

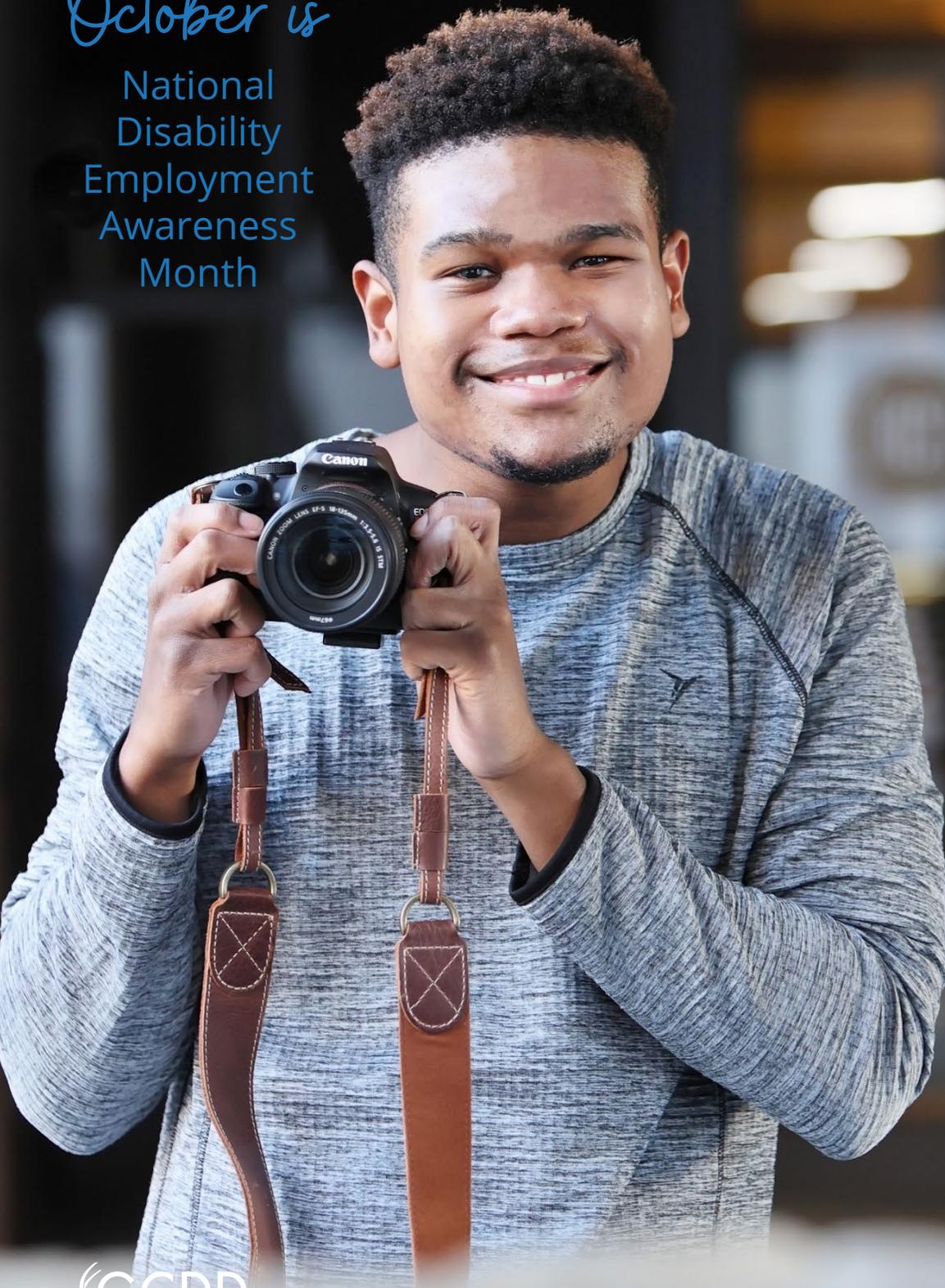
Making **a** Difference

VOLUME 23, ISSUE 4

Fall 2022

October is

National
Disability
Employment
Awareness
Month



Disability Rights
Advocates Prepare
Community for
November Elections

Meet New GCDD
Executive Director
D'Arcy Robb

Your Vote Counts!

VOTING

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By Hilary Vece

Voters with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) hold power to make a real difference in elections, but there are many barriers in place that make voting difficult, like inadequate transportation or accommodations at polling locations. Voting rights advocates across the state are encouraging Georgians with IDD to register to vote and get educated on the issues for the November elections.

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By D’Arcy Robb

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Your vote counts, so make sure you’re ready to go by knowing important deadlines, where you go to vote, and who you want to vote for. There are many tools you can use to find your district and the legislators that represent you, review your sample ballot, and learn about the platforms for different candidates.

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Opportunities For You!

Opportunity: The Webster’s Dictionary defines it as “a favorable combination of circumstances, time, and place” or “a chance for advancement.” When it comes to the disability community, the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) and our partners are working hard to support and advocate for employment opportunities and better wages for you. October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This issue of Making a Difference Magazine will focus on advancing disability employment to ensure your voices are heard in the work place and that you are recognized in the Georgia workforce. In this issue, you will also see a recap of the 2022 GCDD candidate forum on disability issues as well as a recap of the latest iteration of The GCDD Storytelling Project that was filmed in Macon, Georgia.

As you know, there is an election this November. GCDD and our partners want you to be aware of your voting rights and voting access so that you can be sure to cast your vote. You can find out who your elected officials are at [Open States](#). Learn about innovation in accommodations for employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in the Expert Update article featuring Jennifer White, Owner of Able Opportunities, Inc.

We want to ensure that we are providing you with the best information and resources, including opportunities for

employment. As we focus on advancing disability employment in this issue, enjoy learning about our partner, Advancing Employment, in our GCDD Impact article and what they have been doing in support of employment for the disability community. Also featured in this issue is an article about Lele Griner, a baker and graduate of the University of Georgia’s (UGA) Destination Dawgs. Additionally, this issue’s Include College article will feature Georgia’s newest Inclusive Post Secondary Education (IPSE): THRIVE at Georgia College and State University. Also be sure to read about the latest COVID Update, including vaccines available for children ages six months and older.

I was awarded the 2022 National Disability Inclusion Leadership Award this month by the National Disability Inclusion Summit, which recognizes people and organizations that are leading the way in disability advocacy and inclusion efforts within the workplace and community, as well as highlights DEI best practices surrounding inclusion of individuals with disabilities. Going into my second year as the Council Chair, I am excited to see the many great strides GCDD has made, but there is still much more work to be done. You can do your part by getting involved. Write your legislators to give them the opportunity to learn about the issues that impact people

GCDD VIEWPOINT



Nick Perry

with disabilities, their families, and caregivers. Tell them about concerns and challenges that you have, like wanting to get the waiver list reduced or to increase pay for direct support workers, and that you want to get at least minimum wage. Be sure to look at our Calendar of Events to see what activities and events we have going on over the next few months.

