The Developmental Disabilities Institute

The Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI) is Michigan’s University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). We are one of 67 UCEDDs throughout the 50 states and in U.S. possessions such as Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. DDI was established in 1983 at Wayne State University by the Federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. DDI is mandated by ADD to provide statewide services and programs designed to enhance the lives of persons with disabilities. DDI’s programs and services accomplish the following:

- Provide education
- Assist community agencies and human service systems as they shift policies and procedures to support consumers in making choices and controlling their own lives
- Investigate processes and products through systematic qualitative and quantitative methods
- Conduct research, and
- Produce and distribute products that inform and contribute new knowledge.

Through its project sites, the institute provides support statewide to more than 12,000 persons with disabilities, family members and professionals annually. DDI collaborates with organizations throughout Michigan to develop innovative strategies for meeting the needs of diverse communities.

Our mission

Contribute to the development of inclusive communities and quality of life of people with disabilities and their families through a culturally sensitive statewide program of interdisciplinary education, community support and services, research and dissemination of information.

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Michigan Rehabilitation Services

Barbara LeRoy PhD
Now in its 13th year, the Empowerment Education Project continues to offer unique training opportunities for Michigan’s direct support professionals and persons with disabilities. The mission of Empowerment Education is to offer free training for direct support professionals in an effort to positively impact their knowledge and skill set with an ultimate goal of elevating the field. To date, over 16,000 direct support professionals and persons with disabilities have received Empowerment Education training. A train-the-trainer event was held at DDI in May of 2009. Ten new Empowerment Education trainers were welcomed to the project and provided with the tools to return to their communities and facilitate training events for direct support professionals.

One of the Institute’s more recent projects, Supporting Educational Achievement for Minorities (SEAM) aims to improve educational services, retention and postsecondary outcomes for minority families living in Southwest Detroit. To achieve this goal, project Director and DDI staff member, Julia Hernandez, assists families in navigating the education system through a series of parent trainings. Training sessions are offered in both Spanish and English and touch on topics such as special education law, individualized education plans (IEP), transition issues and supports, and least restrictive environments (LRE). The project runs through 2012 and plans to serve a minimum of 20 families per year. For more information regarding SEAM, please visit the project website at www.ddi.wayne.edu/seam.php.

As part of the Mount Pleasant Center Monitoring Project, DDI has had the opportunity to provide support and guidance to adults with disabilities who are moving into the community following the closure of the Mount Pleasant Center (MPC). Located in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, the MPC was an institute that housed persons with disabilities and was among the last remaining of its kind in Michigan. DDI’s role in this project has been to meet with former residents as they move into the community to assure that their transitions to community living are done properly, maintaining the quality support services that each individual needs. DDI will continue to follow up with former MPC residents through 2010.

The Developmental Disabilities Institute continued to offer training in the area of Healthy Relationships in 2009. The Healthy Relationships for Women with Disabilities Training focuses on how to spot and address issues of abuse and also on how to build healthy, positive relationships for women with disabilities. Training has been conducted in different parts of the state and continues to be very well-received. In 2010, the healthy relationships training expanded its focus to include men with disabilities. The need for training on this topic for men with disabilities is high as very little training exists that covers the existence of abuse against men with disabilities. Both training programs — men and women — will continue to be offered in 2010. Please contact DDI for details or check out the DDI training calendar at www.ddi.wayne.edu/events_calendar.php for future offerings.

DDI’s SEAM Project Supports Educational Achievement in the Community

Empowerment Education Training Offers Unique Training Opportunities

Healthy Relationships Training for Women and Men

Mount Pleasant Monitoring Project Supports Quality Community Living
The second annual Picnic for Detroit 360° Spanish Speaking Families was held August 5th, 2009 at the All Saints Neighborhood Park in Southwest Detroit. The picnic was both a fun event for families and also a chance for the Detroit 360° Project to encourage families to participate in community events with their children in order to meet new people and families experiencing similar challenges and issues. Over a dozen families attended the event.

New for 2009 was a series of fun parenting workshops hosted by Detroit 360° Project Family Support Navigators Rosetta Howard and Andrea Alvarez. The workshops cover an array of topics from reducing clutter in the home, to smart money budgeting, to recycling. The workshops have been very well received and will continue through 2010.

The Detroit 360° Project is now in its 6th year of operation and continues to serve families and individuals with developmental disabilities who reside in Wayne County. In addition to the ongoing family support and navigation services provided to participants by Detroit 360° Family Navigators, the project also hosts several events and support activities for families throughout the year. In 2009, Detroit 360° staff members organized a series of support group meetings geared toward our Spanish speaking families. These meetings have helped to strengthen families by providing them with opportunities to learn more about various topics and to network with other Spanish speaking families.

