

MAKING a DIFFERENCE

REAL HOMES. REAL CAREERS. REAL LEARNING. REAL INFLUENCE. REAL SUPPORTS.



**NEWS
FOR YOU:**

WADDIE WELCOME Symbol of the Beloved Community.

DOJ SETTLEMENT And Justice for All...

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA Issues on the Table for 2011.

GCDD
GEORGIA COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities collaborates with Georgia's citizens, public and private advocacy organizations and policy makers to positively influence public policies that enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families.

GCDD provides this through education and advocacy activities, program implementation, funding and public policy analysis and research.



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MAKING a DIFFERENCE

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New Year, New Initiatives


During the last ten years, *Making A Difference* magazine has had numerous articles about the Olmstead Decision. As you will recall, this is the United States Supreme Court decision directed at the State of Georgia indicating that providing services in institutions is a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Many of us believed that with this decision, the State would begin closing institutions and moving people with developmental disabilities into the community. Instead, the State seemed to fight the decision and continued to keep people in institutions and admit individuals on a regular basis. At the same time, organizations such as the Georgia Advocacy Office were identifying cases of abuse, neglect and even death in the institutions.

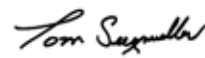
Both of these resulted in the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) taking the State of Georgia to court to create better conditions in the institutions and to require the state to move people into the community. After much negotiation, the two sides settled this lawsuit. The most important aspects of the agreement are that the State will not admit anyone into a state institution after July 1, 2011 and will move all people with developmental disabilities out of institutions by July 1, 2015. In addition, the Department of Justice realized people could not be moved into the community without quality services available to provide support. This issue of *Making a Difference* focuses on the DOJ Settlement and what it means to the disability community.

We also want to celebrate 2011! The New Year marks the 40th anniversary of the Developmental Disabilities Bill of Rights and Assistance Act of 1971. GCDD is proud to be one of the 55 entities created throughout the U.S. and territories as a result of this historic legislation. And be sure to join GCDD at the 14th Annual Disability Day at the Capitol on February 24, 2011.

Also, beginning with this issue, Governor Nathan Deal has agreed to provide a quarterly article. We congratulate the Governor on his election and look forward to working with him on issues important to people with developmental disabilities.

You can learn more about Governor Deal and the legislature by following the Georgia General Assembly through the GCDD's new and improved website www.gcdd.org, by subscribing to *Moving Forward* at www.gcdd.org/join-our-mailing-lists/, and following us on Facebook (Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities) and Twitter (twitter.com/georgiacouncil). We hope that you will find our new tools useful in helping you find out about news and events that affect you and your family members.


Eric E. Jacobson
Executive Director, GCDD


Tom Seegmüller
Chairperson, GCDD

We hope that you like the new look for our magazine and that you will let us know what articles you would like to see by e-mailing us at vmsuber@dhr.state.ga.us, subject line: **Letters To The Editor.**

GCDD VIEWPOINT

How to Reach Us

Letters to the Editor

Letters should include the writer's full name, address, phone number, and may be edited for the purpose of clarity and space.

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Audio or Large Print Versions:

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It is our policy to publish readers' comments. Contents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of GCDD, the editors or state government.

Magazine Sponsorship:

For sponsorship opportunities contact: Kim Shapland at 770.578.9765 or kim@oneillcommunications.com.

To Georgia's Disability Community:

On election night, I stood before all of Georgia and declared in my acceptance speech,

“We are going to make this state great!”

As promised, my administration will aim to create a land of opportunity and prosperity for everyone lucky enough to call Georgia home.

GUEST ARTICLE



“As governor, I can assure you that my administration will continue to seek new and innovative ways to better support initiatives that promote independence, employment and the health and well-being of the great people of our state.”

Georgia has a record of strong and visionary leadership, but each new governor has a chance to improve in certain areas. I feel strongly that we can expand opportunities and boost the quality of life for Georgia's disability community. As governor, I'll implement the recent settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice, which is a bold call for 25 specific action items. These include:

- Increasing community crisis services to serve individuals in a mental health crisis without admission to a state hospital, including crisis services centers, crisis stabilization programs, mobile crisis and crisis apartments
- Creating at least 1,000 Medicaid waivers to transition all individuals with developmental disabilities from the state hospitals to community settings
- Increasing crisis, respite, family and housing support services to serve individuals with developmental disabilities in community settings

As a state, we must provide a stronger, more effective community-based infrastructure to meet the individual needs of people with disabilities.

Our vision for people with disabilities begins with Community First and builds on the idea that individuals have access to real communities, real careers, real homes and real learning experiences. As a state, we must provide a stronger, more effective community-based infrastructure to meet the individual needs of people with disabilities. This encompasses

people with disabilities already living in the community and those leaving institutions as they assimilate into their local community. Our service system should reflect and promote the values of dignity, independence, individual responsibility, choice and self-direction.

As governor, I can assure you that my administration will continue to seek new and innovative ways to better support initiatives that promote independence, employment and the health and well-being of the great people of our state.

Our work will begin in earnest as we start moving more and more of our citizens with disabilities out of institutions and into their communities where we need to provide appropriate support services. For me, this is a continuation of

my efforts in Congress, where I worked with my colleagues to provide enhanced support services for people with disabilities through improved community-based services in the Medicaid program.

As 2011 begins and my first term as governor unfolds, the disability community can rest assured that it will have an advocate in the governor's office. I look forward to not only working for you, but also with you over the next four years.

Nathan Deal
Governor of Georgia

Direct Support Professional Certificate Program Receives NADSP Full Accreditation

As of November, the Direct Support Certificate Program received full accreditation from The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP). This is the second highest level of accreditation available and means that certificate holders are more marketable than their non-certified counterparts.

The certificate program includes two classroom courses and two practicum, a total of 250 hours of training. The unique feature of the program is that

The certificate program includes two classroom courses and two practicum, a total of 250 hours of training.

each student is paired with a learning partner who is a person with a disability. The students take what they are learning in the classroom and apply it in their learning partner's life. It is a very hands-on curriculum that is offered through the technical colleges. Over

300 direct support professionals have completed the certificate program. Visit directsupportnetwork.com for more information.

GCDD Family Support Grant

GCDD plans to create a sustainable model of community-based family support founded on collaboration and asset-based community development, which addresses the needs of unserved or underserved families with developmental disabilities and is inclusive of their non-disabled community partners. GCDD intends to carry out the activities in collaboration with its federal partners, Parent to Parent of Georgia, the Navigator Teams and the Parent Leadership Coalition, The Arc of Georgia, the trainers from the TASH technical assistance team and partners from outside the disability arena. The communities will include families from rural, culturally diverse and urban environments. For more information, contact Dottie Adams at dxadams@dhr.state.ga.us.

Correction: In the last edition of *Making A Difference*, the magazine reported in the, "Appreciation Program" article (page 12) that Senator Don "Doc" Thomas was being recognized for his work on the Nurse Practice Act. He was actually being honored upon his retirement for his many years of service in the Senate, particularly for his contributions as chairman of the Human Services Committee.



IN THE NEWS

Abilities Expo 2010

The Atlanta Abilities Expo was held October 15 – October 17, 2010 at the Cobb Galleria Convention Center. The mission of the show was to help the community find solutions, gain knowledge and network with other individuals with disabilities, their families, caregivers and healthcare professionals. The show featured products for people with physical, sensory or developmental disabilities. Workshops on a diverse group of topics, from finance to dating, travel to home modification, were also offered. Special events included a wide-range activities that were interactive, instructive and entertaining. The next Atlanta Abilities Expo will take place February 17-19, 2012 at the Georgia World Congress Center. Visit www.abilitiesexpo.com to learn more!



LEAN Tools

- 1. Standing in the Circle**
Observing and understanding the real situation through direct observation.
- 2. Waste Analysis**
Where is time, money, and energy being wasted?
- 3. Fishbone Diagrams**
Finding the cause and effect.
- 4. Five Whys**
Finding the root cause of a problem.
- 5. Five S's**
A process that results in a well-organized workplace.
- 6. Standard Work**
A tool for making the best method consistent among all workers.
- 7. Training Matrix**
Form to use to identify standard operating procedures for employee training.
- 8. Error Proofing**
A tool for improving the process to prevent mistakes from being made or greatly reducing the possibility for error.
- 9. Action Plans**
A tool for communicating progress during implementation phase of problem solving.
- 10. Measurement Systems**
A way to define the uses of data for analyzing and improving performance.

Running LEAN, but Not Necessarily Mean.

LEAN is not just something you do against a wall when you're tired and need some support. Around GCDD, LEAN is a set of business principles designed to help businesses try to look at their efficiency and add value.

Dottie Adams, GCDD Family and Individual Supports director, says, "It's not necessarily about how to streamline things, but more about making the most of who and what you have, and setting up the environment in a way that flows."

GCDD recently sponsored a LEAN seminar for representatives of the thirteen Project SEARCH programs in Georgia at the Simpsonwood Conference Center in Norcross. "Our two trainers were Susie Rutkowski from Project SEARCH in Cincinnati, and Anne O'Bryan from Project SEARCH in England," said Adams. "We sponsor job coach training and Susie does all the technical assistance training for us in Georgia."

"It's not necessarily about how to streamline things, but more about making the most of who and what you have, and setting up the environment in a way that flows."

The Cincinnati Project SEARCH program was awarded a grant to facilitate the LEAN seminars at various locations around the country and Georgia was selected. "They taught us ten different tools that are ways to either problem solve or look at the environment you're working within to try and figure out the best way to do things," said Adams.

The Benefit of Project SEARCH.

Project SEARCH is a program designed to transition high school kids with disabilities into the workplace. Most of the businesses involved are either hospitals or other medical facilities as well as one county government.

"We're hoping this will help teach the Project SEARCH staff, the job coaches and the instructors to really look at the environment and assist in helping the businesses be more effective and efficient," says Adams. "It can also help the businesses see how hiring people with disabilities can assist them in performing some of the jobs that clinical people are doing right now. It's a way to use the clinical people more for what they are trained for and let the

people with disabilities do the jobs they're skillful at doing and are trained to do. That way, it doesn't take away from people giving patient care."

