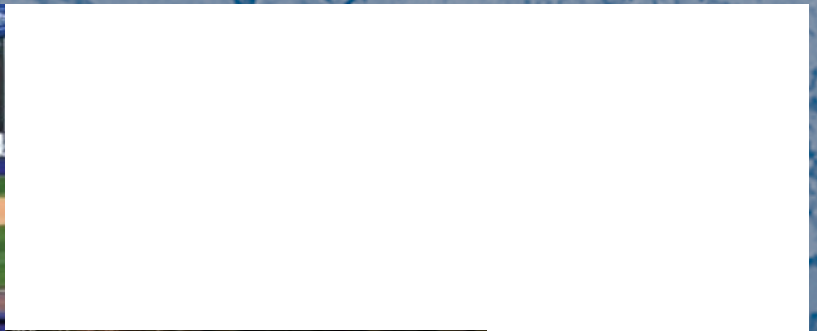


MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES COUNCIL

*Annual Report*

2007

*Highlights*



- ◆ **ADVOCACY**
- ◆ **CAPACITY BUILDING**
- ◆ **SYSTEMS CHANGE**

# The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

## *Our Vision*

The Council believes that all people, regardless of how complex or severe their disability, belong in the community with the support they need to maximize independence, be productive, and lead the lives they choose. Practices that segregate and isolate people with disabilities must end.

## *Our Mission*

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is a public policy organization that advocates for the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life.

## *To Accomplish Our Mission The Council:*



- ◆ Educates and informs policymakers about issues of importance to people with developmental disabilities and their families.
- ◆ Advocates for services, policies and practices that support people with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination and lead productive, fulfilling lives.
- ◆ Designs and funds innovative projects that promote community inclusion and improve services and supports.
- ◆ Focuses on bringing about lasting improvements in the areas of: education and early intervention, child care, employment, transportation, community supports, recreation, housing, health, and quality assurance.

## *Council Members*

The majority of the Council is comprised of people with developmental disabilities and family members of people with developmental disabilities. One member is a person or a family member of a person once or now institutionalized.

The Council also includes representatives from state agencies, the Protection and Advocacy System (Maryland Disability Law Center) and the University Center on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (Kennedy Krieger Institute). Other Council members include representatives from local agencies and non-profit organizations that provide services and supports to people with developmental disabilities.

## ❧ Initiatives and Outcomes ❧

### **Cross Disability Rights Coalition**

*People On the Go and ADAPT of Maryland*

[www.thecdrc.org](http://www.thecdrc.org)



#### **“It’s all about FREEDOM”**

CDRC has a membership of 40 self-advocates with over 30 of them actively engaged in public policy efforts and legislative advocacy. CDRC affects systems change by providing its members with leadership trainings and supporting them as they serve on key coalitions and committees, such as the Money Follows the Person Advisory Committee and the Medicaid Advisory Committee.

In the past year, CDRC worked in collaboration with the Council and other advocates to keep the issue of closing the Rosewood Center at the forefront of the legislative session. Representatives from CDRC impacted several initiatives including the Rosewood Transition Plan and the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Rebalancing Grant.

CDRC also conducted trainings and outreach efforts to residents of nursing facilities and institutions. They provided mentorship for individuals in applying for New Directions, a self-directed waiver that supports individuals to have increased choice and control in managing their supports and to live in the community.

For more information about the Cross Disabilities Rights Coalition or to become a member, contact Ken Capone at [Kenny@thecdrc.org](mailto:Kenny@thecdrc.org) or visit [www.thecdrc.org](http://www.thecdrc.org).

### **Legislative Internship at the MD General Assembly**

*People On the Go of Maryland*

The legislative internship is made possible through funding from the Council and staff support from the Arc of Maryland. It provides an opportunity for a person with a developmental disability to impact public policy during the Maryland legislative session. In 2007 Ken Capone, leader of the Cross Disabilities Rights Coalition and member of People On the Go of Maryland, interned with Senator Madaleno who represents Montgomery County. Mr. Capone provided testimony on many bills and educated lawmakers about all areas of community life on behalf of people with developmental disabilities. As a creative way to develop and guide new leaders, Ken Capone will mentor another person with a developmental disability in 2008 who will take over the legislative internship in 2009.