In August of 2009, the second annual Detroit 360° Zoo Day was held. Over 60 family members enjoyed a day at the Detroit Zoo which began with a catered breakfast on the zoo grounds. The annual zoo day is a terrific chance for families to relax and enjoy a day at the zoo and also to meet other Detroit 360° families in a fun and laid back environment.
Inclusion, Education, Among Topics Discussed During Dr. Tuli Visit

The Developmental Disabilities Institute was pleased to have hosted Dr. Uma Tuli in June of 2009. Dr. Tuli is the Founder of the Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust located in Delhi, India, and is the Chair of the Education Commission, Rehabilitation International (Dr. Barbara LeRoy, DDI Director, is the Vice Chair of the Commission). The Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust provides rehabilitation services to children with disabilities, utilizing a holistic approach in an integrated learning environment. Her pioneering concept has created an inclusive school in which at least half of the students have disabilities. Dr. Tuli was also part of the team that drafted the 1995 Persons with Disability Act in India. She has authored The Spirit Triumphs and Seen, but not Heard. She is a recognized leader in India who tirelessly advocates for barrier free environments so that people with disabilities may have equal access to communities and education. Dr. Tuli’s visit provided DDI staff with an opportunity to share ideas regarding inclusive education, family support and disability rights.

Impact of Transportation Program Linked to Quality of Life

DDI Researcher Chesley Giertz had the opportunity in 2009 to examine the impact that the Michigan Transportation Voucher Program had on the lives of persons with disabilities who participated in the program. Funded by Easter Seals Project ACTION, findings from the study indicate that the Transportation Voucher program has had a significant, positive impact on the lives of persons with disabilities who have used it by increasing their self-reported quality of life. Respondents to the study survey reported less stress, increased time out in the community, and more time to relax when using the transportation voucher versus not using it. Ms. Giertz has presented her findings locally and at state conferences and will be presenting her study internationally at the 12th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons being held in Hong Kong, China in June of 2010.

GEAR UP Focus Groups Project Addresses Inclusion

The goal of the Michigan GEAR UP Program is to give secondary students exposure to college programs and campuses prior to high school graduation. These experiences are meant to provide students with a look at the college options that are available to them after graduation. The question that DDI has been brought in to answer is to what extent are students with disabilities participating in the GEAR UP Program and if participation is low, how can the inclusion of these students be increased? DDI has partnered with The Arc Michigan, Michigan Alliance for Families, to conduct focus groups and interviews with school administrators, parents, and students at 10 Michigan high schools. Running through 2010, this project aims to shed light on the level of participation that students with disabilities have in extracurricular and college preparatory activities and programs.

S.A.F.E. Project Takes on Topic of Emergency Preparedness

Funded by a grant from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD), the Supporting All Families In Emergencies (S.A.F.E.) Project began in October of 2009. The main goal of the project is to raise awareness and provide information regarding the need for emergency preparedness for individuals and families of persons with disabilities. A parallel goal of the S.A.F.E. Project is to educate emergency response personnel in Wayne County, Michigan about the special needs of persons with disabilities in the event of a widespread emergency situation. To accomplish these goals, S.A.F.E. Project staff are conducting a series of training events for persons with disabilities, their families, and local emergency personnel. These training opportunities provide participants with the tools and knowledge necessary to be both better prepared in the event of an emergency and more sensitive and informed as to the unique needs of persons with disabilities and their families. In addition, Project Director Elizabeth Janks, along with the S.A.F.E. Project Design Team, are hosting focus groups and other research activities that will work to add vital information to the training curriculum used to conduct project training events. The S.A.F.E. Project will run through the end of 2010.

Easter Seals, DDI Host First National Family Support Navigator Academy

Funded by a grant from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) to Easter Seals, Inc., the National Family Support Navigator Academy is designed to train family members of people with disabilities and self-advocates how to discover, access, and use their local services and supports to strengthen their families. The Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI) was contracted by Easter Seals to facilitate the two-day conference. Following the conclusion of the Family Support Navigator Academy, follow-up opportunities in the form of conference calls and mentoring would be offered so that participants could continue to build and focus upon their new skills.

DDI Author Series Welcomes Writers and Advocates to Wayne State Campus

The DDI sponsored Author Series continued in 2009 with a talk and book signing given by author, educator, and advocate Ms. Jennifer Greening. Ms. Greening spoke about her experiences as the parent of a child with disabilities as well as her work in the education system. Her book, Opening Doors, Opening Lives: Creating Awareness of Advocacy, Inclusion, and Education for Our Children with Special Needs - highlights this journey. Ms. Greening’s talk was followed by a book signing during which those attending had a chance to meet and speak with Jennifer. To learn more or to purchase her book, please visit Ms. Greening’s website at jennifergreeningbooks.com.