We hope you enjoy reading Making a Difference Magazine and hope that these articles and updates on what is happening in Georgia will provide you with new and useful information. We want to hear from you. Let us know your thoughts and comments about the magazine by writing to Tianna Faulkner at tianna.faulkner@gcdd.ga.gov

Nick Perry

Nick Perry
GCDD Council Chairman

Disability: IN Greater Atlanta is Looking for an Executive Director



Position: Executive Director

Status: Volunteer Board Member Hours: About 10/week

“If you have a heart for diversity and inclusion and desire to help move the Greater Atlanta business market to be more disability-friendly and inclusive, this role is a great opportunity for you. All interested parties, please introduce yourself and email your resume to Info@di-ga.org. We are excited to hear from you!

”

Disability: IN Greater Atlanta is a local non-profit, business-led, business to business educational organization. It is an affiliate of the national Disability: IN organization.

We provide members with opportunities to engage within a trusted network. We learn from each other as well as from experienced knowledgeable sources on how to advance inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce.

What We Are Looking For:

DIGA is seeking an individual to volunteer their time to carry out its initiatives daily toward extending its mission and message. This role will be hands-on. It will require follow-up from those internal and external to the organization. The role will be responsible to make sure things “cross the finish line” via influence and strategic thinking. The Executive Director opportunity is ideal for someone looking to enhance their foundational knowledge about working at the intersection of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), supporting persons with disabilities in the workforce, and passion for evangelizing the organization’s message. And lastly, this is great for someone who is early in their career that is looking to grow or someone experienced that the mission of DIGA resonates well with them.

What a Good Candidate Looks Like (the more the better but not all required)

Any combination of the following qualifications is typical of someone filling this role, and greater weight is given to those who have more of them. However, all are encouraged to express interest:

- ✓ Experience with a not-for-profit organization (employee or volunteer)
- ✓ Experience in one or more areas would also be beneficial: Business Administration, General Management, Human Resources, Project Management
- ✓ Demonstrated awareness of the challenges and opportunities surrounding workplace and marketplace inclusion of people with disabilities
- ✓ Master’s degree (completed or in process) with an interest in human capital advancement for those with disabilities
- ✓ Passion for and knowledge base of current DEI initiatives being used in various workplaces
- ✓ Demonstrated, organization, communications, and influencing skills

This position is open until filled.

Get Out the Disability Vote

Disability Rights Advocates Prepare Community for November Elections

By Hilary Vece

Disability rights advocates across the state of Georgia are getting ready for the November elections. Leaders in the disability community are working to ensure that every voter with disabilities is registered, educated, and prepared to exercise their right to vote. Voters with disabilities hold the power to make a significant difference in upcoming elections.

There are 650,000 people with disabilities of voting age in Georgia—that's not a number to ignore. With a reasonable estimate of caregivers included, this voting bloc tops one million people, but candidates running for office in local, state, and national elections often forget this voting bloc. As candidates make their way across their districts and across the state, disability rights advocates are encouraging them to slow down and take the time to meet with these voters. Voters with disabilities hold power to

make a real difference in elections, and candidates who recognize this power will benefit on election day from their engagement. Candidates can also help to empower voters by supporting accessible voting.

People with disabilities, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), face many barriers to voting. Barriers to voting range from inadequate transportation, lack of access to information on candidates and issues, lack of accommodations at polling locations, and blatant discrimination. Even though there are laws in place meant to protect the right to vote for people with disabilities, there is a significant effort to repeal voter protections. Voter suppression is not new, and advocates for voting equality have been fighting against it for more than 100 years. In addition to disability discrimination, voter suppression has

been used to limit the ability of people to vote based on race, gender, and socioeconomic status. While there are many discouraging factors when thinking about voting, disability advocates are enthusiastically encouraging people with disabilities to prepare to participate in the November elections. This message is being shared through the REV UP Georgia campaign. REV UP is an acronym standing for Register, Educate, Vote, Use your Power, and state leaders are helping people with disabilities to REV UP. Registration is often the first step to engaging voters with IDD. You must be registered in your state in order to participate in an election. Deadlines to register to vote are weeks ahead of elections, so it's important that all voters are registered on time.

REV UP Georgia is a statewide nonpartisan voting initiative focused on advancing the power of the disability

One of the main things we discuss in disability advocacy is systemic advocacy and systemic change. The only way that you will be creating systemic, effective change is by going to vote.

–Jessica Mathis, REVUP Georgia Community Connector

vote. To support voter education and reach voters in rural Georgia, the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) awarded a Get Out the Vote grant to Crimminz and Associates, a consulting firm, led by Stacey Ramirez, previously with The Arc Georgia, and Daniel Crimmins, previously with the Center for Leadership in Disability at Georgia State University. Both Ramirez and Crimmins have a long history of disability advocacy in Georgia. Ramirez has been intimately involved in voting rights for people with disabilities for more than ten years, first as a supporter before becoming co-chair of REV UP Georgia. Gaylon Tootle, a blind, disability rights advocate who passed away in

September, was the co-chair, and the heart, of REV UP. Tootle, a nationally recognized advocate for people with disabilities, shared his message on voting rights, saying “We are here to simply educate, empower, and have general discussions with people. Making sure that they are registered and that they understand what the issues are.” When Ramirez began working on voting rights, she recalls hearing that people with disabilities and their families didn’t know how much of a difference their voices could make in elections. “People didn’t seem to realize that their voice mattered in those spaces. That was very much appalling to me as a disability rights advocate. We need to share that ‘your voice matters

in all places, especially at the polls.’ Meanwhile, on the other side of the table, we were hearing that the board of elections didn’t realize that they had the obligation to uphold the Americans with Disabilities Act to make the ballot and polling locations accessible. So, we began having conversations with local boards of elections and the state board of elections,” said Ramirez. Part of REV UP’s approach is to partner with likeminded organizations—including the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD), American Civil Liberties Union, Walton Options, LIFE, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and individual donors—to reach the community through digital outreach and in-person connection. Crimminz & Associates, LLC has organized and trained community connectors, specifically targeting rural areas of Georgia, who will engage with community members, leaders, and officials as the countdown to November 8 continues. The Crimminz group works alongside

What we do is educate voters on their voting rights. We work as an advocate to get their voice heard and their vote counted. We want to get as many people as possible with disabilities to the polls.

–Lee Jones, REVUP Georgia Community Connector

ten community connectors—trusted local leaders—to participate in a nonpartisan engagement strategy. These community connectors are compensated for their work. They conduct outreach on multiple levels from spending time as a 1-on-1 resource with community members, voter registration, participating in webinars, conducting webinars on voter education, attending community meetings or events, and meeting with candidates and election officials. Community connectors know that people with disabilities are not the only group in need of outreach ahead of the November elections, election officials do too. Reaching election officials can

help to secure accommodations and accessible polling facilities in their local area by ensuring officials are aware of requirements. REV UP Georgia also hosted a webinar series throughout September and October titled “Power the Disability Vote.” This webinar series covered topics such as making voting plans, finding polling places, understanding ballots, understanding accommodations required at polls, and getting assistance at polls. Uniting for Change, Georgia’s grassroots network of self-advocates, also focused on voter education leading up to the election with a three-part workshop series titled “Our Voice, Our Vote.”

Definitions:

Voting: A way to make decisions. It gets used to choose elected officials, pass laws, or making other kinds of choices.

Ballot: A list of who and what you can vote for.

Election: You vote for laws and elected officials during an election. There are two main kinds of Elections: primary elections and general elections. November 8 is the 2022 general election.