## ❧ Initiatives and Outcomes ❧

### **Youth Empowerment Alliance**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

[www.mdtransition.org](http://www.mdtransition.org)



**The YEA is funded by the federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities with additional supports from the Maryland Department of Education/DORS.**

The YEA, a project of the Council, is in its final year of funding. The project provided opportunities for youth and young adults with disabilities to develop independence and leadership skills as they transition from school to the adult world.

The YEA funded three mini-grants for high school and college students to promote inclusion of youth with disabilities in their schools and communities. The grants impacted 100 youth with activities focusing on inclusion in general education classrooms and extracurricular sports and training seminars on disability awareness.

The YEA youth leadership curriculum, “Taking Control of Your Life” was presented at the 2007 Maryland Transition Conference for 60 youth and young adults with disabilities. The curriculum was also distributed to approximately 400 education, community, and service organizations nation-wide. The 40-hour curriculum along with a collection of YEA Newsletters is now available at [www.md-council.org/resources/yea.html](http://www.md-council.org/resources/yea.html).

### **Leaders in Disability Policy**

The Coordinating Center, Abilities Network, Maryland Association

of Non Profit Organizations, Leadership Anne Arundel, MD Technical Assistance Program, Ciekot & Elliott

[www.bealeader.info](http://www.bealeader.info)

The Leaders in Disability Policy (LDP) project helps people with disabilities, family members and other advocates to develop skills to positively affect policy change at the highest levels. In 2007 the project trained new participants using a revised curriculum and team mentor approach. An on-line training module was accessed by 107 additional participants who chose to take a portion of the course from their homes.

LDP was successful in recruiting Ciekot & Elliott, an experienced policy and advocacy firm, as a community partner to collaborate on the program. Ciekot & Elliott is working in conjunction with LDP to make the project a permanent self-sustaining program. LDP continues recruitment and the seeking of diverse funding sources.



**LDP Participants educate lawmakers by conveying personal stories, sharing fact sheets and advocating on behalf of all people with developmental disabilities.**

For more information on LDP and to find out how to sponsor someone to participate in this unique leadership training, visit [www.bealeader.info](http://www.bealeader.info).

## ❧ *Initiatives and Outcomes* ❧

### ***Ending Institutionalization - Community for All***

The Council continued its long-term commitment to ending Maryland's use of institutions for people with developmental disabilities. A long history of successful deinstitutionalization in Maryland and throughout the nation provides evidence that people now in institutions can be well supported in the community with a higher quality of life.

Working collaboratively with people with disabilities, parents and other member organizations of the Developmental Disabilities Coalition, the Council engaged in a range of activities and strategies toward the goal of institutional closure and "community for all."

2007 activities focused on the closure of the Rosewood Center, the state's largest and most troublesome institution.



#### ***Highlights include:***

- ◆ Undertaking a media initiative to communicate effectively with the public and policymakers about why Rosewood Center must close.
- ◆ Co-sponsoring a 2-day symposium to develop alternatives to institutionalization for individuals with developmental disabilities involved in the criminal justice system. Over 100 participants attended the symposium including judges, state officials, service providers and advocates.
- ◆ Supporting the publication of "Rosewood Center: A Demand for Closure" by the Maryland Disability Law Center. The publication detailed seriously failed practices and treatment at the center. Over 400 copies were distributed throughout the state and to all policymakers in Maryland.
- ◆ Unrelenting advocacy with the Governor, high-level policymakers and lawmakers about the problems at Rosewood and recommendations about appropriate community alternatives based on national best practice.

