



Highlights: Annual Report

MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

Vision OUR VISION

The Council believes that all people with developmental disabilities should receive the support they need to maximize independence, be productive, and lead the lives they choose in the community. Practices that segregate and isolate people with disabilities must end.

Mission 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.

Accomplish 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.

The majority of Council Members are people with developmental disabilities or family members of people with a developmental disability. One member is a person or a family member of a person once or now institutionalized. The Council includes representatives from state agencies, the Protection & Advocacy System (Maryland Disability Law Center) and the University Center on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities). Other Council members include representatives from local agencies and non-profit organizations that provide services and supports to people with developmental disabilities.

Working for communities that include and support everyone.

Ending Institutionalization & Building Community Supports

2008 marked the long awaited announcement that Maryland's largest institution for people with intellectual disabilities, the Rosewood Center, would close and its residents would move to the community. This resulted from many years of persistent advocacy by the Council and many other advocates, including people with developmental disabilities, their families and other local and statewide organizations. The closure of the Rosewood Center and the transformed lives people will enjoy remind us all not to be dissuaded from fighting for the rights and opportunities that people with disabilities deserve – no matter how long it takes or how discouraged we may become along the way.

In partnership with the Developmental Disabilities Coalition, the Council:

- Successfully advocated for the development of community-based services for people with developmental disabilities involved in the criminal justice system and strict limitations on who could be placed in the state's new forensics facility.
- Served on the Closure Advisory Committee to support a successful closure process.
- Garnered TV & print media attention to educate policymakers and the public about supporting the closure of Rosewood.
- Contracted with an Academy Award-winning filmmaker to document the transition from institutional services to community supports, the challenges and the transformation in people's lives.
- In addition, the Council collaborated with the Developmental Disabilities Administration to select and monitor a mentoring project that supports families as they transition their loved ones from an institutional setting to the community.

“I've got freedom now.” – *former Rosewood resident*



EXECUTIVE ORDER:

January 9, 2008

I, MARTIN O'MALLEY, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS OF MARYLAND, HEREBY PROCLAIM THE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE ORDER, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY: A. The Department shall develop and implement a plan to close the Rosewood Center by Fiscal Year 2010.

Improving Education

Accelerating Systems Change

The Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE) focused on changing local and state policies and empowering parents to advocate on their own to effect systemic change within local school systems. MCIE trained 340 parents regarding their child's education rights and planned and presented training to 140 Baltimore City security officers, police officers and security personnel regarding the use of restraint against students with disabilities.

Project Discovery

Through this Council supported initiative, Project Discovery utilizes an innovative approach to facilitate the transition process for middle and high school students with disabilities in the Howard County Public School System. By using individualized career planning, Project Discovery supported students to develop representation portfolios with a focus on customized employment, self-employment, and/or participation in career training or higher education. This initiative is being implemented in 18 middle schools across Howard County. The principles of individualized career planning are being taught to middle school staff throughout the county. Once fully implemented and refined, this innovative approach should serve as a model for other counties.

Life After High School

Trish Foley, Parent

Our family decided to participate in Project Discovery, a process that begins transition planning in middle school. It was during our Discovery meeting that a general educator pointed us on a path that we would not have otherwise taken for our son with autism. By seeing our son through his eyes, we were able to see talents and skills we hadn't seen before, and more importantly, how to turn this into meaningful employment. We are thinking about him working independently in an office. We now write his Individualized Education Plans to include course work such as the yearbook to work on socialization similar to what he will experience on the job, and content classes like software applications to work on skill acquisition. Through Project Discovery, we've opened up the high school course book and looked at all the courses to see opportunities for skill building where we hadn't looked before.



Shane Foley, Marriotts Ridge High School

“Since joining Project Discovery it has made me view students and their abilities in a different way.” – *Participating Teacher*

Improving Education

“There is a brilliant child locked inside every student” – Teacher

Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

Maryland continues to rank at the bottom nationally in terms of educating children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, as required by law. In 2008, the Council continued its commitment to identify strategies that promote lasting systems change, support advocacy and build capacity in the schools so many more students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment. As a first step, the Council began by convening LRE Roundtables to solicit input from key advocates and leaders on this issue regarding challenges, opportunities, potential strategies, and promising ideas. In 2009, next steps include broader outreach and the development of one or more funding initiatives.

Promoting Inclusive Child Care

Project Include Me

Project Include Me (PIM) supports the inclusion of children with developmental disabilities and/or delays in inclusive child care settings by providing training and equipment, and conducting on-site consultation to licensed child care providers in Wicomico County. In 2008, 87 people were trained and used that training to facilitate the inclusion of additional children with disabilities in child care settings. Just this year PIM has

maintained 22 children with disabilities and/or delays in inclusive child care settings bringing the overall total to 65, which surpasses the expected goal of 30 children. The Maryland State Department of Education has since recognized the success of the project and awarded PIM a grant to sustain services in Wicomico County and to expand into Somerset and Worcester Counties.