GCDD has been a long-time sponsor of technical assistance for local areas to help replicate Project SEARCH and do it well. "We've helped pay for training so that representatives can go to the national Project SEARCH conferences," says Adams. Putting the LEAN principles to work will not only serve to help the Project SEARCH staffs work smarter and more efficiently, but they also bring added value to the employers who hire the kids coming out of the Project SEARCH programs.



GCDD Welcomes New Staff

GCDD is pleased to welcome its new staff members, Anna Watson, Michael Harrison and Erin Walls. Each of them brings his or her own skills and expertise to the GCDD team, but most importantly, they bring a passion for helping people with disabilities live fuller, more integrated lives.

Anna Watson

As a new GCDD Planning and Policy Specialist and assistant to Pat Nobbie, Anna Watson quickly found out that the title means,

"I get to take part in just about everything." That suits her just fine.



Watson graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Fashion Merchandising from the University of Georgia in 2005 and a Master of Science in Family and Consumer Sciences in 2007. While in graduate school, Anna interned at the Office on Disability in the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Secretary in Washington, D.C. "When I was working on my Masters, I also had the opportunity to interview Pat," which is how Watson was first introduced to GCDD.

Watson and her husband moved to Charlotte for a couple of years while he attended culinary school. She taught school, and when they moved back to Atlanta, she sought a position that would allow her to combine her interests in the educational field with her passion for helping kids with disabilities transition into the community. Watson's twin sister has cerebral palsy, so she has first-hand knowledge of what programs are and are not available.

"I've been part of Project SEARCH and have already been to conferences for that program,

as well as Partnership for Success and others," Watson says. "And Dottie Adams and I just got back from visiting schools in Moultrie."

Her long-term goal is "to unlock the waiting list." In her new job, she's in a perfect position to do just that.

Michael Harrison

Cleveland, Ohio-born Michael

Harrison is one of the newest members of the GCDD support family. His official title is Real Communities AmeriCorps member, and he provides volunteer part-time programmatic and administrative support to GCDD's Real Communities Initiative. AmeriCorps is a large organization with various branches and he works under the Georgia Personal Assistance Service Corps (GA Pas Corps). The GA Pas Corps works in concert with the University of Georgia's Institute on Human Development and Disability.

Michael moved to the Atlanta area six years ago for professional growth and advancement. "I have a passion for leadership, community building, strategic planning, personal growth (self-love, love ethic, and self-esteem), social justice, public transportation, literacy, disability rights, youth empowerment, civil rights, LGBT rights, poverty, race, culture, and sexuality," he says.



He wanted to work for GCDD because of "its mission of advocating for public policies that improve and enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities. The idea of creating local change to improve lives of individuals and families connected with one of my primary purposes in life: to serve others," he says. Furthermore, "the small staff environment appealed to me because I have the opportunity to learn from the public policy director, public information director, and family and individual supports director."

Michael holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree with a specialization in Marketing. And he maintains full-time employment with the Department of Treasury.

Erin Walls

Atlanta native Erin Walls is working on her Masters of Social Work at Georgia State University. As part of her second year course studies, she was placed as an intern at GCDD because of her interest in social policy and advocacy.



Erin actually has a professional background in the performing arts. She moved to New York after high school to pursue a career as a professional ballet dancer. She also worked in theatre and film as an actor, as well as producing a couple of plays.

A former ballet dancer, Erin was motivated to change careers by the volunteer work she did at Ground Zero immediately following the events of 9/11. Erin was able to volunteer with an ad hoc group to feed and provide respite for all the recovery workers at the site.

The experience impressed upon her the ability and generosity of people to come together to help others in time of need. She says her interest in policy and advocacy is very much related to what motivated her as an actor, which is to tell the story of people who may not be able to tell it themselves.

Waddie Welcome: Symbol of the Beloved Community

By Claire Barth

In 1999, *Connect Savannah*, a local newspaper, named Waddie Welcome one of the most influential people of the decade.

He is called a “surprising new leader,” and is described as follows:

“At first glance Waddie Welcome looks anything but influential, beset with cerebral palsy and approaching nine full decades, he is mostly quiet and unassuming. But beneath the years, beneath the persona of disability, lies fierce determination, a determination that has influenced thousands across the state, the nation and the world...”

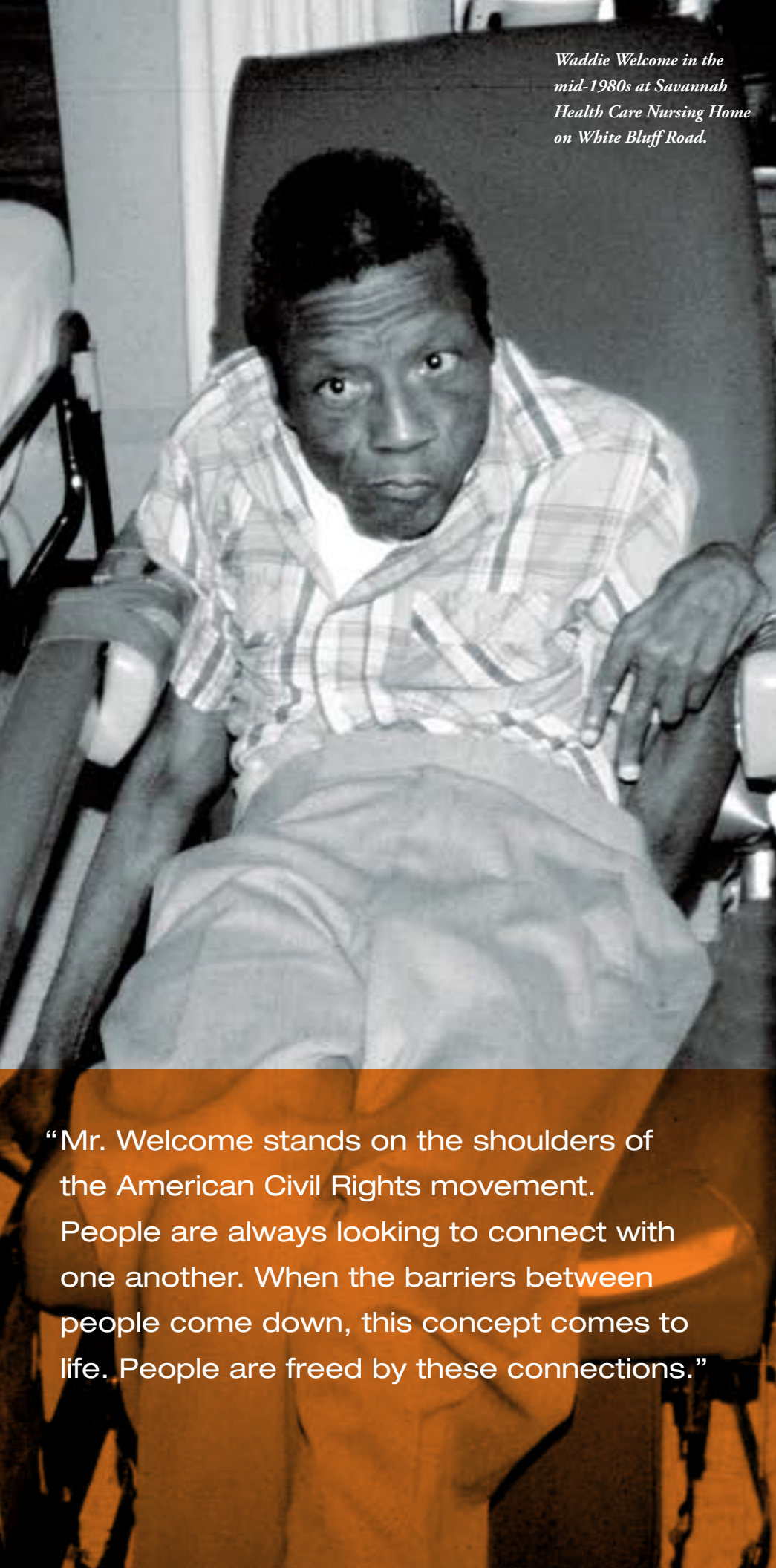
Though Welcome died in 2001 from liver cancer, his influence is still felt. His life is the crux of a new grass roots movement that began with one remarkable man fighting to live in his community but ended as a magical collaboration of individuals that came together to affect change and ultimately live better lives.

The story of how citizens came together to improve Welcome’s quality of life stops at nothing short of inspirational. How did one man motivate so many people? Close friend and author Tom Kohler wrote, “Waddie Welcome was a kidnapper. He had a way of catching your eye with his eyes, those fierce, intense eyes, and once he had you with his eyes, he would use that amazing smile, that quick laugh, to hold you.” Friend and author Susan Earl, added, “Not only was he captivating, but Mr. Welcome made a huge contribution simply by letting people get to know him. He could have easily hidden from society, but he was determined to connect with people and get noticed.”

Today, Welcome’s influence continues to transcend that which he was physically capable. Since the publication of the book, *Waddie Welcome and the Beloved Community*, by Tom Kohler and Susan Earl, he has become a symbol of the beloved community. In the book, the authors cite civil rights leader Rev. James Lawson’s well-known definition of the beloved community, “The beloved community is not a utopia, but a place where the barriers between people gradually come down and where citizens make constant efforts to address even the most difficult problems of ordinary people. It is above all else an idealistic community.” And with those words, so begins the Welcome’s story.

“Waddie Welcome was a kidnapper. He had a way of catching your eye with his eyes, those fierce, intense eyes, and once he had you with his eyes, he would use that amazing smile, that quick laugh, to hold you.”





*Waddie Welcome in the
mid-1980s at Savannah
Health Care Nursing Home
on White Bluff Road.*

“The beloved community is not a utopia, but a place where the barriers between people gradually come down and where citizens make constant efforts to address even the most difficult problems of ordinary people. It is above all else an idealistic community.”

Waddie Welcome was born on July 4, 1914 to Carrie and Henry Welcome of Savannah, Georgia. He lived happily with his family for over 70 years. Before his mother died in 1974, she asked her friend, Mrs. Addie Reeves, to watch over Welcome. She never intended for him to be placed in an institution. Over the years, Reeves and Welcome's brother, Willie Welcome, managed his care until neighbors called in Adult Protective Services. Instead of assisting Willie and Mrs. Reeves, they placed Welcome in a nursing home.