Polling place: Somewhere people go to vote.

Voter suppression: Unfair laws and other tricks that keep people from voting.

Source: ASAN Your Vote Counts: A Self-Advocates Guide to Voting in the U.S.

Resources:

Find Sample Ballots:
[Branch Vote](#)

Find Your Elected Officials:
[OpenStates](#)

Check Your Voter Registration Status
<https://mvp.sos.ga.gov/s/>

Voting Assistance for People with Disabilities:
<https://sos.ga.gov/page/voting-assistance-people-disabilities>

REV UP Voting Campaign:
<https://www.aapd.com/advocacy/voting/>

Georgia Advocacy Office Voter Protection Hotline:
404-885-1234 or 1-800-537-2329

Dates to Remember:

October 17: Early voting begins for November election

November 8: Election day

We are here to simply educate, empower, and have general discussions with people. Making sure that they are registered and that they understand what the issues are.

–Gaylon Tootle

Your life was a blessing.
Your memory a treasure.
You are loved beyond words.
And missed beyond measure.

IN LOVING MEMORY
GAYLON TOOTLE
1959-2022



Our Voice
Our Vote.

Lele Griner Shares Her Passion with the World through Instagram and a Lot of Sugar

By Hilary Vece

Disability advocate Lele Griner loves to bake. She worked in bakeries during high school, interned at a bakery in college, and started working at a bakery after graduating from [Destination Dawgs](#) at University of Georgia.

Griner is also a proud advocate for inclusive post secondary education (IPSE), like Destination Dawgs. IPSE gives students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) the opportunity to attend college in an inclusive setting and find careers in the fields of their choice. Students in IPSE take courses that support their personal career goals alongside university students who may or may not have IDD.

“It’s important to have a true college experience, be able to go to sporting events and activities with mentors, and be immersed in college life,” said Griner.

Griner graduated from Destination Dawgs in 2021 with a focus on food and nutrition.

During the pandemic, Griner and her sisters began working from home and decided to start baking together at their home in Atlanta. Her older sister, Lucy, started the Instagram account [@BakingWithLele](#). Her twin sister, Allison, takes photos and videos of Griner and her creations to share on the account.

Lele’s sisters help out in the kitchen, and her mom, Saretta, coordinates and gathers supplies, but Griner, who has Down syndrome, is head baker. Griner leads the kitchen, finding recipes and baking creations from start to finish.

In addition to head baker, Griner is also the model on her Instagram account where she shares photos and videos. With over 1,300 followers (and growing), Baking with Lele is sharing her skills with the world. On her Instagram, you can find updates from Griner, baking challenges, guest bakers, and of course, lots of her sweet treats. Her bio reads “Spreading joy through baked goods! Advocate for inclusivity and following your dreams!”

“The Instagram makes me happy!” said Griner, “I love the comments!”

From college she learned how to make healthy foods, but her internship at [Alumni Cookie Dough](#) taught her about making sweet treats. Griner worked in the kitchen at the Alumni Cookie Dough dessert shop in Athens as an intern for two semesters. She followed

recipes to make different flavors of cookie dough. One Baking with Lele Instagram post featured Alumni Cookie Dough, describing her internship saying, “This is where Lele truly gets to shine and be independent! It’s such great practice for owning her own bakery one day!”

Before that, Griner worked at Publix Bakery in Buckhead and the Sloppy Floyd bakery in Atlanta while in high school. She also helped bake for Darden’s Delights, a pie shop opened by a family with a daughter with Down syndrome.

Today, in addition to Baking with Lele, she works at Crumbl Cookies where she rolls cookie dough and frosts and decorates cookies.

Griner’s baking journey has mostly been shared through friends, but her family sees her vision growing into something even bigger, with Griner leading the way. She introduces herself on Instagram saying, “I’m a baker with Down syndrome who has a dream to bring joy to others, advocate for my special needs community, and eventually open my own bakery!”

“I want to keep baking because it is my passion,” said Griner, “I love that we can advocate for others with special needs through this business.”

Her advice for other young people who want to start a business is simple and direct: “Just go for it!”

To see what Griner is whipping up next, follow her on Instagram [@BakingWithLele](#).



Meet New GCDD Executive Director D’Arcy Robb



“D’Arcy, Welcome Home.”

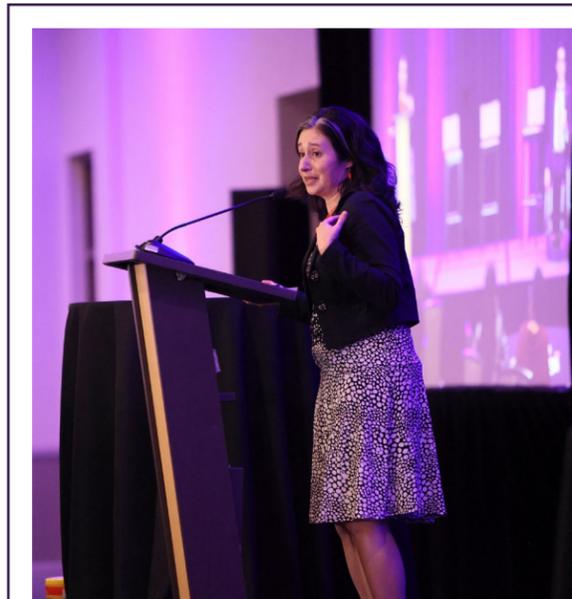
Those words feel so right. That was how I was greeted at one of the first meetings I attended in my new role as Executive Director of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD). While this role is new to me, the disability community and DD Councils are not. I am humbled and thrilled to have been selected for this position and beyond excited to collaborate with our Council, staff, partners, and advocates across Georgia to advance our mission.

If we’ve not met, my name is D’Arcy Robb. I’m originally from South Charleston, West Virginia, and stumbled into the world of DD Councils after graduating with my Master’s in Public Policy from the University of Kentucky. I’ve worked for the Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, the Department of Human Services’ Division of Family

and Children Services, and spent a bit of time in the private sector. I am also proud to be a family member of several remarkable, beloved individuals with developmental disabilities. That is, proud not because of anything I’ve done, but because they are too a person and awesome human beings. (Note to my relatives without disabilities, no offense, I think you’re great too.)

Back when I was Public Policy Director for GCDD, I used to describe our mission by saying that our job was to move the ball forward for folks with developmental disabilities and their families. While I don’t think that’s wrong, there’s more to it in our mission statement—that is, to bring about social and policy changes that promote opportunities for the wide spectrum of diverse people/persons with developmental disabilities and their families to live, learn, work, play, and worship in their communities. As

a seasoned disability leader recently shared with me and the staff, it comes down to supporting people with developmental disabilities to have a meaningful life and remembering that the definition of “meaningful” must be determined by each of us for ourselves. It means a lot to me to do this work in partnership with you. Whether you identify as someone with a disability, a family member of someone with a disability, a friend, neighbor, policymaker, or supportive ally—I’m thrilled to collaborate with you on making the kind of changes that support everyone in our community to live purpose-filled lives.



Sustainable Business Models Create Opportunities for Businesses and Employees with Developmental Disabilities

Featuring Jennifer White

By Hilary Vece

When people think of a person with a disability, often they do not think that person is able to work or employable. One woman is using her passion and talents to help people with disabilities excel in the workplace.