Being Included

Beth Cooney, PIM Coordinator

Through PIM children increase their self esteem and sense of belonging. It is a great relief for the parents to see that their children are being cared for appropriately and is completely included in the provider's activities. For example, a child care provider for a two year old needing gross motor skill development received a walker with a suspension kit and harness. The use of this equipment enabled him to build his leg strength by encouraging him to pull himself from a chair or the floor and play with the other children. Project Include Me has changed his life not only in the child care setting but in his community as well.





End the Wait

The Creed family has been on the Waiting List for 10 years.

Photo by Jennifer Bishop

“We would love to take care of our daughter forever, but we can’t...we need help now.” – *Mrs. Creed*

Advocating to End the Wait

During the course of 2008, we witnessed the Developmental Disabilities Waiting List grow from 17,250 to 18,750 people with no indication that the state plans to make this a public policy and funding priority. With 94% of the people on the list indicating that they need support now – not in the future –and with Maryland ranked 43rd in the nation in terms of the amount of funding it devotes to services for people with developmental disabilities, this remained a top priority for the Council.

The movement to get elected and state officials to make the waiting list a priority became known as the End The Wait Now! Campaign (ETWN) and involves a partnership between people with developmental disabilities, parents, the Council, The Arc of Maryland and other DD Coalition members.

In addition to extensive advocacy with legislators and state officials, the ETWN Campaign’s strategy expanded in 2008 to include regional coordinators, outreach to new partners, a dynamic website, broader press coverage made possible by a media consultant, and the filming of 7 Waiting List videos posted on YouTube, one of which was viewed over 11,000 times.

The ETWN Campaign seeks to harness the collective frustration, anger and influence of people on the Waiting List, their families and other advocates to secure a commitment from the state to provide adequate funding for essential community supports and services.

www.EndTheWaitNow.com

Advancing Quality Health Care

In 2008, the Council supported three new health related projects focused on improving health care quality and access through advocacy, education, training and information dissemination.

HOMES Helping Obtain Medicaid Essential Services

The first grant was awarded to the Maryland Disability Law Center (MDLC) to expand its HOMES (Helping Obtain Medicaid Essential Services) Project to serve adults, as well as children. The purpose of HOMES is to improve access to the Medicaid Program and DDA's community waiver services for people with developmental disabilities. MDLC produced and distributed 2 new booklets focused on the rights of adults with developmental disabilities entitled "Accessing Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities through Maryland Medical Assistance/Medicaid" and "Get the Health Care and other Services You Need Under Medical Assistance/Medicaid." The project also developed 2 training programs on Medicaid services and legal rights, one designed for providers/professionals/families and the other for people with disabilities. Training was provided for 60 adults with developmental disabilities and over 360 provider agency staff, advocates, resource coordinators and families. On a systemic level, MDLC successfully advocated to improve DDA's process of providing written notification and appeal rights to waiver enrollees denied services available under the waiver.

Impact of Consent

The second grant was awarded to Resource Connections of Prince George's County for the Impact of Consent project. The project is designed to promote quality healthcare for people with disabilities through education of family members, service providers, healthcare providers, and people with developmental disabilities about issues of decision-making and true informed consent. A website will be developed for a variety of audiences regarding health care decision-making among adults with intellectual disabilities.

Families as Faculty

The Parents' Place of Maryland received the third grant to implement the Families as Faculty Project, a training experience that offers pediatric residents, medical students, and masters-level health professionals an opportunity to learn from families. In this past year, seventeen students from the University of Maryland, School of Medicine Division of Behavioral and Developmental Pediatrics and the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, Masters in Public Health Program participated in home visits and learned about the families, their challenges, and experiences with health care professionals. Students have found the experiences to be invaluable because it gives them tremendous insight into the life of a child with disabilities and special health care needs. The students' supervisors have been so impressed with the positive feedback that they are interested in publishing research based on the impact of the project.

"It turned out to be a tremendously valuable experience for the students and several of them rated it the best experience in their rotation!" – *Participating Supervisor, Families as Faculty*

Supporting Leadership Development and Advocacy

The Council continued its strong commitment to self-advocacy, self-determination and leadership development in 2008. Believing that people with developmental disabilities and parents of children with disabilities must be prepared and empowered to speak for themselves, advocate for change and lead the way, the Council supported a diverse range of initiatives and activities.

In 2008, the Council:

- Supported the Cross Disability Rights Coalition (CDRC), whose membership and leaders are people with disabilities, to be active on a range of issues including deinstitutionalization, transportation and health care. CDRC educated over 60 providers, families and support staff about the benefits of community living, influenced policy and program decisions by having members with disabilities on key statewide committees, testified on bills in the legislature, and continued efforts to foster young leadership.