From the mid 1980s through the early 90s, Welcome lived in nursing homes in various Georgia cities. When Kohler, who was and still is the coordinator of Chatham-Savannah Citizen Advocacy, met Welcome in 1986, he was immediately captivated and began a search for the right citizen advocate for him. When asked what he looks for in an advocate, Kohler says, “First and foremost, an advocate needs to possess common sense, passion and persistence. Also, advocates should be proactive in their communities. Successful advocates are not afraid to make a commitment and stand by it.” Prominent Savannah attorney, Lester Johnson fit the bill.

At the time, his friends were not sure if Welcome could speak, but they did know that he wanted out of the nursing home so that he could move back to Savannah. But he was told he was too old and too disabled to live in the community.

“Mr. Welcome stands on the shoulders of the American Civil Rights movement. People are always looking to connect with one another. When the barriers between people come down, this concept comes to life. People are freed by these connections.”



The Carter Center preview of Waddie Welcome A Man Who Cannot Be Denied. From left: Susan Earl, Tom Kohler, Sylvia Kemp, Dotti Black, Debra Selman and young friends.

“It’s really simple. Get a book. Invite your friends to your house. Have each person read a chapter. Sometimes there are tears, sometimes laughter. Encourage people to go forth and conduct their own readings. Help others hear the story for the first time.”

As Kohler, Johnson and a few others worked tirelessly to bring Welcome home, other citizens came forward to join the effort. Susan Earl, *Beloved Community* author, became one of the founding members of a grass roots organization called The Storytellers, founded upon the principles set forth by the Highlander Folk School, where much of the strategy of the civil rights movement was forged. In their monthly meetings, they listened to each other’s hopes and dreams while sharing food and friendship. The Storytellers also helped form support systems that assisted many members who were living in nursing homes to move toward community life.

Welcome became a member of the Storytellers. Because Welcome’s verbal skills were minimal, the group had to develop creative strategies to help him communicate his dreams and wishes. Once they knew exactly what he wanted, they set out to connect with the organizations and people who could help. Disability Rights Advocate, Debra Selman, became the group’s organizer and Welcome’s disability rights advocate and circle facilitator. She kept the group on task and before they knew it, his team of citizen advocates included a state representative, the president of the Savannah Bar Association, a revered civil rights leader, a historian and a newspaper reporter.

In 1996, in-home funding was secured, and Welcome moved in with friends. Earl writes of his homecoming, "It was simple, it was quiet, but was radical social change."

The combination of Welcome's gregarious personality and the support from prominent citizens soon began to attract the public's attention. The 1996 documentary, "Waddie Welcome: A Man Who Can't Be Denied," about his fight to leave nursing homes and reclaim his place in his community, was used to persuade state representatives to modify Medicaid laws and advocate for individuals with disabilities to live in homes in their communities. It also won the 1998 TASH (The Association of People with Severe Handicaps) Award and three other distinguished awards. Timothy Daiss, *Connect Savannah* reporter, said, "By pushing his own agenda, he is now pushing public policy. By pushing policy, he is making an impact for future generations."

In 2000, at age 84 he was diagnosed with liver cancer. Born on the 4th of July in 1914, he died on Martin Luther King holiday Sunday in 2001. His friends say this is no coincidence. Kohler said, "As a symbol of the concept of the 'beloved community,' Mr. Welcome stands on the shoulders of the American Civil Rights movement. People are always looking to connect with one another. When the barriers between people come down, this concept comes to life. People are freed by these connections." By the time Welcome died, he had spent 15 years influencing public policy.

As if Welcome's achievements in life were not remarkable enough, he is making an even bigger impression today.

Group readings of *Waddie Welcome and the Beloved Com-*

munity have gained popularity as a way to motivate people to be more involved with other people and their communities. Susan Earl explains the book reading process, "It's really simple. Get a book. Invite your friends to your house. Have each person read a chapter.



Mr. Welcome with Debra Selman, facilitator of Mr. Welcome's circle.

Sometimes there are tears, sometimes laughter. Encourage people to go forth and conduct their own readings. Help others hear the story for the first time."

Kohler and Earl have facilitated the development of a web page (www.waddiewelcome.com) and Facebook page where people can promote their own readings and even post pictures and share their experiences.

When asked why Welcome's story is so important, Kohler responded, "It's a story about community, creativity and commitment. It's an opportunity to meet people who have big characters but who are often marginalized in communities. Mr. Welcome, Mrs. Reeves, Mrs. Selman all possess huge characters. Lester Johnson was a very busy man, but not too busy to become a citizen advocate. There's a power in gathering people together consistently with a common purpose to take action. The book will open a person's eyes to ideas and

people who may be invisible within their communities."

The movement continues to gain momentum through readings. A combined celebration of Martin Luther King's birthday and Waddie Welcome's life will be held at the Children's Museum in Atlanta on January 17, 2011 around noon. A public reading of *Waddie Welcome and the Beloved Community* will be part of the festivities. By the time this magazine is distributed, the reading will already have occurred, but visit www.waddiewelcome.com or the Facebook page to see what people had to say about it.

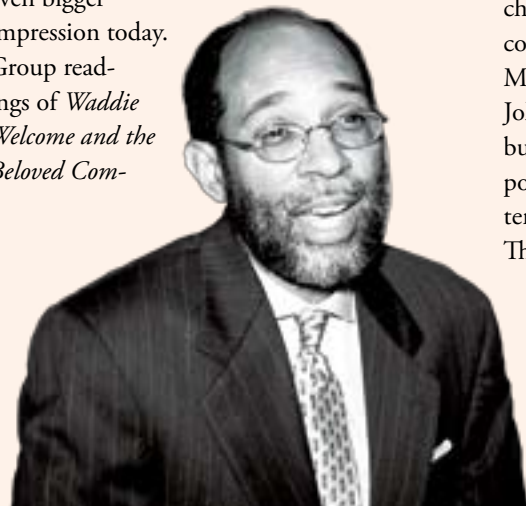
Kohler and Earl are encouraging everyone who can to join the grassroots movement to work towards creating and sustaining communities. Kohler says making a difference "is really about looking close to home. Ask yourself if you know anyone in your church, school or social network that needs help. You won't have to look very far. Approach them and ask them if you can help. It's as simple as that," he explained.

Most citizen advocates, and anyone who takes the initiative to help a person in need, find that it is a reciprocal relationship. According to Kohler, "You generally receive as much as you give, which is why we refer to people like Mr. Welcome as 'unexpected teachers.'" These are humbling life lessons that everyone could stand to learn from.

Visit www.waddiewelcome.com or become a fan of the Waddie Welcome Facebook page to purchase the book and to find out how you can host a reading. For more information about becoming a citizen advocate, visit the Resources section on page 30 or contact your local advocacy office.

Sharing the human experience with one another – a humbling life lesson from which everyone could stand to learn.

"It's a story about community, creativity and commitment. It's an opportunity to meet people who have big characters but who are often marginalized in communities."



Waddie Welcome's lawyer, Lester Johnson

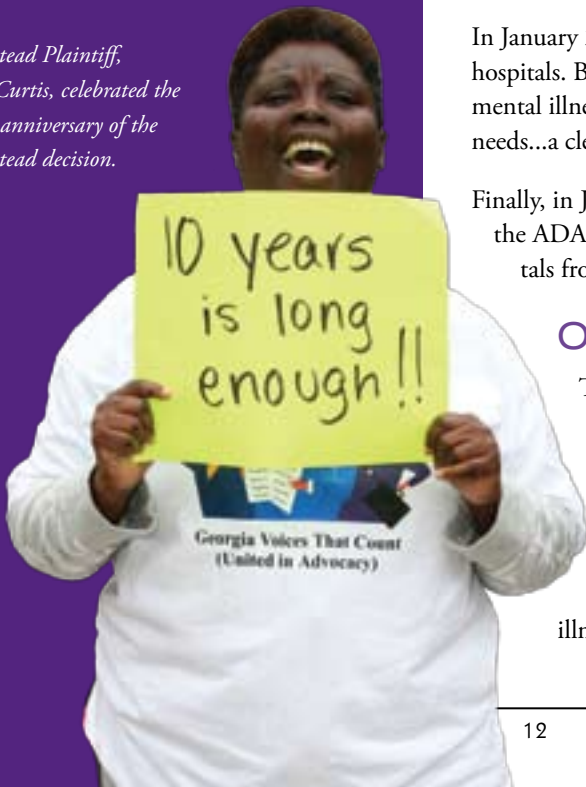
...And Justice For All.

Landmark settlement supports Georgians with developmental disabilities and mental illness to move out of institutions and into communities with proper services.

By Bill Lewis

“Georgia will stop admitting individuals with developmental disabilities to its state-run hospitals by July 1, 2011, and will transition all individuals with developmental disabilities already living in the hospitals to community settings by July 1, 2015.”

*Olmstead Plaintiff,
Lois Curtis, celebrated the
10th anniversary of the
Olmstead decision.*



“Good things come to those who wait.” Perhaps that old adage never had more meaning than in the agreement recently reached between the U.S. Department of Justice and the State of Georgia in a lawsuit aimed at moving people in Georgia who have disabilities out of state institutions and instead serving them in the community.

In the June 1999, *Olmstead v. L.C. and E.W.* case, the Supreme Court affirmed the right of individuals with disabilities to live in their community. That was supposed to settle the legal side of the issue, but the practical side was another story.