Jennifer White’s career in helping people with disabilities prepare for the workforce began when she was a teenager. Through her father’s work as a psychiatrist, she grew up surrounded by people with disabilities. She witnessed their gifts and their struggles, often with communication. In this environment, White learned how to communicate and help individuals express themselves through trial and error with different techniques and devices. She describes herself as “an inventor out of the gate” and combined her love of inventing and her belief that all people deserve the right to be heard and participate in their communities to found her company Able Opportunities, Inc. located in Hansville, Washington.

[Able Opportunities, Inc.](#) is an organization that believes in providing equal opportunity, economic power, independent living, and inclusive communities for people with disabilities. They offer many services, including supported employment and job placement, transition services from school-to-work after graduation, consulting, business partnerships, and more. They also offer trainings, innovative accommodations, and

resources for employers, people with developmental disabilities, and their families.

“I focus on person-driven accommodation tools made by the individual,” said White. Person-driven accommodation tools and supports are tools that are co-created and customized by employment specialists and the person with disabilities who will be using it for their job.

These person-driven supports are an integral part of her approach to employment customization. Her company created the Work Autonomy app. This app allows employers and people with developmental disabilities to program and track concrete information about job tasks. The app’s three primary functions—messages, schedules, and production—are completely customizable for its users.

Often in supported employment, people with disabilities work their job with a one-on-one job coach throughout their entire shift or part of their shift, but many people with disabilities in the workforce don’t want to be dependent on a job coach. With technology, they don’t have to.

“We taught a person with a developmental disability how to use this app. This was someone who was previously deemed to be ‘unemployable.’ This was his

first job out of high school, and he said, ‘I like using the Work Autonomy app because I can do my job and the job coach goes away!’ Now he trains new coaches how to use the app. Accommodation changes the world for people with disabilities” said White, “not just in their lives, but how people see them and their capacity to work.”

White is determined to demonstrate that there are cost-effective opportunities for employers to hire people with developmental disabilities that will benefit their businesses financially. The more supported employment becomes a system and focuses on the business value of employing people with disabilities, the more success will be seen in this field.



She described the success of one business partnership saying, “It’s not just a ‘feel good story,’ it’s a sustainable model opening up better job opportunities for people with developmental disabilities,” said White. “Every organization I know is struggling with hiring people right now. To me, this is the perfect time to be talking to employers about business model structures that are sustainable. There is a massive pool of people who want to work, and who want to stay in a job where they are successful and valued. Those are people with developmental disabilities.”

“The math breaks the myth,” explains White. Evidence shows that the benefits outweigh the costs when employing people with disabilities. “At one company, we pitched the first wage for employees at \$10/hour when the minimum wage was \$7.25 and got the higher rate because the business model makes sense.”

White recognizes the origins of why employers assume that hiring people with developmental disabilities isn’t sustainable, isn’t cost-effective, or takes too much of their time.

“Historically, the community that is focused on employing people with developmental disabilities has been looking at this as a social work challenge, when really it’s a business

problem that needs to be presented as a business solution,” she explains. White also identified iPads as an effective person-driven accommodation tool because they are accessible for people who process information [differently](#). [On her website](#), she provides a justification letter to submit to insurance companies or Medicaid to purchase the iPad and gives free step-by-step instructions on how to make “Silly Movies” on iPads. The lessons to make “Silly Movies” use built-in apps like Photo Booth and iMovie to train users on every way they can touch the iPad for all other apps.

These movies also allow the user to interact with the devices outside of work and give them opportunities to create and express themselves.

Whether low-tech or high-tech, White encourages employers and families to explore employment possibilities that incorporate custom accommodations created by and for people with developmental disabilities. With these tools in place, businesses benefit and bring life-changing employment opportunities to people with developmental disabilities.

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Treasure Maps: Macon Event Wrap Up

By Maria Pinkelton



Treasure Maps: Macon, the first event in the three-part 2022 Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) Storytelling Project, kicked off on Saturday, September 17, to a wonderful crowd in Macon, Georgia. The film screening and community celebration that took place at the Elaine Lucas Center at Carolyn Crayton Park was attended by the Treasure Maps stars, friends, and family members as well as many Macon-area leaders and community leaders.

This is the second anthology of short films done as a part of The GCDD Storytelling Project. Last year, the first set of short films capturing the stories of 10 Georgians with developmental disabilities were produced and toured the state as a part of Treasure Maps: The Georgia Storytelling Roadshow 2021. Xerophile Films, who produced those films, returned for a second year on the project. All 10 of the 2021 Treasure Maps films are available on

[GCDD's YouTube channel.](#)

The GCDD Storytelling Project that began four years ago as an opportunity for Georgians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to share stories with their legislators has become a multi-faceted collection of written stories, audio conversations, and films displaying the rich tapestry that makes up the lives of these individuals. L'Arche Atlanta, StoryMuse, and their partners have traveled the state collecting images and stories of Georgians with IDD and the lives they live. So far, more than 150 stories have been told through the two seasons of the Hidden Voices podcast, the documentary 6,000 Waiting, and short- and long-form written stories with accompanying photographs.

The project, managed by a partnership between GCDD, L'Arche Atlanta, and StoryMuse, is unique in the way it entertains audiences while also touching on important topics

such as finding one's talent, being a part of community, and gaining independence. From a woman sharing her love of books through volunteering at a school to a budding comedian honing his craft under the guidance of a seasoned professional, the stories are rich and diverse.

The ten Georgians showcased in the film have undergone extensive training in the art of storytelling. Through a series of workshops, they learned the basics of how to tell a story and what lived experiences they'd had that would make for the best stories to tell. This year, the producers focused their eyes on Macon, and the ten residents that were selected for the project from there are as follows:

- Gregory Childs
- Stuart Evans
- Lydia Foss
- Tyler Harper
- Nandi Isaac
- Crawford Lyman
- Guillermo Ramon

- Valerya Robinson
- Sara Whitby
- Tamika Woods

Event attendees relished the opportunity to meet and talk to the Macon Storytellers themselves, and the film's stars enjoyed their newfound celebrity. Treasure Maps Storyteller Guillermo Ramon shared, "I have paralysis in one arm which allowed me to live a very normal life. My experience participating in the Storytelling Project was fascinating for me and being a part of the Storytelling Project, you see that there are many different opportunities when you have a disability."

"It was a very personal experience that creates a unique history. That's what I like about the Storytelling Project, everyone has a unique and different history," said Ramon. "I have appreciation for the fact that my life is special and have had an opportunity to see the weaknesses in others that we can all have."

"Working alongside community-based organizations like Storytellers Macon and Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation weaves this work into the fabric of the city. It connects local people to local people and in doing so builds relationships that will last beyond this one project," said Shannon Turner, StoryMuse's Founder and Lead Artist and Storyteller who facilitated training workshops.

The festivities began with the Cuban Island Café and Cheeseburger Freddie food trucks, The Vineyard Band, and many representatives from the community at the resource fair, including Wesley Glen, Macon Magazine, Pentatonic Therapies, and many others.

"It was an amazing experience to be a part of the making of this film. I'm happy my dreams and wishes came into reality through prayers and by God's grace," said Nandi Isaac.