DDI’s Author Series will continue in 2010 with events highlighted by Author and Professor of Special Education Dr. Phil Smith from Eastern Michigan University, college student and self-advocate Ms. Abby Loy, and Soccer Coach and Author Pedro Ruta. Please visit the DDI Author Series website for updates, weblinks, and schedule of events at ddi.wayne.edu/author_series.php.
DDI Associate Director for Training and Community Support, Elizabeth Janks, had the opportunity to present at the ACCESS Abu Dhabi conference held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) in March of 2009. Her presentation focused on topics surrounding family support and inclusive education for children with disabilities. Ms. Janks offered examples and findings from the Detroit Family Support 360 Project to highlight the importance of empowering families of children with disabilities. Equipping families to be better able to navigate the social service and education systems helps them to be more successful in securing the services that they need and can increase inclusive educational experiences for their children.

This marks the third straight year that a representative of DDI has participated in the ACCESS Abu Dhabi conference. DDI Director, Dr. Barbara LeRoy, has been an invited keynote speaker at previous conferences.

Michigan Partners for Freedom (MPF) is a grassroots coalition of people with disabilities, family members, advocates, and organizations working together toward the primary goal of increasing statewide awareness of and demand for self-determination. Angela Martin of DDI works with The Arc Michigan to coordinate MPF’s steering committee. Ms. Martin also helps the MPF to provide Local Leader training to persons interested in becoming community leaders in advocating for self-determination. MPF is supported by a grant from the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council to The Arc Michigan.

Michigan Partners for Freedom Continues Grass Roots Efforts, Offers Training

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Expanding Opportunities Project Seeks Increased Inclusion, Family Involvement

The Michigan Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the Child Care Bureau, the Office of Head Start and the Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI) were awarded a technical assistance grant to support state efforts to increase inclusive opportunities for young children with disabilities and their families. The grant is a collaborative award through the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD). The project team’s goal is to develop a strategic plan to address state policy, professional development, child and family involvement, local level collaboration, data and accountability for the state of Michigan. Following a June 2009 orientation meeting, teams of university professors, educators, policymakers, and parents were formed to address each component of the plan. DDI Director Dr. Barbara LeRoy and Research Assistant Ms. Chesley Giertz are leading the child/family involvement team. This multidisciplinary team is looking to have the strategic plan finalized and ready for adoption and implementation by the Fall of 2010.

Family Quality of Life (FQOL) Project Yields Preliminary Findings, Presentations

Dr. Preethy Samuel, a Research Associate with DDI, finished up the data collection phase of her study on the family quality of life of minority low-income families raising children with disabilities. Funded by the Mary Switzer Merit Research Fellowship from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), Dr. Samuel’s study incorporates the Family Quality of Life (FQOL) measurement tool developed by an international team led by Dr. Ivan Brown at the University of Toronto to examine the quality of life of families raising children with intellectual/developmental disabilities. This data is being compiled together with data from several other countries to validate the FQOL tool and also to compare trends and similarities in family quality of life outcomes. Dr. Samuel is also examining the impact of various factors such as leisure activities and service supports on family quality of life. Dr. Samuel has presented early findings from this study at the Annual NIDRR Research Fellowship Seminar in Washington, D.C. and at research gatherings held at Wayne State University in Detroit.

DDI’s Julia Hernandez Honored by Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

In February of 2009, DDI Researcher and Family Support Navigator, Julia Hernandez, was honored by the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC). The Legislative Award Ceremony was held in Lansing, Michigan at the offices of MDDC. Ms. Hernandez was presented with the Diversity Outreach Award for her hard work in the areas of outreach, training and education with minority families of persons with disabilities in the Detroit Metro area. Julia was nominated by Angela Martin, also from DDI.
2009 Presentations and Training Events

Rosetta Howard and Andrea Alvarez, DDI. Detroit Family Support 360° Project Fun Parenting Workshop Series. Parenting workshop series held over several months in 2009 at the Developmental Disabilities Institute, Detroit, Michigan.


Michael Bray, DDI (Coordinator). Empowerment Education: Consumer-driven Training for Michigan’s Direct Support Professionals – Various Topics. Multiple (77) training events were conducted at several locations throughout Michigan in 2009.


Elizabeth Janks, DDI. The Detroit Family Support 360° Project. Sustainability Strategies. Webinar conducted for the Administration on Developmental Disabilities Institute, Detroit, Michigan.

Elizabeth Janks, DDI. The Detroit Family Support 360° Project. Sustainability Strategies. Webinar conducted for the Administration on Developmental Disabilities Institute, Detroit, Michigan.


Angela Martin, DDI, Troy Butler, and Elizabeth Martin. Getting the Life You Want Through Person-Centered Planning. Presentation given at the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority Conference: Whose Life is it Anyway?! August 2009, Troy, Michigan.