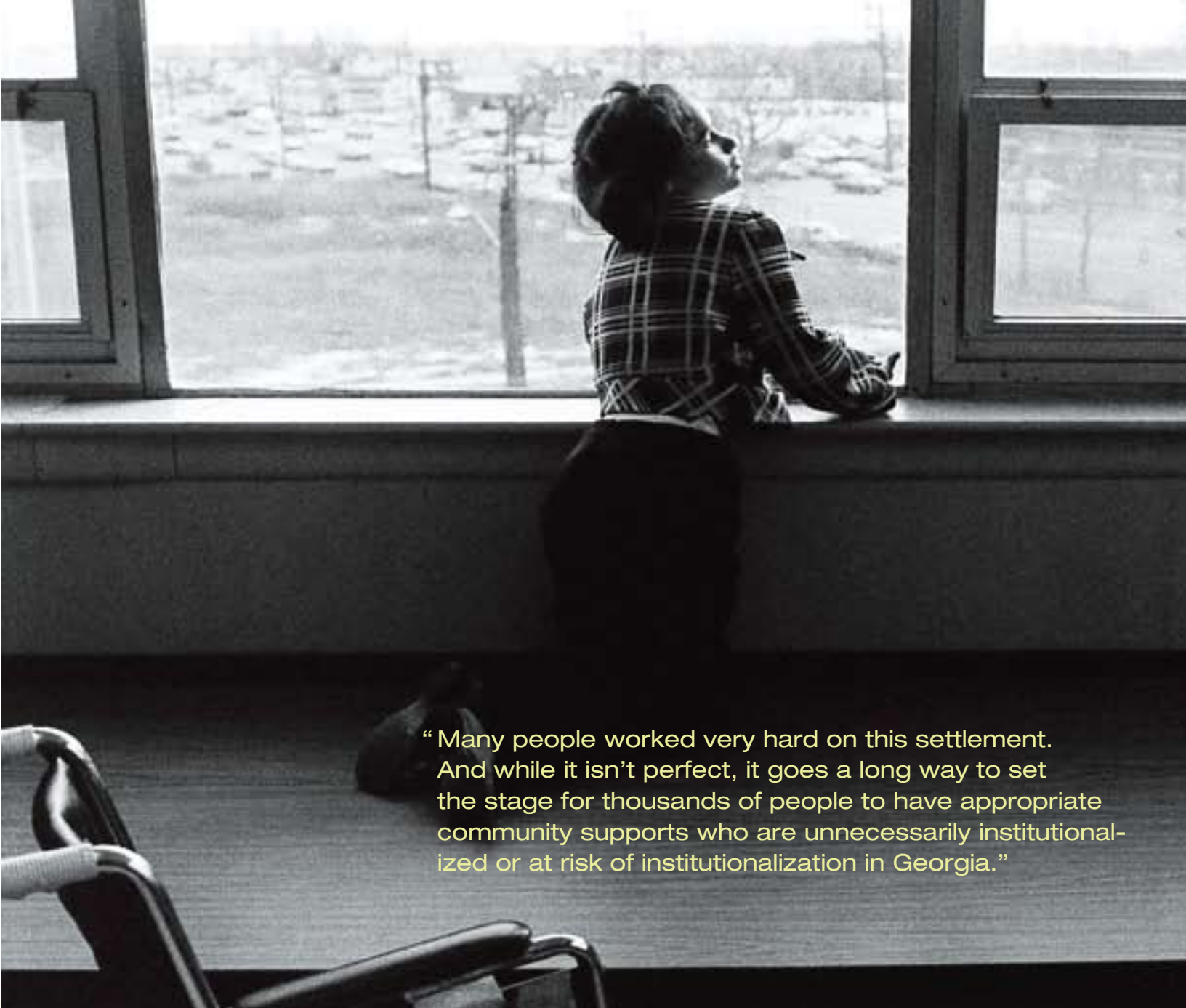
It's not that Georgians with disabilities didn't want to leave the state institutions, but they were hindered in their attempts to assimilate into communities because of the lack of essential services and support. With a distinct lack of progress shown, the Justice Department began an investigation in 2007 and found that preventable deaths, suicides and assaults occurred at a higher frequency in state hospitals than in the general community.

In January 2009, a settlement was reached with the State of Georgia regarding conditions in the hospitals. But, further investigation showed that the State also failed to serve individuals with mental illness and developmental disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs...a clear violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the *Olmstead* decision.

Finally, in January 2010, the Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a freestanding complaint under the ADA and a motion for immediate relief seeking to protect individuals confined in hospitals from continued segregation and from threats of harm to their lives, health and safety.

October 2010 Settlement

The result of all the legal maneuvering manifested itself in October with the landmark settlement. On that day, Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, applauded the State of Georgia officials for their willingness to work on solutions and said, “Under this agreement, the state of Georgia will provide services in the community to hundreds of people with developmental disabilities and thousands of people with mental illness. The promises of the ADA and *Olmstead* will finally become a reality for individuals in Georgia with mental illness and developmental disabilities.”



“Many people worked very hard on this settlement. And while it isn’t perfect, it goes a long way to set the stage for thousands of people to have appropriate community supports who are unnecessarily institutionalized or at risk of institutionalization in Georgia.”

Specifically, Perez pointed out that, under the agreement, “Georgia will stop admitting individuals with developmental disabilities to its state-run hospitals by July 1, 2011, and will transition all individuals with developmental disabilities already living in the hospitals to community settings by July 1, 2015. The state will provide support coordination services to ensure individuals will have access to the necessary medical, social, educational, transportation, housing, nutritional and other services. In addition, many of those people with mental health needs will be transitioned out of jail and have access to proper care.”

So What Does It All Mean in the Real World?

For people like David, it means the possibility of having his own apartment. David has been institutionalized for many years and is currently at Central State Hospital (CSH). He has a mental health diagnosis of schizophrenia and also has a developmental disability. But David is young, enjoys his family music, and being outdoors.

David has been denied services through the developmental disability waiver, and that has

left him without an option for supported housing or supported employment. Through the Department of Justice settlement agreement, David will have access to supported housing that will empower him to live on his own. With additional services, he could be supported to fulfill his dream of becoming an interior decorator or a small business owner.

Sam is a young man who has been at Gracewood for several years, and both he and his mother want him to return home. He enjoys taking walks, the outdoors, and spending time with his mother. However, he experiences some challenging behaviors and needs behavior supports to live at home. A provider

“The Olmstead decision strongly affirmed that people with disabilities have a right to live and receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate for them as individuals.”

was identified for Sam, and his needs were assessed. When the provider submitted the request for extra funding to provide Sam all of the supports he needs, they were denied. So, Sam remains at Gracewood.

Through the DOJ settlement agreement, Sam will have access to a full range of behavioral supports, allowing him to return home to live with his mother. In addition, Sam has expressed an interest in working, and could receive support to have a job. As he grows up, he would also have the opportunity to live on his own in supported housing.

Robert is 18 years old and very close with his family. He enjoys swimming, listening to music and being on the go. Unfortunately, his grandfather died a few years ago, and Robert misses him a lot. His grandmother, though, is extremely devoted to him. At one point, Robert needed some additional supports in his grandmother's home to help him through some crises. He went to a temporary immediate support home, but did not receive the supports he needed while there and returned to his grandmother's home with an inadequate discharge plan...one that lacked in-home supports.

“The right to live in the world like everyone else, to decide where to go and what to do based on one's own desires and not the desires and convenience of others, to make choices and face the consequences – all of this is the hallmark of an adult citizen.”

Robert has autism and uses few words to communicate. Soon after being at home, he was sent to a local hospital in a crisis where he was restrained, because the hospital was not the place for him. Unfortunately, a provider was not identified during this crisis period and Robert was transferred to Central State Hospital. He's been there for over a year even though

he was only supposed to be there briefly. He's been on the waiting list and has waiver funding available, but it's been difficult to find a provider to serve Robert and meet his needs with the restrictions on exceptional rate waiver funding. The U.S. v. GA settlement, though, is good news for Robert. He will now be able to receive the supports he needs through a waiver to live at home with his grandmother. And appropriate crisis supports will be available to him so he won't find himself restrained in the local hospital again.

Groundbreaking and Meaningful

As those three stories illustrate, the U.S. v. GA settlement agreement opens the doors to new lives for a great number of people with disabilities.

“Many people worked very hard on this settlement. And while it isn't perfect, it goes a long way to set the stage for thousands of people to have appropriate community supports who are unnecessarily institutionalized or at risk of institutionalization in Georgia,” Georgia Advocacy Office Executive Director Ruby Moore said. “This settlement outlines over 25 specific deliverables including implementation and quality assurance safeguards so that Georgians with disabilities can live good lives in the community with everyone else.”

Moore and Josh Norris, Esq, director of legal advocacy at the Georgia Advocacy Office point out that there are three key aspects of the agreement:

- **Individuals with disabilities will have a meaningful opportunity to be able to live in their own homes or with family.** The agreement recommends funds in addition to Medicaid waivers for accommodations.
- **No more institutions.** In the past, the policy has seemed to be “when in doubt, admit.” The settlement mandates that Georgians with disabilities will no longer be admitted to state hospitals. Instead they will be assisted in finding the appropriate support that will enable them to live at home and in their communities.

- **The state will be held accountable.** Olmstead had the legislation but lacked the follow-through. Elizabeth Jones, disability expert and the court appointed independent reviewer, will be responsible for reviewing the states compliance to the mandates of the settlement and reporting to the court.

The settlement agreement does not directly address the exceptional rate process. However, according to Norris, “It will very likely have an impact on that funding process as many of the people in the target population covered by the agreement will need exceptional rates to be supported appropriately in the community under the current structure of our DD waivers.”

In a speech given to University of Cincinnati College of Law on March 3, 2010, Samuel R. Bagenstos, principal deputy assistant attorney general at the DOJ, summarized the fundamental goal of the settlement. “The right to live in the world like everyone else, to decide where to go and what to do based on one’s own desires and not the desires and convenience of others, to make choices and face the consequences – all of this is the hallmark of an adult citizen. What Olmstead is about – what we are always trying to keep in mind as we go about our Olmstead enforcement – is ensuring that people with disabilities are treated as full citizens,” he said.

Policy vs. Actual Practice

The settlement agreement addresses people with mental illness as well as people with

developmental disabilities. Although the state has successfully transitioned many people with developmental disabilities into the community, the population in the state hospitals has not changed significantly. Substantial challenges exist for people with mental illness.

Sue Jamieson, lead counsel for the plaintiffs in the Olmstead case and an Atlanta Legal Aid Society attorney says that, “While Georgia’s policy has always been to move institutionalized people into the community, the State hasn’t done it.”