The event was not only an opportunity to educate and inform audiences, but it also brought together various agencies from the Macon community to make the event a reality. Staff from Macon Bibb County Recreation Department, Storytellers Macon, River Edge Behavioral Health, Wesley Glen Ministries, Citizen Advocacy, and The Arc of Macon contributed their time and talent to the training workshops and community celebration, and this evening would not have been possible without them.

"I am excited for the opportunity to work with GCDD and StoryMuse for the second year in a row and to create Treasure Maps: Macon. At River Edge, we see individuals' abilities not disabilities and Treasure Maps gives a larger voice to that motto," said Greta O'Dell, IDD Director at River Edge Behavioral Health in Macon.

"Gatherings like the premiere and celebration for Treasure Maps: Macon are community building events that draw in many residents who've never had a connection to Georgia's disability community. When spaces like these are created, true connection

and relationships happen," said Maria Pinkelton, GCDD's Public Relations Director. "I am so happy to see how the citizens of Macon and so many grassroots, community-based organizations worked alongside the Friends of L'Arche and StoryMuse to coach the ten talented storytellers and create this wonderful evening."

For those who are interested in participating in The GCDD Storytelling Project, there are two more opportunities to have their voices heard. Budding storytellers will have the opportunity to tell their stories through traditional interview-based journalistic stories with photographs, or through a partnership with Cow Tipping Press, they can participate in a workshop that will build their capacity to develop a thorough understanding of the art of story building and how to convey their own stories. A formal, public book launch featuring the stories of those individuals will cap the work with Cow Tipping Press.

Learn more about The GCDD Storytelling Project, view the complete library of work done thus far, and learn how you can participate in an upcoming storytelling event by visiting our website at story-collection.gcdd.org.

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Moving Awareness to Action in National Disability Employment Awareness Month

By Hilary Vece

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), and Advancing Employment is working to ensure that Georgia's developmental disability community isn't forgotten in the fight for competitive, integrated employment and an end to subminimum wages—the legal practice of paying employees with developmental disabilities less than the minimum wage.

Advancing Employment, an organization managed by the Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD) at the University of Georgia (UGA), began four years ago as a center to help organizations with best practices in employment supports. This work began with a grant from the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD). Advancing Employment is led by Project Director Doug Crandell, a decades-long expert in the field of community-based employment practices. Crandell recently authored the book *Twenty-Two Cents an Hour: Disability Rights and the Fight to End Subminimum Wages* about employment issues and the disability community.

Advancing Employment provides assistance to employment providers across the state, including Pineland CSB, ASPIRE/Albany CSB, Easterseals Southern Georgia, Woodright Industries/Bartow Board of Health, and The Arc of Southwest Georgia. Advancing Employment's assistance

(known in the field as “technical assistance”) ranges from assisting with access to employment services for people with disabilities to providing teleconferences, workshops, and site-visits to employment providers and more.

The organization has formed a Community of Practice for the employment providers, with monthly meetings together in addition to individual technical assistance. Crandell explains that the goal of this assistance is to help providers “to really do the work around actually helping people get to work and leave sheltered workshops, subminimum wage work, and day programs.”

The organization also provides workshops and resources to organizations who provide services to people with developmental disabilities to help them learn how to create video and image-based resumes which help candidates demonstrate their passion, abilities, and personality.

Additionally, Advancing Employment provides information and resources to the public through several webinar series on wide-ranging employment and disability topics.

The organization's impact expands beyond technical assistance. Their 2022 Employment Policy Imperatives for Georgians with Disabilities tackle employment through policymaking.

Advancing Employment has established these eight policy goals to help Georgians with disabilities obtain competitive, integrated employment with fair wages. Their policy goals include ending subminimum wages, creating tax incentives for businesses to hire people with developmental disabilities, implementing self-employment policies, promoting research, and more.

Advancing Employment sees and celebrates Georgia's robust and unique economy—from film to agriculture, including green jobs through the production of batteries for electric vehicles.

The organization's goal is for legislators to recognize the role that people with disabilities play in Georgia's economy. While there is interest from private companies in employing people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), it is primarily in the form of service jobs. Advancing Employment encourages deeper conversations and considerations for career paths for people with IDD.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is celebrated annually in October to raise awareness and educate the public about disability employment issues and recognize the many contributions of workers with disabilities. Led by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy,

this awareness month is primarily observed at a grassroots level across the country. Iterations of Disability Employment Awareness Month began as early as 1945 with a week-long observation in the first week of October. In 1988, Congress expanded the declaration to a month-long celebration every October.

Despite its near 80-year history, Disability Employment Awareness Month has not always been packed with action. Last year, Advancing Employment reenergized Disability Employment Awareness Month in Georgia in collaboration with ten groups across the state through education and events with weekly themes. Building on the success of their Disability Employment Awareness Month 2021 initiative, Advancing Employment is moving awareness to action for Disability Employment Awareness Month 2022.

Disability Employment Awareness

Month 2022's weekly themes, which were established to highlight important issues related to disability and employment, are Disability and Economics, Employment Stories, State as Model Employer, and Innovative Policies. Weekly resources from Advancing Employment will include webinars featuring guest speakers, workshops, social media, press releases, and proclamations from public officials. These resources created and curated by the team at Advancing Employment can be sent as an information packet to public officials and policymakers to encourage action.

While maintaining a focus on Georgia, Advancing Employment has established a national footprint through partnership with the national Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center, the National Center on Self-Employment, Business Ownership, and Telecommuting, and supporting California's SB 639 to end

subminimum wage in the state of California.

Advancing Employment is also in the process of putting together and supporting a small group of parents, intended to help other parents and families make decisions about leaving sheltered or segregated employment settings that employ people with developmental disabilities separate from people without developmental disabilities and pay subminimum wages.

Crandell's message for people with IDD that have not worked or only worked in segregated settings is that “you have a lot to offer, and there are employers who need you.”

For more information about Advancing Employment, visit [AdvancingEmployment.com](https://www.advancingemployment.com).

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Advancing Employment's 2022 Employment Policy Imperatives for Georgians with Disabilities:

- ✓ Adopt an approach known as the State as Model Employer that requires Georgia state agencies to set goals for the recruitment, and retention of people with disabilities.
- ✓ Ensure that the renewals of the NOW and COMP waivers prioritize and incentivize employment.
- ✓ Enact the self-employment policy recommendations provided to GVRA in 2018 so that microenterprise is an option for Georgians with disabilities.
- ✓ Phase out the use of subminimum wages in Georgia by 2023.
- ✓ For go the Order of Selection process at GVRA so that job seekers receiving SSI and/or SSDI have the supports to work and become Georgia taxpayers.
- ✓ Create an initiative in tandem with the Employment First Council to promote an Economic Coalition for Employment and Disability to guide research and dissemination related to return-on-investment, purchasing power, and economic growth.
- ✓ Create a state tax-incentive for businesses that hire workers with disabilities that have previously been paid subminimum wages.
- ✓ Create evidence-based expectations and practices in services funded by DBHDD such as Community Access Individual that will contribute to a more robust employment focus.

Tell Your Stories

The GCDD Storytelling Project team is looking for sixteen individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD), their family, and/or caregivers/support staff who are interested in having their story documented by professional writers and photographers as a part of The GCDD Storytelling Project. These stories are used by GCDD in a variety of ways, including our newsletters and website, and sometimes for advocacy with your legislators.