These activities led to heightened media scrutiny, increased concern and attention by the Governor and key legislators, a broader and louder outcry for the closure of Rosewood Center and a momentum toward closure.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

☞ *Initiatives and Outcomes* ☞

### ***Reducing the Wait for Community Supports***

[www.EndTheWaitNow.com](http://www.EndTheWaitNow.com)

In 2007, the Council re-energized its commitment to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families on the Developmental Disabilities Administration Waiting List. The list totaled over 16,000 people in 2007, with half of them in critical need of at least one service.

Working with its partners in the Developmental Disabilities Coalition, the Council committed funds and staff resources to expand and diversify strategies targeted at getting a state commitment for a multi-year Waiting List funding initiative. This education and grassroots effort was named the End the Wait Now! Campaign and activated multiple strategies.

A website dedicated to the campaign was developed to provide extensive information and resources; a network of 8 local volunteer coordinators was established and activated; a media consultant assisted with communicating the Campaign message to the public and policymakers; and the first in a series of YouTube-type videos was made. The videos are an innovative way for people with developmental disabilities and their families who are stuck on the Waiting List to tell their stories. The videos will be used as a part of the overall Campaign's advocacy.

**END THE WAIT NOW! CAMPAIGN**

**"BE AWARE. FIND OUT MORE. GET INVOLVED"**

**WWW.ENDTHEWAITNOW.COM**

### ***Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature***

The Council co-hosted this annual event that drew over 350 participants in 2007, including people with developmental disabilities, parents, providers, and other advocates. Interest was so high that registration had to be closed. Following a briefing on priority issues and rallying comments from legislative champions, participants met with their legislators to advocate for community services funding and the passage of bills important to people with disabilities and their families.



## COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

☞ Initiatives and Outcomes ☞

**Family NETWorks**

[www.family-networks.org](http://www.family-networks.org)



Family NETWorks, the Council's comprehensive online resource, continues to receive a great number of visitors, averaging over 10,000 unique visits monthly. We now know that these visitors are not only from Maryland, but also from all over the country.

Family NETWorks, the Council's comprehensive online resource, continues to receive a great number of visitors, averaging over 10,000 unique visits monthly. We now

The website provides information on current news and events, connects users to resources on a wide range of topics, and spotlights important topics. A related list serve connects 250 families, professionals and others who want to share ideas and information or seek answers and needed resources. In the past, Family NETWorks has awarded small grants to help support groups get started, continue to grow, and reach their communities. Most of those groups are still active and supporting families in their communities. Following is a list of some of the groups that Family NETWorks supported that are still having an impact.

- Families for Intensive Autism Treatment
- Anne Arundel County Chapter of the Autism Society of America
- The Autistic Children's Support Group of Worcester County, Inc.
- FOCUS – Families of Children with Autism Support Group
- F.R.I.E.N.D.S. – Family Resource Information Education Network for Down Syndrome
- Korean American Disabled People (KADPA)
- Maryland Fragile X Resource Group

## HEALTH

Projects approved at the end of 2007. Watch for their progress and impact.

**Families as Faculty: Parents' Place of Maryland** – This project will offer a unique training experience for medical students provided by families in their homes regarding children with disabilities and special health care needs. Additional funding provided by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

**HOMES: Maryland Disability Law Center** – The “Helping Obtain Medicaid Essential Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities” project will expand to provide training for adults with developmental disabilities that enables them to advocate for their rights to health care, including how to obtain services that help them remain in their own homes or with family members.

**Impact of Consent: Resource Connections of Prince George's County** – This initiative will promote quality healthcare for people with disabilities through education of family members, healthcare providers, and individuals themselves, about decision-making and informed consent.

For more information go to [www.md-council.org](http://www.md-council.org) and click on projects.