Now, though, Jamieson says, “There is a proposed multi-million dollar budget that has been developed to fund the services outlined in the agreement.” Those include mainly ACT (Assertive Community Team), Supported Employment, Medication Management, Peer Support, Social Work/Case Management and Supportive Housing.”

“One of the key elements,” as Jamieson points out, “is to keep people from going back into the state hospitals.” Supports can be brought into apartments or group living homes based on needs. Some people may require 24/7 care, but the ACT team provides a wraparound service concept. They can provide activities of daily living (ADL) such as housekeeping, meal preparation, shopping, bathing, etc.

“The key thing to note,” says Jamieson, “is that these people are trained to address behavioral health needs. Crises can now be addressed in the apartment or home without the person having to return to the hospital.”

Lewis Bossing, senior staff attorney at the Bazelon Center, concurs. “This settlement agreement is the first document that has fully articulated the distinct array of mental health services needed to achieve full community integration. It also is the first document that holds the State accountable for implementing the system that Georgians with mental illnesses need and deserve.” The Bazelon Center represents a coalition of stakeholders that advised the federal district court in the U.S. v. GA case.

For over ten years now, full inclusion has been the dream. And while the State of Georgia has long maintained an official policy of integrating its citizens with disabilities, the reality has been that their needs have not been adequately served. What was missing has now been addressed and given strength by the October 2010 settlement agreement.

“The Olmstead decision strongly affirmed that people with disabilities have a right to live and receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate for them as individuals,” said Perez. “Under this agreement, the State of Georgia will provide services in the community to hundreds of people with developmental disabilities and thousands of people with mental illness. The promises of the ADA and Olmstead will finally become a reality for individuals in Georgia with mental illness and developmental disabilities.”



“The promises of the ADA and Olmstead will finally become a reality for individuals in Georgia with mental illness and developmental disabilities.”

Is it Okay

for Individuals with Disabilities to Use Derogatory or Socially Unacceptable Words to Refer to Themselves?

This issue's Perspectives were inspired by a recent blog from GCDD's website. It was inspired by a debate that was discussed in a *Making a Difference* editorial meeting. GCDD invited its constituents to weigh in on the issue.

Here is the blog post and the responses:

"In a recent editorial meeting, the staff at GCDD discussed differing perspectives on People First Language, a debate that resurfaces within the disability community from time to time. It was brought to our attention that some individuals are referring to themselves as 'cripples' or 'crips.' Others are concerned that embracing such an attitude will move us in the wrong direction. It seems that it was not too long ago that we were working diligently to convince the public to stop using what were considered to be demeaning words and phrases that placed undue emphasis on the disability rather than on the person. We've moved away from using the word 'handicapped' to refer to people, and we've eliminated official use of the 'R' word label in the Federal government. But even when certain words are used by someone with a disability, there are those who may respond with disappointment or frustration. Some may take offense and get angry. At GCDD, we adhere to the guidelines set forth in People First Language and discourage the tendency to define individuals by their disabilities. In fact, we regularly present these guidelines to journalists across the State and freely distribute them upon request. However, we have heard that the individuals are using the term as one of empowerment and authenticity, so we became very interested in the dynamics of the argument. We want to address the issue here by requesting that people write comments to share their perspectives for or against it. So we ask, do you think it is okay for individuals living with disabilities to refer to themselves as cripples, or by any other term that may be interpreted as derogatory by the standards of today's disability movement?"

It was brought to our attention that some individuals are referring to themselves as "cripples" or "crips."

Tell us your thoughts:
visit gcdd.org/blog and weigh in
on this and other ongoing discussions.



I think disabled people can call ourselves whatever the hell we like. If black people can reclaim the 'N' word and gay people do likewise with terminology, then so can disabled people. Ask Ian Dury, altogether now 'I'm spasticus autisticus...

PERSPECTIVES

I find the use of such terms to be very retrogressive for the disability movement especially in Africa where terminology has such a huge influence on people's attitudes.

In my experience, youth do not always have the maturity to use words responsibly and tend to use the "R" word and "cripple" in negative terms when referring to themselves and others.

My late husband Sam and I talked about this. Sam was African American and I am white. Sam compared it to the "N" word. He said no one gets upset when African Americans call each other the "N" word, but you will not hear the civil rights organizations calling themselves or others the "N" word because we are trying to teach RESPECT and receive RESPECT. Sam also pointed out that it is not ok for a white person to use the "N" word ever. For Sam, he never used that "N" word because he felt respect starts with himself first. Sam was and I am disabled and proud! I am proud of who I am and the disability is just part of that. But I am not a crip or gimp. I believe in being the change. It starts with me.

“I agree with the woman and her late husband. Respect starts ‘at home,’ but I have also found that titles and names seem to affect those without a disability more so than they do those affected. For example, my father was a child and young man in the 30’s and often referred to himself as a ‘mick’ (since he was Irish), but if you were not Irish and used the term he would be insulted. He saw it like many of us see our families...we can call them names, but no one else can. So if a person with a disability feels comfortable using an outdated term, it is his or her call. But that person should take into consideration how the people around him or her might react to using it. So did I ramble too much on that one?”

“I have a learning disability and I may be slow at learning some stuff or ask someone to repeat a question or something, but it just means I did not understand what was said. I don’t want to be called a ‘crip’ or anything else, because I am the same as everyone else! Just because someone has a disability doesn’t mean you can call them stupid or ‘crip’ - it just means they have problems learning.

“I have a disability. I happen to be blind. Blindness is a simple term that accurately describes my disability. I don’t consider ‘blind’ to be a dirty word, so why not call it what it is? It is respectable to be blind. So why hide behind convoluted politically correct euphemisms to dress up a disability. While my disability doesn’t define me, it is still a characteristic of who I am. I am not offended when someone says I have curly hair or brown eyes, and I am not offended when I am described as blind because it’s okay to be blind. We have to change what it means to have a disability. Then we can just call it what it is and move on.



The event poster that sparked the debate.

“Language changes over time and connotations change with it. Thus the unacceptable terms ‘morons’ or ‘idiots’ gave way to the more acceptable at the time terms ‘retarded’ or ‘trainable’ or ‘educable’ which gave way to ‘developmental disabilities,’ which has given way to ‘intellectually challenged’ or ‘intellectually impaired.’ Twenty years from now there will likely be another term come into play as the negative connotations attach themselves to the current terms. Just using politically correct language doesn’t necessarily change underlying feelings and attitudes.

Eventually we may be able to get beyond labels and realize that everyone has strengths and weaknesses, obvious or not, and everyone has challenges in some situations.

As of now, labels are here to stay as long they are required for eligibility for educational services, financial benefits, charitable contributions, insurance coverage, workplace accommodations, and state and federal program funding.

In my years of working with people with disabilities, the ‘negative’ terms don’t seem to matter as much to individuals using them to refer to themselves. So terms such as ‘crips’ might be fine within the family or among close friend, but might be offensive if coming from outsider.

“In general, People First Language is a great practice, but like anything good (or bad for that matter) can go to the extreme in either direction. No matter how hard people try they will end up insulting or upsetting someone sometime somewhere. I recently attended a training session where it was explained that it was no longer PD or PF to say, ‘Jane Doe is diagnosed with ADHD or Lupus’ but to say instead ‘Jane Doe experiences ADHD or Lupus.’ In my opinion, this is a little too extreme.

“I regularly refer to myself as a cripple and my friends use the word too. It’s the intent behind the word that is a problem, not the word itself! By its very definition I AM a cripple! It is only a problem when it is used as an insult. I am crippled and proud of it. Yes, I am different but why is that a problem? I am more offended by people who insist on being “politically correct” as they like to try and deny my differences! I am proud of who I am and my disabilities are a part of me! I have known many people who use cripple or other ‘bad’ words to describe themselves or others, but as long as they do not intend it as an insult then it isn’t one! On the other side, I have heard people sneer the word “disabled” which then becomes an insult! Blame the people and their ignorance, not the word, as ignorance can make any word an insult!

Doug Crandell: Advocate and Author



Doug Crandell is the author of several books, including *The Flawless Skin of Ugly People*, which is soon to be made into a motion picture.

Crandell has a long history with the developmental disability community. As an educational program specialist, at the University of Georgia's Institute on Human Development & Disability, Crandell's work focuses on employment issues.

As a writer, it comes naturally to him to weave individuals with disabilities into his stories. "I grew up on a pig farm," says Crandell. "My older sister has an intellectual disability, my mother had severe depression, and my grandfather had dementia...right at the time my fingers were nearly cut off in a farming accident, and I was unable to do any work around the farm. And all members of a farm family work. That kind of shaped my view of the world that we can all contribute. It doesn't just have to be with our bodies."

In his novel, *The Flawless Skin of Ugly People*, which is currently being made into a major motion picture, the two protagonists are misfits, suffering from physical flaws (acne and obesity) that, on the outside, make them seem unloveable. This is precisely the kind of logic Crandell aims to undermine in the story. He explains, "Everyone deserves to be loved. Everyone feels love. Albeit an unlikely one, Hobbie and Kari's is a love story."

The movie is scheduled to go into production in Spring of 2011. For more information about Crandell and his books, visit www.dougcrandell.com.

And Playing The Part Of The Disabled Person Is... *Someone Who's Really Disabled?*

By Bill Lewis

fans of the TV show *Glee* know there's a character named Artie who is in a wheelchair. The doctor who performs the autopsies on *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* uses two forearm crutches to get around the morgue.

But as the *Hollywood Reporter* revealed in an October, 2010 article, "There are 587 series-regular roles on scripted network primetime television this fall. Only six of them have disabilities. Only one of those six is portrayed by a disabled actor."

That actor is Robert David Hall, the *CSI* actor who walks on two artificial legs. Actor Kevin McHale (*Glee*) does not use a wheelchair away from the set. Hall is unabashed in his support of fellow actors with disabilities. *Access Hollywood* recently quoted him as saying, "I think there's a fear of litigation, that a person with disabilities might slow a production down, fear that viewers might be uncomfortable." But he's not buying that. "I've made my living as an actor for 30 years," says Hall.