If you'd like to have your story become a part of the growing archive of The GCDD Storytelling Project, please fill out this form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeQVv7XAWbSSAQVJij_ii5vflrxo1R_qcj4GXW1heJ1tQLQ/view_form

The deadline for application for Telling Our Stories is rolling. Applications will be accepted until November 1, 2022.

Questions?

Contact Shannon Turner at The GCDD Storytelling Project at ddstorytellingga@gmail.com or 678-837-6681



COVID-19 Guidelines & Vaccination Update

By Naomi D. Williams

The COVID-19 vaccination has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for children ages 6 months to 5 years old.

It is [recommended](#) that children five years and older receive the COVID-19 booster. The Pfizer booster is available for people five years old and older, and the Moderna booster is available for people 18 years old and older. The dosage and timeframe for full vaccinations in this age group is different than vaccinations for older age groups. As always, be sure to talk with your child's pediatrician or primary care physician (PCP) if you have questions and want to discuss any concerns. The importance of these boosters is that they address and add protection to cover Omicron variants. The boosters have added proteins to protect against Omicron variants BA.4 and BA.5, the most recent variants and newer strains of COVID-19.

New [guidance](#) from the CDC released in August shares updates on when and how long to quarantine or isolate if you test positive for COVID-19 and what to do if you or your child has been exposed to COVID-19. The guidance took into consideration everything that has been learned

about COVID-19, what's worked and what did not, and the steps necessary to reduce the risk of severe illness. You can contact your PCP, your child's pediatrician, your local health department, or local pharmacy if you have questions or need more information on what, when, where, and how to get your first, second, or booster vaccinations.

At home COVID-19 vaccinations are still available for Georgia residents who are currently sick or homebound due to an ongoing physical or mental disability. Email HVS@dph.ga.gov or call (888) 572-0112 to request an at-home vaccination. You will need to give the following information for the person requiring the at-home vaccination:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Address
- City
- County
- Contact phone number

As we move forward and continue to learn how to live life with COVID-19 and other viruses during cold and flu season, we can give ourselves and our children of all ages a boost. You can boost your immune system by:

- Drinking plenty of water
- Getting restful sleep at night
- Eating healthy meals with

- fruits and vegetables
- Taking the recommended daily dose of vitamin C
- Staying up to date with recommended vaccinations and boosters
- Washing hands often with soap and water

Locations for Vaccination and Boosters

For children, connect with your child's pediatrician or primary care physician to schedule an appointment for vaccination. For adults, connect with your primary care physician or medical home to schedule an appointment for your vaccination or booster. Vaccinations are still being provided free of charge. If you don't have a primary care physician or medical home, you can contact your local health department or go to www.vaccines.gov to find a place to get the shot near you.

As we continue to live through the COVID-19 pandemic and follow guidance on when the Public Health Emergency statute will end, your concerns, quality of life, and vote in the upcoming elections matter.

Remember: People may be over covid, but covid is not over!

Your Vote Counts!

By Naomi D. Williams

Georgians will head to the polls in November to cast ballots for candidates in the general election. There are several seats that candidates are eagerly pursuing and seeking your vote. As demonstrated in the 2018 gubernatorial election, and even more so in the 2020 presidential election, the country witnessed Georgia turn from a red state to a blue one. Every vote, your vote, really does count.

Georgians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) showed up and made their voices heard in recent elections.

Reflect on the 2018 gubernatorial race between Stacy Abrams and Brian Kemp: Kemp won by less than one percent. We can expect another contentious gubernatorial race this year, as Stacy Abrams is running again and looking to unseat Governor Kemp, as are two other candidates.

There have been redistricting and other changes made in communities across the state regarding voting centers and absentee ballot box drop off locations. It's important to know in advance what, if anything, has changed in your community regarding casting your vote. Check with your local board of elections office to confirm you're registered to vote and identify your polling location or visit the [Georgia secretary of state website](#).

Visit [OpenStates](#) online to find out which state senate and house district you live in and the current state legislators who represent you. You can even see the committees the legislators serve on and the bills they have sponsored.

Visit [Ballotpedia](#) to learn more about the election history of your state-level districts and whether or not your current legislator has a general election challenger.

Visit [Branch.vote](#) to find your sample ballot and information about candidate platforms to plan who you will vote for.

To learn more about each candidate running, you can visit their respective personal campaign page and learn what their platform is and what priorities they are running on. Using these resources, you can ensure you are prepared to cast your vote for the candidates that best represent you.

When assessing the candidates and selecting who you will vote for, it is helpful for you to identify what's most important to you and what changes would make the IDD community to the forefront in decision making and funding allocation. Consider creating a "Top 5 list" of priorities, why they are important, and what difference it would make for Georgia if changes were made.

Priorities you might consider:

- Economy and Employment
- Healthcare and Medicaid Expansion
- Emergency Preparedness
- Education
- Access
- Voting Rights
- Rural Development
- Small Business Development
- Criminal Justice and Public Safety

There are many issues that candidates are addressing. As you decide what's most important to you, your priority list can help you select the candidate that will best represent you. It can also help form questions to submit to candidates in the event you can attend an in-person or virtual event or even reach out to candidates by email.

For more information about voting and voting rights and support regarding disabilities connect with community partners [The Arc Georgia](#) and the [Georgia Advocacy Office \(GAO\)](#).

**It is important to note that GCDD does not endorse any candidate and that the enclosed information encompasses only a small piece of a larger political platform for each candidate. We encourage you to reach out to them with questions of your own—and to vote.*

U.S. Senate

Georgia is considered a "battleground state" or "swing state." This means support is closely divided by Democrats and Republicans and both parties have a good chance of winning. Therefore, every person who can choose who they want to represent them and their priorities should cast a ballot as every vote matters.

Candidates:



[Raphael Warnock](#)
Democrat Incumbent



[Herschel Walker](#)
Republican



[Chase Oliver](#)
Libertarian

Governor

The [governor](#) is the chief executive of the state and oversees the executive branch. Governors have the power to enforce laws similar to the president.

Candidates:



[Brian Kemp](#)
Republican incumbent



[Stacy Abrams](#)
Democrat



[Elbert Bartell](#)
Libertarian



[Shane Hazel](#)
Libertarian

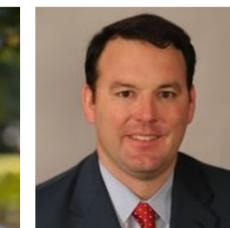
Lieutenant Governor

The [lieutenant governor](#) is the second-highest elected official and president of the state senate. The lieutenant governor oversees debates in the senate and works with advocates to introduce legislation.

Candidates:



[Charlie Bailey](#)
Democrat



[Burt Jones](#)
Republican



[Ryan Graham](#)
Libertarian

Geoff Duncan is the incumbent, and he is not running for re-election.

Attorney General

The attorney general is the head legal advisor for the governor and state agencies, boards, and commissions. The attorney general cannot provide legal assistance to private citizens while holding office.

Candidates:



[Chris Carr](#)
Republican Incumbent



[Jen Jordan](#)
Democrat



[Martin Cowen](#)
Libertarian

Secretary of State

The secretary of state registers voters, grants professional licenses, tracks annual corporate filings, and oversees the state's securities' market.