## CHILD CARE

☞ Initiatives and Outcomes ☞**Project Include Me**

*The Wicomico County Local Management Board*

In 2007, the Council approved two years of funding for an inclusive child care initiative, Project Include Me, to support providers in rural Wicomico County to care for children with developmental disabilities or delays in typical child care settings. A typical child care setting is center based or home based care, a before and/or after-school program, a summer camp or anywhere that a child without a disability would attend. The Wicomico County Local Management Board is the lead agent in administering funds to support the child care providers in this project, which enables the project to leverage other community resources as well. Funding for the project is used for training, on-site consultation, and/or equipment, modifications and adaptations.



Within its first year, Project Include Me has exceeded its performance measures. The project conducted a kick-off seminar attended by over 50 child care providers and engaged in community outreach efforts. Targeted community trainings for family members and providers were completed, benefiting 16 children with a range of developmental disabilities in their community child care settings. In addition to accessing child care, the project works to connect children and their families with other resources such as medical assistance, transportation, mentoring, and other community programs.

A non-profit organization called Kindness of Strangers has also partnered with Project Include Me to provide funding for the project to purchase accessible equipment such as an Easy Pivot chair, changing tables and reading materials for children with visual impairments. Through a partnership with the Children Enter School Ready to Learn Committee and the Birth to Four Network, Project Include Me implemented a targeted outreach plan to pediatricians in order to increase awareness about available resources and early detection.

Strong community collaboration and awareness of the project's ongoing success are expected to help garner additional funding support for the project to continue beyond the Council's initial grant.

For more information about Project Include Me contact the coordinator, Beth Cooney at [bcooney@wicomicocounty.org](mailto:bcooney@wicomicocounty.org).

## ☞ Initiatives and Outcomes ☞

### ***Inclusive Education: Accelerating Systems Change***

*Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education*

[www.mcie.org](http://www.mcie.org)



**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

2007 marked the second year of funding for the Inclusive Education: Accelerating Systems Change Project designed to support students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. The project builds upon previous efforts supported by the Council. The purpose of the project is to increase the number of students with disabilities in Maryland who are placed in general

education classes in their neighborhood schools; promote systemic change through advocacy and capacity-building; and support students and families in obtaining more inclusive educational opportunities through the Individualized Education Plan process.

In 2007, the project developed a training module for the Baltimore City Public School System to train their school police departments on how to handle situations involving students with disabilities. MCIE also concentrated on the development and expansion of Least Restrictive Environment workgroups in 5 jurisdictions across the State, while continuing to provide advocacy and informal representation to more than 150 students and families seeking a lesser restrictive educational environment.

### ***Howard County Public School System - Project Discovery***

*Arc of Howard County / F.A.P.E. Family Advocacy & Parent Education Program of Howard County*

In 2007, Howard County Public School System was awarded a three year grant to develop and implement an individualized transition planning process for students with developmental disabilities who attend middle schools. The long term goal of Project Discovery is to ensure that students with disabilities successfully transition to adult life.

The project is developing transition plans based upon the individual needs and desires of students transitioning from high school to the adult world by using the Individualized Career Planning (ICP) process. The project is being implemented in 18 middle schools throughout Howard County. Project Discovery promotes customized employment, self-employment, and/or participation in career training or higher education as outcomes for students with developmental disabilities when they exit the school system. To help students achieve their goals the project offers expert training, technical assistance and input from instructors and a transition workgroup to steer the ICP process. The project focused heavily on building partnerships with businesses and other community participants in its initial stages.



### ***High School Assessments & Diplomas Options for Students with Disabilities***

The Council served on a Task Force which completed their work on providing recommendations to the State Board of Education. The recommendations resulted in several adaptations to the Maryland High School Assessments, including modifications designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

## TRANSPORTATION

☞ *Initiatives and Outcomes* ☞

**Project Ride**

SEEC

[www.freedomintransit.org](http://www.freedomintransit.org)



Project Ride is administered by SEEC with support from the Council and the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriot Foundation. The project increases opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to

access their communities by providing travel training services, engaging in systems change work and educating service providers and transit personnel. Project Ride staff received the 2007 Edward Bynum Leadership and Advocacy Award from the Maryland Transit Administration for making public transportation more accessible to people with developmental disabilities.