The report also said that Hall is "chair of a multi-union committee for performers with disabilities, part of a small band of such steadily working actors on TV that includes Daryl 'Chill' Mitchell, of Fox's *Brothers*; teenager RJ Mitte of AMC's *Breaking Bad*; and ABC's *Private Practice* newcomer Michael Patrick Thornton."

The *Access Hollywood* report also stated that, "While TV has grown more inclusive of ethnic and gay characters, those with disabilities represent a sizable minority that hasn't fared as well – whether with genuine or fake portrayals."

"More than a third of performers with disabilities reported facing discrimination in the workplace, either being refused an audition or not being cast for a role because of their disability, the study found. Many performers fear being candid about their health or needs to avoid pity or being seen as incapable of doing a job."

There has been progress.

That's not to say strides haven't been made over the years...or at least baby steps taken. Terri Mauro, author of the "Special Needs Children Guide" blog (and mother of two children with special needs), writes: "The character I always think about when these kind of questions come up is Joey Lucas on *The West Wing*, a pollster played by actress Marlee Matlin, who like her character, is deaf. Though Joey's sign language and occasional spoken language was used to great comedic (never at her expense) and dramatic effect, she was never a Deaf Pollster. Her disability was one not terribly important element of a well-rounded and engaging character, and I wonder how much the fact that the actress could bring some personal experience to the part contributed to that."

More recently, an English producer has developed a TV show for the UK this season that features a cast fully populated by people

with disabilities. Called *Cast Offs*, it's a reality show about six disabled people marooned on a British desert island. As one reviewer put it: "In a twist from conventional reality TV, the actors have the disabilities that they portray but will follow a script in a mock documentary way, one which promises to highlight the dark humor which often treads on the boundaries of decency. *Cast Offs* is perhaps television's first attempt to not sympathise with the disabled community, but to provide them with a forum for comedy. Much has been made of just how the various disabilities on the show will be portrayed. Reactions to trailers and the first episode have been positive, with many disabled groups indicating that programming like this opens the door to the possibilities of more disabled casting."

One of the show's creators is Jack Thorne. Not only did he help create *Cast Offs*, but he has a disability himself and appears on the show. He also wrote the screenplay adaptation of Georgia author Doug Crandell's book, *The Flawless Skin of Ugly People* (see sidebar for more information about Crandell and his book).

The Slow Awakening of Hollywood.

Hollywood, for all its faults, may be opening its collective eyes to the situation as well. Value Added Script Services (V.A.S.S.) is a company designed to "enable access to the disabled market." Its mission states: "At V.A.S.S., we help you reach out and resonate with an audience of over 50 million Americans with disabilities. Our service adds value to your film, television



Cast Offs is perhaps television's first attempt to not sympathise with the disabled community, but to provide them with a forum for comedy.

or multimedia project by adding characters with depth, warmth, drama and humor that you won't find anywhere else."

Screen and scriptwriters who are thinking about including people with disabilities in their projects are encouraged to contact V.A.S.S. The organization functions as a resource center that can direct writers to consultants who have first-hand or other expert knowledge of a specific disability.

Authenticity is not only preferred, but demanded, especially when it comes to medical issues. One former soap opera scriptwriter said his show once featured a character who was on kidney dialysis awaiting a transplant. "I spent several days at the UCLA Medical Center interviewing physicians, technicians and, most importantly, the dialysis patients themselves to understand how the treatment and disease affected their daily lives."

That storyline took place many years ago and the actress playing the role did not have kidney problems. "Quite truthfully," says the writer, "we never even thought to hire an actress who might actually have that disability to play the part. It just wasn't done then. Looking back, though, there's no doubt an actress on dialysis would certainly have been able to bring great authenticity to the part."

Today, even a Facebook group is dedicated to portraying more disabled characters with disabled actors. Their page description reads: "This group has been set up to highlight the importance of the fact that there are NOT enough disabled Actors and Actresses in serial dramas and general television programs."

Media Access Awards.

In October, a giant step toward more recognition of entertainers with disabilities took place at the 2010 Media Access Awards banquet. The producer of the show, Deborah Calla, wrote, "While the last thing Hollywood needs is another event where everyone slaps each other on the back for a job well done, this was an event which deserved our full attention."

"The Media Access Awards celebrates individuals and organizations in the entertainment and broadcast industries for their efforts in promoting the awareness and the accurate portrayal of the disability experience."

The Awards were funded in part by some of the largest entertainment organizations in Hollywood. Calla observes that AFTRA (American Federation of Television and Radio Artists), CSA (Casting Society of America), PGA (Producers Guild of America), SAG (Screen Actors Guild) and WGAwest (Writers Guild of America West) all contributed to the event.

As Calla noted in her commentary about the ceremony, "What we need to remember is that our media has a social responsibility and the power to educate and entertain. If we portray people with disabilities as complex human beings with dreams, desires, nobility and shortcomings like any other person, we will not only be taping into a whole world of untold stories but we will also be affecting our societies into being more tolerant and inclusive."

And it all just might make for some superb entertainment.

"There are 587 series-regular roles on scripted network primetime television this fall. Only SIX of them have disabilities. Only ONE of those six is portrayed by a disabled actor."



2011 Legislative Session

Setting an Agenda in the Midst of Uncertainty

By Pat Nobbie, Ph.D.

over 750 people with developmental disabilities living in the state hospitals.

5,700 people on the waiting list for NOW or COMP waivers.

163 people with physical disabilities known to be waiting for an ICWP waiver.

17,000 people with developmental disabilities living with caregivers over the age of 64.

190,000 individuals living with a disability who require some assistance from a family member or caregiver every day...

Could there be any more things up in the air at the start of this legislative session? With any new administration, we wait with baited breath for the announcement of the individuals who will hold key positions with whom we will try to establish communications – particularly, the person overseeing health and human services policy, and after that, the Governor's Floor Leaders. Then there could be new commissioners.

There is a hole in the budget anywhere from \$1.3 billion dollars to \$1.8 billion dollars. There are several dozen new legislators and some new leadership in the majority and minority parties in the House and Senate. New tax legislation is looming, crafted on the work of the Special Council on Tax Reform and Fairness; the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement with the State needs appropriations to be implemented; and, the Olmstead Plan sits in the Governor's office awaiting approval.

Regardless of uncertainty however, we go forward stating the needs and providing good information to policymakers. Despite the fact that the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) did not experience the level of budget cuts that most other state agencies did, and that there were actually some additional dollars added to their budget to improve conditions in the hospitals because of the Department of Justice lawsuit, the needs of folks with developmental disabilities is substantial.

- There are over 750 people with developmental disabilities living in the state hospitals.
- There are 5,700 people on the waiting list for NOW or COMP waivers. This number is most likely underestimated.
- There are 163 people with physical disabilities known to be waiting for an ICWP waiver. There are many more people unidentified in nursing homes who have expressed their wish for a home in the community.
- There are 17,000 people with developmental disabilities living with caregivers over the age of 64.
- The Price of Neglect estimates that there are 190,000 individuals living with a disability who require some assistance from a family member or caregiver every day, at great sacrifice to the economic well-being of that family and individual.

As always, the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities met in October to

The most important issue in this tier is Unlock the Waiting Lists! campaign for home and community based services.

consider the initiatives and budget items that we will work on during the legislative session. We outline them here and invite your support!

Tier I: GCDD Takes the Lead.

The most important issue in this tier is the Unlock the Waiting Lists! campaign for home- and community-based services. The Unlock campaign is basing its budget request on the settlement agreement between the State and the U.S. Department of Justice (see *...And Justice For All* article on page 12). These budget items are also in the proposed DBHDD budget. The items are as follows:

- **150 COMP waivers** to support moving people into the community from the state hospitals in FY2011A and in FY2012
- **100 waivers** for people ALREADY in the community but on the waiting lists
FY2011A: \$3,587,634
FY2012: \$14,556,172
- **Services for 400 families** to receive family support services. (These amounts represent state dollars)
FY2011A: \$1,297,600
FY2012: \$1,497,600
- **Crisis, respite and nursing supports** to build up community infrastructure for when admissions to state hospitals are discontinued
FY2011A: \$9,590,095
FY2012: \$19,130,190

In addition, we will be supporting funds to provide the Independent Care Waiver to 157 people on the waiting list. We know there are 135 outstanding Money Follows Person waivers available in the budget which have not been awarded yet, and we will be advocating for those to be provided to individuals who need them.

The other Tier I item is to pass the state Individual Development Account Legislation that enables an individual with disabilities to save toward an accessible vehicle, assistive technology, communication devices or home modifi-





The demand for houses with universal, visitable design will only increase with the aging of the population, returning veterans who have mobility impairments as a result of their service, and the mandated transition of individuals from institutions to the community.

Get Connected



We will be keeping you up-to-date on what occurs in the legislative session via our blog, Facebook, Twitter, *Moving Forward* legislative newsletter, and GCDD grassroots advocacy email alerts, so visit gcdd.org to connect with us through any and all of these mediums. We want our website to be a forum for you to express your thoughts, so sign-up for our mailing lists, stay informed and make yourself heard!

cations, in addition to the standard purposes for IDAs, new homes, education or business start-ups. We got this legislation all the way to the end of the process last year, only to have it die in the end due to a technicality. We will work on this with the Center for Financial Innovation and Independence.

Tier II: GCDD Supports Another Leading Organization(s).

Flexible Sick Leave legislation: Many individuals have paid sick leave with their workplace, but can only use it if THEY are sick. This legislation, which is a very small bite of a more comprehensive family friendly work-life policy, would enable parents with paid sick leave to use it to care for sick children or aging parents. We are supporting 9 to 5 Atlanta and a large coalition on this legislation.

New Home Access Legislation: This is the fourth year working on this legislation, which would increase accessibility in all new single family homes by requiring one zero-step entrance, 32" wide interior doorways and blocking to support grab bars in the bathroom. The demand for houses with universal, visitable design will only increase with the aging of the population, returning veterans who have mobility impairments as a result of their service, and the mandated transition of individuals from institutions to the community. We will support Concrete Change and a coalition of aging and housing advocates to pass this legislation.