Barbara LeRoy, Director, DDI. PISA 2006 Findings. Presentation given at the OECD/CRELL Conference in April, 2009, Zagreb, Croatia.


Mary Mueller. Early Intervention and Early On Presentations. Series of six presentations given to Children’s Hospital Staff and Residents during 2009, Detroit, Michigan.


Angela Martin, DDI and Elizabeth Janks, DDI. Impact of Service Support on the Quality of Life of Families Raising Children with Disabilities. Poster presented at the Annual Research Day of Occupational Therapy, Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Wayne State University, December, 2009, Detroit, Michigan.
2009–2010 Publications


Staff Professional Community Service

Barbara LeRoy, Ph.D.
Advisor
- Rehabilitation Counseling Program, Michigan State University
- Rehabilitation Counseling Program, Wayne State University
- Educational Accessibility Services, Wayne State University
- Autism Taskforce, Department of Community Health
- Developmental Disabilities Performance Improvement Team, Department of Community Health
- Volunteers, Administrators, and Coaches Program, Wayne State University
- Michigan Alliance for Families
- Disabilities Steering Committee, Health Promotion for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Community Health

Member
- Rehabilitation International (RI) Nominating Committee
- AUICD/ADO Workgroup (Annual Report)
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities Legislative Affairs Committee
- Special Interest Research Group on Aging and Intellectual Disabilities, World Health Organization
- Governor’s Appointee to Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council
- Panel reviewer:
  - U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs
  - U.S. Department of Education, National Institute on Disability, Rehabilitation and Research

Board Member
- Association for Community Advocacy (Ann Arbor, MI)
- United States International Council on Disabilities (Board Secretary)
- U.S. Delegate and Vice Chair
- Education Commission, Rehabilitation International

Angela Martin, M.S.W., L.M.S.W.
Board Member
- Sibling Leadership Network (SLN) Board
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities, Council on Community Advocacy
- The International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities, Special Interest Research Group on Comparative Policy and Practice
- Sibling Leadership Network, Chair of Policy and Advocacy Committee
- The Arc of Oakland County
- National Association of Social Workers
- The Howell Group, Representative
- Michigan Olmstead Coalition
- Michigan Partners for Freedom, Representative
- Wayne County Interagency Coordinating Committee, Representative
- Michigan Expanding Opportunities Initiative Task Force
- Michigan Department of Community Health Performance Improvement Team
- Michigan Expanding Opportunities Initiative Task Force

Karen Hobden, Ph.D.
Member
- National Association for the Dually Diagnosed
- National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation (NOAH)

Preethy Samuel, Ph.D.
Member
- American Occupational Therapy Association
- Michigan Occupational Therapy Association
- All India Occupational Therapy Association
- Editorial Team of American Journal of Occupational Therapy
- Ad Hoc Reviewer for the Journal of Intellectual Disability Research
- Ad Hoc Reviewer for the Journal on Developmental Disabilities

Julia Hernandez
Member
- Detroit Public Schools, Detroit Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)
- Diversity Advisory Committee - Wayne County Health and Family Services Head Start
- Michigan Alliance - Parent Training and Information
- Great Start Collaborative - Wayne (GSC-W) Family Support Workgroup

Chesley Giertz, LMSW
Member
- Detroit Department of Transportation’s Mobility Advisory Committee
- Michigan Expanding Opportunities Initiative
- ANIDD’s Students and Early Career Professionals Committee.

DDI Monthly Electronic Newsletter

The Developmental Disabilities Institute began a monthly electronic newsletter in 2009. The monthly communication, sent out in email format, contains information and announcements of upcoming DDI events, training opportunities and general Institute updates. If you are interested in being added to this list, please visit the DDI website www.ddi.wayne.edu and contact Dr. Karen Hobden by email at khobden@wayne.edu and thank you for your support!

Class Instruction
Michael Bray, DDI. Disability Studies in the disciplines of:
- Disability Studies
- Education
- Medicine
- Occupational Therapy
- Psychology
- Public Health Administration
- Rehabilitation
- Social Work

Elizabeth Janks, DDI. Disabilities in an Urban Society: Special Topics (SW 6700), Wayne State University, Fall 2009.

Elizabeth Janks, DDI. Practicum in Disabilities (SW 6750), Wayne State University, Fall 2009.

Preethy Samuel, DDI. Occupational Therapy Research II (OT 6070), Wayne State University, Fall 2009.

Students Trained in 2009
600 students were by the DDI staff in the disciplines of:
- Disability Studies
- Education
- Medicine
- Occupational Therapy
- Psychology
- Public Health Administration
- Rehabilitation
- Social Work

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