In 2007, 14 people with varying disabilities completed Project Ride's travel-training program, allowing them greater access to recreational activities and employment opportunities. The Harford County Department of Community Services engaged Project Ride to create a "Train the Trainer" curriculum that included information on best practices for supporting people with developmental disabilities. This new curriculum is being distributed to all provider agencies in the Harford County area. In addition, presentations were conducted for 145 transit personnel and service provider staff regarding transportation resources, ADA regulations and disability awareness.

The project's website, [www.freedomintransit.org](http://www.freedomintransit.org) provides current transit information for people with disabilities and their families, resources for transit personnel, and one-on-one travel training sessions for adults and transitioning students.

**After Keshav was hired at a public relations firm he set a goal to learn how to use public transportation. Keshav participated in Project Ride's individual travel-training program and received one-on-one instruction that specifically fit his needs. Keshav faced challenges during his travel training sessions such as understanding bus schedules, deciphering road signs and planning which route to take. Keshav is now comfortable with asking a bus driver for assistance and locating landmarks in his community. With the support of Project Ride's staff and his desire for independence, Keshav is able to travel safely to work and other activities as he chooses.**



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

❧ *Initiatives and Outcomes* ❧

### **Small Grants**

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*Each year the Council sets aside funds to invest in small, one-time-only projects or activities of a limited duration. Examples of Small Grants funded by the Council in 2007 include:*

- ◆ Supported the 10th Annual Maryland Respite Awareness Day Conference by providing free registration for 46 people with disabilities and their family members to attend the event. There were over 270 in attendance including, professionals, caregivers, advocates and policymakers, all brought together to examine quality respite care needs throughout the lifespan.
- ◆ Supported the Maryland Youth Leadership Forum which provided role models and mentors to teach 28 high school juniors and seniors with disabilities about leadership, independence and how to stand up for their rights.
- ◆ Funded a guest speaker/trainer for the New Tools, New Connections Conference who provided information on person centered planning. The conference was attended by over 200 self-advocates, families, professionals and youth who learned about Medicaid Waiver services available in Maryland.
- ◆ Sponsored a self-advocate from the under-represented eastern shore area to participate in the Arc of MD Partners in Policymaking program, designed to provide people with developmental disabilities and parents with information and skills to advocate for full inclusion in community life.
- ◆ Co-sponsored an updated version of the Baltimore Commission on Disabilities Resource Guide for Individuals with Disabilities, which was distributed to 25,000 people in Baltimore County. The guide contained disability specific information on summer camps, educational opportunities, housing resources, and transportation and emergency assistance services.

### **Conference Participation Fund**

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The Council continued to assist people with developmental disabilities and their family members to attend state and national conferences with the purpose of sharing information and resources with others in the community.

For more information on Small Grants and the Conference Participation Fund visit, [www.md-council.org](http://www.md-council.org) and click on funding.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