Streamline the Medicaid Appeals Process:

Currently, if a family or individual appeals a decision against them concerning Medicaid, and the Administrative Law Judge rules in their favor, the Department of Community Health can overturn that decision. This

This legislation, which is a very small bite of more comprehensive family friendly work-life policy, would enable parents with paid sick leave to use it to care for sick children or aging parents.

legislation would eliminate agency discretion, and send the appeal directly from the Office of State Administrative Hearings directly to Superior Court. The Georgia Advocacy Office has worked with students in the Health Law program at Georgia State University to draft the legislation.

Support Legislation to establish a Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired:

For several sessions, The Georgia Coalition for the Blind and Visually Impaired has worked on research and legislation to establish a Commission that would oversee the services which are now delivered by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in the Department of Labor. A few states

have such commissions, and research conducted by the University of Mississippi found that service delivery through an independent commission structure was more effective than services delivered through VR.

Assist coalition to develop legislation for Assisted Living Facilities to create additional long-term care options so individuals who become more disabled can age in place with appropriate supports. Currently, state law requires residents of assisted living facilities to be independently mobile. If they become more impaired, they are required to move to a nursing facility. This legislation would enable individuals who become more disabled and need a higher level of care to stay in the place where they have made their home. A coalition of advocates from the aging and long-term care community will carry this legislation.

Revisions to the Elections Code: The election code underwent some revisions several sessions ago to make it easier for people with disabilities to seek assistance at the polls without having to verify their disability or “certify” it with an oath, but a few places in the code still define disability as physical. Individuals with sensory or cognitive impairments also vote and may need assistance, but their disability is not overtly physical. This change would remove ‘physical’ from the definition of disability describing who can seek assistance at the polls. The Arc of Georgia is taking the lead on this legislation.

Tier III: GCDD Will Sign On to Materials to Indicate Support.

In this category, GCDD will allow organizations to use our name on their materials or in committee meetings in support of their position or initiative. We briefly describe below the legislative or budget issues which we will sign on to support.

Sign on to Support the Blind Persons Braille Literacy Rights and Education Act to ensure teachers of children who are blind are literate in Braille. The Georgia Coalition for

The population of citizens over the age of 64 will increase dramatically in the next 10 years, along with their needs...

the Blind have had this on their agenda for several legislative sessions.

Restore \$1,045,000 in state funding to continue the nutritional services program in the Division of Aging. These funds were cut from the Division of Aging budget, were restored before the FY 2011 budget was completed, and then were cut again in the reductions that occurred during the summer. These funds provide Meals on Wheels.

The Council on Aging is advocating for legislation to establish a separate **Department of Aging**. The population of citizens over the age of 64 will increase dramatically in the next 10 years, along with their needs, and the Coalition on Aging feels the needs of this population will be better served in a department focused on aging issues.

Support legislation to **increase the minimum wage for tipped workers** (9 to 5 Atlanta).

Support the legislative agenda for scattered site, integrated housing with appropriate supports for individuals transitioning from the state hospitals. The Georgia Association for Supportive Housing is carrying this agenda, which includes housing support services for people with mental illness, but the GCDD will support the items that reflect the housing needs for the people with developmental disabilities transitioning from the state hospitals.

This legislation would enable individuals who become more disabled and need a higher level of care to stay in the place where they have made their home.



Watch List

Every year, there are issues that may come up that we just have to track and be prepared to act on. One of these is the potential that the Department of Community Health will release a request for proposals to implement a managed care model for the Aged, Blind and Disabled category of Medicaid recipients. Other items we are watching is any legislation proposed by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability to implement the Settlement Agreement between the Department of Justice and the State.

This will be an interesting year, and it is more important than ever, with a new administration, and the opportunity to redesign community services, for advocates' voices to be heard. Make sure you are signed up for Capitol Impact, and check gcdd.org for updates, links to Unlock the Waiting Lists! website and Facebook pages, and follow GCDD on Twitter!



13th Annual Disability Day at the Capitol

February 24, 2011

UNLOCK THE DOORS TO REAL COMMUNITIES!

Your registration includes one t-shirt and lunch per attendee.

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Registration/T-Shirt &
Lunch Wrist Band
Pick-Up/Activities at the
Georgia Freight Depot

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Rally Program
on the Capitol Steps

12:30 PM – 2:00 PM
Lunch at the
Georgia Freight Depot

For more information,
visit gcdd.org or call
1-888-ASK-GCDD

Unlock the Doors to Real Communities!

That's the theme for the Georgia Council On Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) 13th Annual Disability Day at the Capitol that invites people with disabilities, family members, policy makers, business leaders and providers to gather at the Capitol in celebration of community, advocacy, friendship, and achievement. In 2010, nearly 2,000 Georgians attended the public rally on the steps of the State Capitol in a powerful show of support for disability rights.

In 2011, Disability Day attendance is expected to grow, strengthening its presence and position among the largest events on record held annually during the official legislative session. 2011 also marks the 40th anniversary of the historic Developmental Disabilities Bill of Rights Act of 1971 and the creation of agencies such as GCDD throughout the U.S.



Join Us!

Attendee RSVP Form

Disability Day at the Capitol • February 24, 2011
Register online at gcdd.org to get a t-shirt!

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Total # attending: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

I plan to attend (please check): ☐ Lunch

Optional \$10.00 donation per person to support luncheon is appreciated, but not required.

Total payment amount: _____

Total amount enclosed: _____

Please make check payable and return to:

Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
Disability Day Registration
2 Peachtree St. NW, Ste. 26-246
Atlanta, GA 30303

For more information about Disability Day, call Kim Person
at 404-657-2130 or email her at kaperson@dhr.state.ga.us.

Please note special accommodations we should be aware of:

This year Disability Day has an exciting new look with a redesigned GCDD logo and the color change of t-shirts from Red to Blue!

DISABILITY DAY



The Road to Inclusion Starts Here

By Ruby Moore and Josh Norris, Esq., Georgia Advocacy Office

The U.S. v. GA settlement agreement is groundbreaking. It addresses the specific harm of inappropriately institutionalizing hundreds of people with developmental disabilities and lays the groundwork for a much fuller discussion of what all people need to live meaningful lives in their communities – homes, family, friends, meaningful employment and full participation in community life. It creates a framework for needed conversations about what should be happening for people with disabilities in Georgia.

There are a couple of aspects of the agreement that bear mention. First, hundreds of people with developmental disabilities in Georgia will have an opportunity to live in their own homes, not someone else's home. This is a monumental shift, as much of the community services delivered in Georgia are structured to place people in someone else's home. The agreement provides for housing supports beyond simply a Medicaid waiver, so that a person may choose to live in his or her own home or family home. The agreement also provides substantial family support resources so that families can access funds when they need them and when long-term, intensive supports are unavailable.

Second, through this agreement, Georgia recognizes the rights of its citizens with developmental disabilities to live in their own communities and not institutions. The agreement provides that the state hospitals will no longer admit Georgians with developmental disabilities and

that those who would have been admitted in the past will instead receive appropriate help in their communities through waivers and family supports. The challenge ahead is how we make the promise of these provisions meaningful for all Georgians with developmental disabilities, not simply those in the state hospitals or at risk of hospitalization.

Third, is the increased focus on accountability and the delivery of quality in services and supports for people with disabilities. This will be accomplished through development of internal and external safeguards and includes the appointment of a nationally known disability expert, Elizabeth Jones, as the court appointed independent reviewer.

This settlement agreement, along with the draft Olmstead Plan

submitted to the Governor, creates a strategic mapping of where Georgia needs to go to make good on the promise of full integration and inclusion of its citizens with disabilities.

The agreement provides for housing supports beyond simply a Medicaid waiver, so that a person may choose to live in his or her own home or family home.



Ruby Moore and Josh Norris

“The challenge ahead is how we make the promise of these provisions meaningful for all Georgians with developmental disabilities, not simply those in the state hospitals or at risk of hospitalization.”





What's So Special?

By Pat Nobbie, Ph.D., Mia's Mom

This Fall, I really questioned the definition of "special needs." Mia has two younger siblings, and at the risk of incurring their wrath, I'm going to relate what my life was like last semester with their brand of special needs.

They both had a handicapping condition. Neither one had a car. This is a serious disability in the South, as every parent of a teenager can attest. How they ended up in college without cars, when they each had a car of their own in high school is a long, expensive tale. But they moved into Atlanta and had to deal with the limitations car-lessness imposes. And I had to deal with them borrowing my car on a rotating, sometimes conflicting basis.

Then there was moving. The new tenant for Child 2's old place moved all his stuff in before she had moved out, forcing us to move out AROUND his stuff. The mover didn't show up until the precise moment that it started to rain. We moved to an Atlanta storage compartment, and the next week, from the storage compartment to a new apartment. Her Atlanta apartment was not ready. Kitchen counters had been stripped and not resurfaced. The water heater was leaking into the carpet. One week later, two dudes climbed under her roommate's jeep in broad daylight and cut the catalytic converter out from the muffler system with a power saw. There went the back-up vehicle. They had an alarm system they aren't paying for go off when they weren't home, dicey phone reception, and no internet. And colds.

Child 3 was seriously ill at the end of spring semester, and applied for a hardship withdrawal. First deadline, we didn't have the doctor's letter, so they denied him. Confusion caused us to miss the second deadline. The third deadline was one week before fall semester started. We had to make Solomon-like decisions between staying in school full time

to retain health insurance which we needed because of the seriousness of his condition weighed against his possible inability to carry a full course load until we got a handle on his condition. Throw maintaining financial aide into the mix. He's on a few medications, needs to eat small meals regularly and not get stressed out. Stressed out? No problem!

Between the two of them, I was getting several calls a day to assist with one thing or another – share the car, money, food, wifi access; buy books, art supplies, groceries and football tickets, and on my downtime, take the dog. I had to issue the following directive: do not call me during the day unless you are in the hospital or jail. To which they paid no attention.