Candidates:



[Brad Raffensperger](#)
Republican Incumbent



[Rep. Bee Nguyen](#)
Democrat



[Ted Metz](#)
Libertarian

Several seats are open. Districts that have two more candidates are listed. You can use [OpenStates](#) to identify who represents your district.

State Superintendent of Schools

The [state superintendent of schools](#) oversees the work of the state Department of Education that oversees the public education throughout the state to include laws and regulations related to education are followed and devoted state and federal funds are properly distributed to local school systems.

Insurance Commissioner

The [insurance commissioner](#) licenses and regulates insurance companies; ensures insurance rates, rules, and forms comply with state law; investigates suspicions of insurance fraud; and conducts inspections of buildings and houses to prevent fire outbreak.

Labor Commissioner

The [labor commissioner](#) is responsible for implementing the state's labor regulations, operating its unemployment insurance and rehabilitation programs, and providing research and statistics of Georgia's labor market.

Candidates:



[Richard Woods](#)
Republican Incumbent



[Alisha Searcy](#)
Democrat

Candidates:



[John King](#)
Republican Incumbent



[Janice Laws Robinson](#)
Democrat

Candidates:



[William Boddie](#)
Democrat



[Bruce Thompson](#)
Republican



[Emily Anderson](#)
Democrat

Calendar of Events

OCTOBER

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

- 15 9am-2pm NAMIWalks Your Way 2022 [Info](#)
Hosted by National Alliance on Mental Illness
Georgia State Capitol, Atlanta, GA
- 18 3pm National Disability Employment Awareness Month Webinar Series: State as Model Employer [Info](#)
Hosted by Advancing Employment
- 25 2pm National Disability Employment Awareness Month Webinar Series: Innovative Policies in Disability Employment [Info](#)
Hosted by Advancing Employment
- 26 12:00pm-12:45pm Family Advocacy Lunch & Learn [Info](#)
Hosted by Georgia Coalition of Family Advocates on Developmental Disabilities
- 26 October 26-December 7 Open Your World Book Clubs: Sacagawea: The Trip to the West [Info](#)
Hosted by Gwinnett County Public Library & Dunamis Educational Foundation
- 27 10am Power the Disability Vote Webinar Series: Getting Assistance at the Polls [Info](#)
Hosted by REV UP! Georgia

NOVEMBER

- 1 10:30am-12:00pm Our Voice, Our Vote Workshop: Voting Q+A [Info](#)
Hosted by Uniting for Change
- 8 Election Day
- 9 Parents Night Out [Info](#)
Hosted by Autism Hope Center
Columbus, GA

DECEMBER

- 5 4-5pm (Repeats Monday) COMMUNITY STRONG! Gathering [Info](#)
Hosted by Uniting for Change
- 6 6:30pm (Repeats Every Tuesday) Tuesdays with Tootle [Info](#)
Hosted by Stancil Tootle

JANUARY

- TBD Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities Quarterly Council Meeting [Info](#)
January 2023

Voting Dates to Remember

Absentee/mail-in ballot request deadline

In-person: October 28, 2022

By mail: Received by October 28, 2022

Online: October 28, 2022

Absentee/mail-in ballot return deadline

In-person: November 8, 2022

By mail: Received by November 8, 2022

Early voting available to all voters:

October 17, 2022, to November 4, 2022



Election Day

November 8

Polls open 7 am to 7 pm



Submit an Event to GCDD's Event Calendar

Georgia College Opens THRIVE Inclusive Post Secondary Education in Milledgeville

By Hilary Vece

Georgia College and State University is preparing to open the newest inclusive post secondary education (IPSE) this spring. Known as IPSE, inclusive college, like Georgia College’s THRIVE, is gaining in popularity throughout the state—and the country. There are now [309 IPSE programs in the U.S.](#) with THRIVE being [Georgia’s ninth program.](#)

Nicole M. DeClouette, Ph.D., is a professor of special education and interim associate dean at the John H. Lounsbury College of Education at Georgia College. As a doctoral student, she worked for an IPSE at Syracuse University in New York and saw the impact IPSE



had on the lives of people with disabilities. In 2018, while working at Georgia College, DeClouette attended a two-week Women in Higher Education Leadership Institute in Denver. When the institute tasked participants to develop a project to implement at their home universities, she decided to bring IPSE to Georgia College.

When she returned to Georgia College, she connected with [Think College](#) and the Georgia Inclusive Postsecondary Education Consortium ([GAIPSEC](#)) and began building THRIVE.

Georgia College received both an exploration grant and an implementation grant through Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) from the U.S. Department of Education to create THRIVE. This support allowed them to temporarily hire a part-time program director to assist in program development.

THRIVE hopes to start their two-year program with 2-3 students in early-2023. They plan to add

residential opportunities in the future so that students from across the state can attend Georgia College. In the meantime, the program will be open to serve local students in the Milledgeville-area.

THRIVE students will choose their education pathways giving them a true liberal arts experience. As the state’s designated public liberal arts college, Georgia College will expose THRIVE students to a broad range of educational opportunities. The ultimate goal of any college program, including IPSEs like THRIVE, is employment for their graduates.

“Georgia College is small enough that it’s personable. The community is special—there is a family-like atmosphere,” says DeClouette.

Aside from THRIVE, Georgia College has a well-established GC Journeys Program, which requires that all Georgia College students participate in five “transformative learning experiences” by the time they graduate. GC Journeys includes three required experiences plus two additional

experiences chosen by the student. The required experiences are First Year Experience, career planning milestones, and a capstone course. Additional experiences for students to choose from include intensive leadership experiences, mentored undergraduate research, community-based engaged learning, internships, and study abroad.

Once THRIVE is established and expanded, it will incorporate the full GC Journeys Program as part of the curriculum.

“At Georgia College, I hope to get this program off the ground and ready to give students the life opportunities that so many others take for granted,” said DeClouette.

DeClouette recognizes the contrast of the THRIVE program at Georgia College with local history. Milledgeville is home to what is now known as Central State Hospital, which was once the largest residential mental

health hospital in the country with 12,000 residents and 6,000 employees. After decades of advocacy for deinstitutionalization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, Central State Hospital has largely downsized and now serves approximately 200 patients.

Many of the residents that left Central State Hospital through deinstitutionalization still reside in Milledgeville and are served by community-based supports, and Georgia College regularly partners with the local disability community. The

establishment of an IPSE at Georgia College is a natural progression.

“It’s important to see where these students may have lived 50-60 years ago versus now, receiving education and skills so they can live and work in the community,” said DeClouette.

This piece is another in our Include College series of articles [highlighting Georgia’s IPSE programs.](#)

...

I hope legislators and community leaders recognize that these programs have a feel-good component to them, but that’s not the focus. The focus is on the skills to get jobs where people with disabilities can lead a meaningful life, drive their own car, live where they want, and contribute to the economy.

—Nicole M. DeClouette, Ph.D.