❧ *Initiatives and Outcomes* ❧

*Coalitions and Partnerships*

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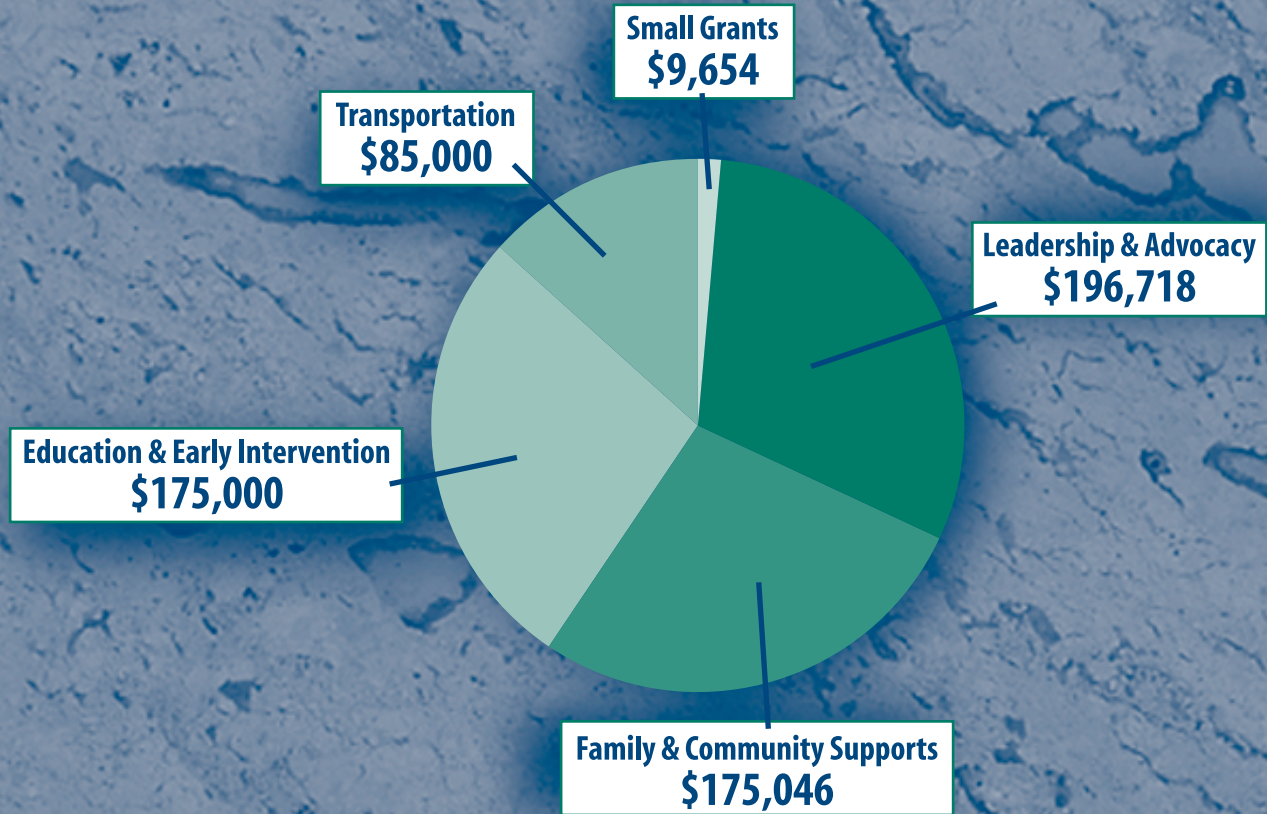


The DD Council worked in partnership with people with developmental disabilities, parents, advocates & other organizations on a wide range of critical issues.

*In 2007 the Council worked on the following key Coalitions, Committees and Taskforces in our efforts to bring about positive lasting change:*

- Developmental Disabilities Coalition
- Education Advocacy Coalition for Students w/Disabilities
- MD Respite Care Coalition
- MD Juvenile Justice Coalition
- MD Civil Rights Coalition for People with Disabilities
- Coalition for Supported Parenting
  
- Autism Waiver Advisory Committee
- Minority Disproportionality Committee
- Special Education State Advisory Committee
- MD Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation
  
- Child Care Advisory Council
- MD Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities
- Grants Review for United Way Impact Council
- State Interagency Coordinating Council
  
- Medicaid Matters! Maryland
- Inclusive Child Care Implementation Plan Work Group
- Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program Work Group
- National Inclusive Schools Week Together We're Better Contest
- Training Advisory Group

2007 PROJECT EXPENDITURES



*Total Project Expenditures in 2007: \$641,419*

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is funded through a grant authorized under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000.

*This publication is available in accessible formats upon request at 1-800-305-6441 or [info@md-council.org](mailto:info@md-council.org)*

# The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

## 2007 COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Vice-Chairperson  
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**Carol Ann Baglin**  
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