All this time, Mia, my child with the "official" special needs, gets up at 8:00 AM, eats breakfast at 9:00, goes out with Fabersha, lunches at 1:30, snacks at 2:00, gets the mail at 4:00, has dinner at 7:00 and dessert at 8:00. Monday is Weight Watchers, Tuesday is shopping, Wednesday is gym day, Thursday is bowling, Friday is snack day, Saturday is laundry and shopping, Sunday is church and watching the toddlers. She never forgets a birthday and sends cards. In her home, everything is in its place. She has the only folded sock drawer I've ever seen, and she never fails to make her bed. She keeps a calendar. She has a well-ordered life. To be fair, she is not dealing with all the stresses of college that they are. But Mia's taking care of her business in a calm and steady way.

Special needs are relative. Now I am in need of respite!

"I have two other children, younger than Mia, and there were times where I had to stop and ask myself, 'Who's got the special needs here?'"

MIA'S SPACE





Marian Jackson is a resident of Fitzgerald, Georgia and a speaker with the Expert's On Disabilities Speakers Bureau at the Institute on Human Development and Disabilities at the University of Georgia.

In Her Voice

By Marian Jackson, President, People First of Georgia

My mission is to help people with disabilities become empowered by teaching them how to speak up for their rights and work in the community for their needs. I was elected President of People First of Georgia because I can get the job done. I want to help all people and see them come together to work for inclusion and social change.

I attended my first People First conference and Disability Day at the Capitol in 1997. People with disabilities were talking to each other and telling stories about their experiences. I understood what they were going through, and I felt their strength. It made me want to become an advocate. They encouraged me. I got training and started working for what I believe in.

Joining People First of Georgia changed my life. It is a self-directed, supportive community. The organization is national and local, run by and for people with disabilities like me. We have 600 members. We want to gain more members and open up more chapters across the state. This is very important to create change in Georgia.

I am also a civil rights and human rights activist with ADAPT, a national grassroots activist organization that organizes nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience so that people with disabilities can live in freedom. We fight for community services and supports to keep people from being locked away in nursing homes or institutions.

When a person asks what they can do to help people with disabilities, I say education. Learn about people with disabilities. We can teach what people with disabilities are about and how they can contribute to the community. People in the community and people with disabilities need to get to know each other. This is how they can learn to accept each other, have good relationships and become real friends. These are issues I work on

with the Real Communities Initiative group and the Georgia Council On Developmental Disabilities. We look for ways to help people with disabilities get involved with others in the community to solve problems. We need to come together and accept each other to make the community better for everyone.

My message is that I am for real. I belong here just like anybody else. I respect everybody and I deserve respect. No one should look down on anyone else, or think anyone is better than anyone else. People with disabilities deserve an opportunity. We can learn. We can help. We can teach. If we are given a chance, we can do a lot more than what some people think. People tell me that I see things that others miss. Sometimes a person with a disability can know things that another person does not.

“When a person asks what they can do to help people with disabilities, I say education. Learn about people with disabilities.”

My goal is for more people with disabilities to get leadership training and have a chance to work with other leaders. I want to see families become educated and bring their knowledge to the community. I hope more people join People First chapters and they all come to Disability Day at the Capitol on February 24.

“My goal is for more people with disabilities to get leadership training and have a chance to work with other leaders. I want to see families become educated and bring their knowledge to the community.”



STRAIGHT TALK

Gwinnett Parents

Combine Efforts to Build Better Living Situations for Individuals with and without Developmental Disabilities

By Claire Barth

In early 2010, GCDD met with the Community Action Pioneers of Gwinnett, a group of parents of individuals with developmental disabilities in the Gwinnett area. The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate a Real Communities Initiative project in Gwinnett County comprised of individuals with and without disabilities working together to improve community life for everyone.

According to Caitlin Childs, organizing director of the Real Communities Initiative, “Given that most of this group is directly affected by disability, we wanted to know what issues they were most concerned about.” Not surprisingly, the group was most interested in housing options for individuals with disabilities, an especially hot topic given that the Department of Justice Settlement passed in October mandates that five state institutions will be closing by 2015. Regardless, Georgia must begin to plan how to assimilate people with disabilities back into the community. First and foremost, that means they need places to live.

According to Detrice Jupiter-Gilbert, Community Action Pioneer and parent of a child with special needs, “We understand that some government subsidized funds are projected to be available as part of the new settlement, but our goal is to create communities that are self sufficient.”

Some research is required before the group can begin thinking about funding. Childs has plans to organize “learning journeys” for the group. She elaborates, “There are some successful cooperatives in Madison, Wisconsin and Ontario, Canada that we are interested in seeing.” Typically, the living co-ops include

people with and without disabilities living in the same area or building and working together to meet one another’s needs. “The idea is to gather some best practices from these existing communities. We don’t want to reinvent the wheel,” she adds. The communities are developing creative ways to meet the needs of the residents, like pooling waiver dollars to get more services and supports for the money.

“The idea is to gather some best practices from these existing communities. We don’t want to reinvent the wheel.”

There are currently 20 members in the Community Action Pioneers group who contribute in various capacities. Jupiter-Gilbert adds, “Aside from helping people with disabilities, we help one another navigate the systems of services and support.”

Richard McKenzie, Community Action Pioneers board president summarized, “Everyone has a special talent or gift that he or she can contribute to the community. By advocating for people with disabilities, we hope to improve the quality of life for everyone.”

For more information about the Community Action Pioneers of Gwinnett and Real Communities, visit www.gcdd.org or contact Caitlin Childs at cpchilds@dhr.state.ga.us or 404.657.2125.

REAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE



“We understand that some government subsidized funds are projected to be available as part of the new settlement, but our goal is to create communities that are self sufficient.”

RESOURCES

For additional information about the articles and issues in this edition of Making a Difference magazine, consult the following resources.

Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD)
www.gcdd.org
 404-657-2126 or
 888-275-4233 (ASK-GCDD)

State Government

Georgia Senate & House of Representatives
www.legis.state.ga.us

Georgia Governor's Office
www.gov.state.ga.us
 404-656-1776

Department of Community Affairs
www.dca.ga.gov

Georgia Housing Search
www.georgiahousingsearch.org
 877-428-8844

Department of Labor
www.dol.state.ga.us

General Information
www.georgia.gov

Georgia Lieutenant Governor's Office
www.ltgov.georgia.gov
 404-656-5030

Department of Justice Settlement

United States Department of Justice
www.justice.gov

Georgia Advocacy Office
www.gao.org

Bazlon Center
www.bazlon.org

Atlanta Legal Aid Society
www.atlantalegalaid.org

Office of the Governor
www.georgia.gov

Waddie Welcome

Official Waddie Welcome Website
www.waddiewelcome.com

Chatham-Savannah Citizen Advocacy
www.savannahcitizenadvocacy.org
 912-236-5798

Citizen Advocacy of Atlanta & DeKalb
www.citizenadvocacyatlantadekalb.org
 404-523-8849

Entertainment & Disability

Doug Crandell
www.dougcrandell.com

Glee
www.fox.com/glee

Disability Day

Follow GCDD's blog for updates.
www.gcdd.org/blog

DSP Certificate Program

Dottie Adams,
Family and Individual Supports Director
dxadams@dhr.state.ga.us
 404-657-2129

LEAN Business Principles Seminar

Dottie Adams,
Family and Individual Supports Director
dxadams@dhr.state.ga.us
 404-657-2129

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REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

The 18th Annual Larry Bregman, M.D. Educational Conference

A conference for adults with developmental disabilities, their families and their caregivers.

Dance: Sat., March 5, 2011, 7:30 pm (Sponsored by DSAA)
Conference: Sun., March 6, 2011, Registration at 8:30 am
 at The Selig Center | Atlanta, GA 30309

For more info, contact 770.677.9345,
bregman@jfcs-atlanta.org or visit www.bregman.org.

A program of Developmental Disabilities Services - Tools for Independence, a division of Jewish Family & Career Services

January

January 17

Waddie Welcome Readings
Contact: Tom Kohler
kohler@bellsouth.net • 912-236-5798
www.waddiewelcome.com

January 18

Arc of Georgia
2011 Legislative Reception
678-733-8969 • 888-401-1581
www.thearcofgeorgia.org

January 19-20

Parent Mentor
Department of Education (DOE)
Gainesville, GA
Contact: Patti Soloman
psoloman@doe.k12.ga.us • 404-567-7328

January 26-29

ATIA 2011 Conference
Orlando, FL
Contact: Assistive Technology
Industry Association
info@atia.org • 312-321-5172

January 28

Project SEARCH
Macon, GA
Contact: Dottie Adams
dxadams@dhr.state.ga.us • 404-657-2129

February

February 4-5

Abilities Celebration 2011
Georgia Aquarium
educational@georgiaaquarium.org

February 15

Advocacy Day
Atlanta, Georgia
Contact: Anna Watson
anwatson@dhr.state.ga.us • 404-657-2124

February 17

Aging and Disability Coalition
Contact: Sandee Panichi
Sandee.panichi@cobbcounty.org

February 24

13th Annual Disability Day at the Capitol
Atlanta, GA
Contact: Kim Person
kaperson@dhr.state.ga.us • 404-657-2130
www.gcdd.org

February 25-27

Navigating Team Training
Atlanta, GA – Northern Team
Contact: Sandra Humphrey
Sandra@p2pga.org

March

March 11-12

Navigating Team Training
Macon, GA - Southern Team
Contact: Cynthia Spaulding
Cynthia@p2pga.org

March 19

Microboard Association Meeting
Atlanta, GA
Contact: Nancy Vara
Nancy43648@aol.net • 678-983-6217

March 25

Project Search Quarterly Meeting
Savannah, GA
Contact: Dottie Adams
dxadams@dhr.state.ga.us • 404-657-2129

April

April 14-15

GCDD Quarterly Meeting
Carrollton, GA
404-657-2126 • 888-275-4233 (ASK-GCDD)

2011 CALENDAR



Planning an upcoming event?

Send your information to Kim Shapland at kim@oneillcommunications.com to be included in the spring calendar.



Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
2 Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 26-246
Atlanta, GA 30303-3142
404-657-2126, www.gcdd.org
Address Service Requested

MAKING a DIFFERENCE

A quarterly magazine of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities

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SAVE THE DATE!
**13th Annual
Disability Day
at the Capitol**

February 24, 2011