who earned her doctorate in nursing at VCU. Her research examined decision-making in self-management for young women with mobility limiting disorders. Her dissertation committee included Dr. Kathleen Sawin, Chairperson, Dr. Rita Pickler and Martha Moon (Nursing), and Dr. Wendy Kliewer (Psychology).

Congratulations to **Susanne Croasdaile**, a Program Specialist with the T/TAC, who earned her Ph.D. in Educational Research from the University of Virginia in May 2005. Her dissertation title was: "Social organizational factors affecting the practice of teacher research."



Partnership Connection

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Partnership for People with Disabilities
700 East Franklin Street, 10th Floor
P.O. Box 843020
Richmond, VA 23284-3020
Telephone: (804) 828-3876
Fax (804) 828-0042
TTD: 1(800) 828-1120
www.vcu.edu/partnership

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