Organizations Employing Georgia IPSE Students & Graduates

A

- Alumni Cookie Dough (Athens)
- Advanced Auto
- Advanced Metals Components (Swainsboro)
- AMC North DeKalb (Decatur)
- Ansley Golf Course (Atlanta)
- Athens Leisure Services (Athens)
- Atlanta History Center (Atlanta)
- Atlanta Humane Society (Atlanta)
- Aramark

E

- Ellis Center (Atlanta)
- Emanuel County School System (Swainsboro, Twin City)
- Engineering for Social Innovation Center at Georgia Tech (Atlanta)
- Enterprise Holdings
- EXLAB at Georgia State University (Atlanta)

F

- FedEx
- Fernbank Museum (Atlanta)
- Ferst Center for the Arts at Georgia Tech (Atlanta)
- Fort Yargo State Park (Winder)
- Frazer Center (Atlanta)
- Fulton County Department of External Affairs (Atlanta)

G

- Georgia Aquarium (Atlanta)
- Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (Atlanta)
- Georgia Film Academy (Atlanta)
- Georgia House Rabbit Society (Kennesaw)
- Georgia Southern University Office of Leadership & Community Engagement (Statesboro)
- Georgia State Police Department (Atlanta)
- Georgia State University EXLAB (Atlanta)
- Georgia Tech Athletics (Atlanta)
- Georgia Tech Cable Network (Atlanta)
- Global Learning Center at Georgia Tech (Atlanta)
- Goodman Decorating Company (Atlanta)
- Good Measures Meals (Atlanta)
- Grady Hospital (Atlanta)

H

- Hampton Inn by Hilton at Georgia Tech (Atlanta)
- Hands on Atlanta (Atlanta)
- Hartsfield-Jackson Airport (Atlanta)
- Hirsch Academy (Decatur)
- Hobby Lobby (Columbus)
- Hojeij Branded Foods, Inc. (Atlanta)
- Home Depot
- Hotel Indigo (Atlanta)

I

- IK Hoffman Lufthansa Cargo Warehouse (Sandy Springs)
- Insight Global (Atlanta)
- Interra International (Atlanta)

K

- Kennesaw State University Division of Diverse & Inclusive Excellence (Kennesaw)
- Kennesaw State University Division of University Advancement (Kennesaw)

L

- L.A. Fitness (Atlanta)
- Lakeside High School (Evans)
- LifeSouth Community Blood Centers (Dunwoody)

M

- Marine Corps Logistics Base (Albany)
- Masquerade (Atlanta)
- Mercedes Benz Stadium (Atlanta)
- Microelectronics Research Center at Georgia Tech (Atlanta)
- M.L. King, Jr. Recreation & Aquatic Center (Atlanta)
- Mojo's Automatic Express Wash (Swainsboro)
- Morton Theatre (Athens)
- Mostly Mutts Animal Rescue & Adoption (Kennesaw)
- Museum of History & Holocaust Education (Kennesaw)

N

- National Center on Birth Defects & Developmental Disabilities at Centers for Disease Control (Atlanta)
- Nordson Corporation (Swainsboro)

O

- Ogeechee Steal Inc. (Swainsboro)
- Old Bethany Nursing Home (Vidalia)
- One Boro City Commission (Statesboro)
- Open Hand Atlanta/Good Measure Meals (Atlanta)
- Outdoor Adventures at Kennesaw State University (Kennesaw)
- Owl's Nest Sports Complex (Kennesaw)

P

- Paradies Lagardere Travel Retail (Atlanta)
- Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital (Albany)
- Piece of Cake (Atlanta)
- Piedmont Park Conservancy (Atlanta)
- Polymers International (Freeport, Bahamas)
- Prospect Airport Services, Inc. (Atlanta)

R

- Randall Brothers (Atlanta)
- RISE Coffee & Tea (Roswell)
- Robert C. Williams Museum of Paper Making (Atlanta)
- Rocky Mountain Pizza (Atlanta)
- Roses Department Store (Albany)
- Roswell Presbyterian Church Preschool (Roswell)
- Roswell Provisions (Roswell)
- Rotary Corporation (Glennville)
- Rural Sourcing, Inc. (Atlanta)

S

- Safe Haven at Brookhaven (Atlanta)
- Signature Healthcare of Buckhead (Atlanta)
- Six Flags Over Georgia (Atlanta)
- Sodexo (Atlanta)
- Southeastern Nanotechnology Infrastructure Corridor Outreach / SENIC (Atlanta)
- Spelman College Bookstore (Atlanta)
- State Farm Arena (Atlanta)

t

- State of Georgia
- Statesboro Therapy Dogs (Statesboro)
- Steel City Pops (Decatur)

U

- Tara Foods (Albany)
- Truist Park, Atlanta Braves (Atlanta)
- The Arc Georgia (Atlanta)
- The Ark Animal Hospital (Atlanta)
- The Children's Campus at Georgia Tech (Atlanta)
- The Cottage School (Atlanta)
- The Elaine Clark Center (Atlanta)
- The Frazer Center (Atlanta)
- The Goddard School (Chamblee)
- The Howard School (Atlanta)
- The Phase Family Learning Center (Alpharetta)
- The Posh Peach (Columbus)
- Tiny Treasures Learning Academy (Statesboro)
- Top Golf (Atlanta)
- Trees Atlanta (Atlanta)

- University of Georgia Athletic Association (Athens)
- UPS

V

- Village Park Senior Living Center (Alpharetta)

W

- Wellstar College Advising Center at Kennesaw State University (Kennesaw)
- WeStaff (Atlanta)
- Woodruff Arts Center (Atlanta)

Y

- YMCA (Albany)

Z

- Zoo Atlanta
- Zuckerman Museum of Art (Kennesaw)

THE GEORGIA COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES 2022 CANDIDATE FORUM ON DISABILITY ISSUES RECAP

By Tianna Faulkner

The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities

(GCDD) hosted its second candidate forum on disability issues this past September, which gave candidates running for public office an opportunity to speak to the public about their disability platforms and issues of importance to the intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) community. Georgians with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and community members had the opportunity to hear from candidates running for public office about various topics including affordable health care, educational opportunities, voting access, and waivers.

The hybrid event, which was well attended, took place at the Courtyard by Marriott Decatur Hotel and Conference Center in Decatur, Georgia, and gave participants and attendees the opportunity to see candidates up close and personal. Candidates who were invited to participate were competing for the offices of governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, insurance commissioner, attorney general, labor commissioner, state superintendent of schools, and U.S. senator for Georgia.

Candidates who participated in the candidate forum included Governor Brian Kemp and Stacy Abrams,

candidates for governor; Senator Raphael Warnock and Herschel Walker, candidates for U.S. Senator; Charlie Bailey, a candidate for lieutenant governor; Bee Ngyuen and Ted Metz, candidates for secretary of state; and Janice Laws Robinson, a candidate for insurance commissioner.

Additionally, attendees were also introduced to GCDD's new executive director, D'Arcy Robb, who hosted the event.

"We were thrilled at the enthusiastic participation from community members and from the candidates. There is something uniquely

powerful about creating this space for the candidates to speak directly to the disability community about some of the most pressing issues we are facing," said Robb. "It not only helps voters make informed choices. It helps the candidates understand our community."

The GCDD partners who helped plan this event include the Georgia Advocacy Office (GAO), Sangha Unity Network, and REV UP Georgia. The first GCDD candidate forum took place in September of 2018 and GCDD plans to continue this event every four years during election season. Early voting in Georgia begins Monday, October 17, and ends Friday, November 4. Election Day is Tuesday, November 8. Get out and vote!



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