- Sponsored a Legislative Internship in the Maryland State Senate for the fourth consecutive year. People On the Go selected the intern who learned to impact public policy through the legislative process with support from The Arc of Maryland. A new intern was also selected and mentored to prepare for the 2009 session.

- Co-hosted DD Day at the Legislature, which drew over 350 people with developmental disabilities, parents, providers, and other advocates to Annapolis to educate and inform legislators and rally for change. This year's event included Governor O'Malley who received outspoken support for his decision to close the Rosewood Center. The media followed the event, which resulted in positive public education about the closure of Rosewood.



Ken Capone
Leader of the Cross Disabilities Rights Coalition



Governor, O'Malley was presented with yellow roses by former residents of the Rosewood Center. The roses symbolized friendship and freedom.



February 25, 2008
Developmental Disabilities Day in Annapolis

“...I have to believe that living in the community and the positives that flow from that far outweigh the disruption in the here and now.”

— Governor Martin O'Malley, on the closure of Rosewood

Supporting Leadership Development and Advocacy

“Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.” – Will Rogers

■ Sponsored a parent of a child with a developmental disability who is an emerging advocate to participate in Leaders in Disability Policy (LDP), a 6-month leadership program. LDP, developed in previous years through a grant from the Council, prepares people with disabilities, family members and others who are passionate about disability policy to advocate for change by focusing on policies and civic action that promote full inclusion and participation in society.



Jennifer Bishop and son Nathaniel

“I came away with one burning idea: that even just one person can have a voice and help to influence policy. I felt inspired to use whatever skills I have to improve awareness of the needs of people with disabilities.” — *Jennifer Bishop, Leaders in Disability Policy graduate*

■ Completed work on our Youth Empowerment Alliance (YEA) project. As a result of this in-house initiative, an extensive training program on self-advocacy, employment, community resources and IEP student participation was developed & 250 copies were distributed nationwide; 10 diverse projects that promoted youth leadership & inclusion were completed in the community; local self-advocacy groups began recruiting more young adult members; and six youth-friendly newsletters reached 2500 people and organizations. The YEA newsletters and training curriculum are available for download at the Council’s website.

www.MD-Council.org

Increasing Transportation Opportunities

Project Ride

In its final year of Council funding, Project Ride which is administered through SEEC, trained people with developmental disabilities to use the bus, light rail and subway to maximize their independence and freedom in the community. They also expanded disability awareness and sensitivity trainings for transit providers into two additional counties. Project Ride presented comprehensive transportation resource trainings to 66 people including service providers, people with disabilities and family members.

Small Grants

Each year the Council invests in small, one-time-only projects and activities. The purpose of the Council's Small Grants is to promote systemic change, capacity building, and advocacy that encourages and supports the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in the community. In 2008, Council Small Grants supported a diverse range of activities including:

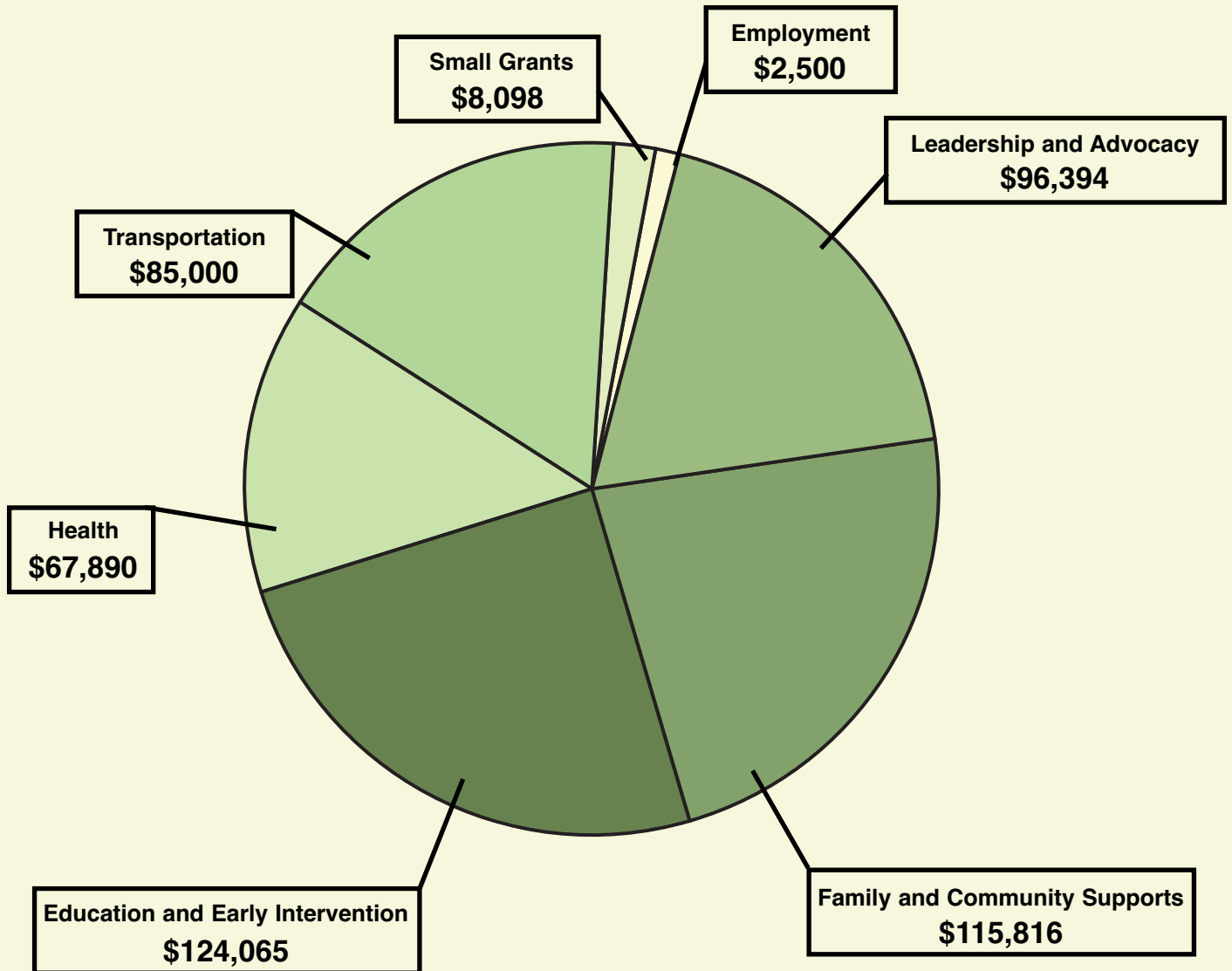
- A transitioning youth workshop focused on autism
- Parent workshops held on the Eastern Shore focusing on Social Security benefits and Financial & Estate Planning
- A seminar on Universal Design for Learning which promotes education designed to accommodate a wide variety of learners, including students with disabilities
- A weeklong Youth Leadership Forum
- An ADA Anniversary Celebration
- The annual respite care conference
- A Poster & Essay Contest to celebrate the annual National Inclusive Schools Week
- The State Employment Leadership Network, a national technical assistance project committed to improving employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities.



“Inclusion treasures diversity and builds community” – Inclusion Network

MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

2008 Project Expenditures



Total Project Expenditures in 2008: \$499,763

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is funded through a grant authorized under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000. The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is 100% federally funded.

This publication is available in accessible formats/languages upon request at 1-800-305-6441 or info@md-council.org

MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

2008 Council Members

Liz Weintraub
Chairperson
Montgomery County

Tom Webb
Vice-Chairperson
Kent County

Carol Ann Baglin
Represented by
Rosemary King-Johnston
Division of Special
Education, MSDE

Sandy Cobb
Department of Aging

Catriona Johnson
Developmental
Disabilities
Administration,
Dept of Health and
Mental Hygiene

Eva Cowen
Montgomery County

Cathy Raggio
Maryland Department
of Disabilities

Victoria Deurr
Carroll County

William DuSold
Anne Arundel County

Gail Godwin
Baltimore City

George Flamer
Talbot County

Angela Harp
Baltimore County

Polly Huston
Division of Rehabilitation
Services, MSDE

Virginia Knowlton
Maryland Disability
Law Center

Jane Wessely
Department of Health
and Mental Hygiene

Shin Ki Kim
Baltimore County

Joan Lawrence
Kennedy Krieger
Institute

Wendell McKay
Howard County

Vicki Mills
Frederick County

Susan Athey-Oxford
Garrett County

Aileen O'Hare
Montgomery County

Lynne Pattison
Frederick County

Steve Pyles
Prince George's County

Jose Sanchez
Baltimore County

David Schlegel
Cecil County

Lori Thompson
Wicomico County

Tim Quinn
The Arc of Northern
Chesapeake Region

Jeri Wasco
Montgomery

Robert Watson
Prince George's County

*Grace Pushparany
Williams*
Prince George's County

Julie Venners Yannes
Montgomery County

2008 Council Staff

Brian Cox
Executive Director

Catherine Lyle
Deputy Director

Angela Castillo-Epps
Director of
Communications/
Policy Specialist

*Michelle Hart and
Kelli Nelson*
(January-May 2008)
Co-Directors of Public
Policy Initiatives

Rachel London
(September- present)
Director of Children
& Family Policy

Linda Nelson
Office Manager

Ann Marie Lane
Youth Empowerment
Alliance,
Project Director

Stephanie Watkins
Family NETWORKs,
Resource Specialist