On the cover: Unlock the Waiting Lists! was the cry as advocates rallied before the State Capitol at GCDD Disability Day 2014.


RespectAbility USA CEO Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi delivered the Disability Day keynote on employment issues and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.


GCDD Council Member Evan Nodvin and Rep. Jimmy Pruitt stand together to advocate for people with disabilities at the 2014 Disability Day at the Capitol.
Harvard Professor Ronald Heifetz wrote that “leadership is mobilizing people to work on the hardest of challenges.”

This brand of leadership was evident in the work of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) during the past year. In the areas of employment and influence, GCDD worked with advocates statewide to create the necessary change for people with developmental disabilities to be more independent, productive, included and integrated in their community and self-determined in their lives.

At the 2014 Disability Day at the Capitol, more than 2,000 people heard Governor Nathan Deal announce the need for an Employment First effort in Georgia. His words were reinforced by Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Director Greg Schmeig and Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi from RespectAbility USA who spoke about employment as a major step toward financial and social independence.

GCDD followed through to organize the Employment First Coalition to mobilize people around the idea that individuals with developmental disabilities want to work as a first option and that there are policy changes needed to make this a reality. Also, progress on the employment front is being made by Project SEARCH, a GCDD sponsored High School internship and employment program. Project SEARCH continues to demonstrate that students and adults with developmental disabilities can get and retain good jobs through partnerships between local communities, schools, businesses, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency and GCDD.

In addition, GCDD Disability Day 2014 featured the “I am Olmstead” StoryCorps project during the 15th anniversary celebration of the landmark Supreme Court Olmstead decision. This ongoing effort allows people to tell their stories and continues the pressure on the State to close all institutions that have warehoused and segregated people with developmental disabilities.

2013-2014 was an exciting year for GCDD as we focused on a range of social justice and quality of life issues that impact people with disabilities in their communities. We look forward to continuing our work with new and existing partners, within the disability community and beyond, to make this State a better place for everyone.
The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) takes pride in supporting and promoting coherent public policies for integrated life in the community for people with developmental disabilities and the people who support them.

Annually, GCDD organizes advocates during the legislative session held at the Georgia State Capitol. In 2014, it advocated for employment, access to post-secondary education and the Unlock the Waiting Lists! Campaign. During the legislative session, GCDD held its 16th annual Disability Day at the Capitol that gathered over 2,000 advocates from across the State. The 2014 Disability Day saw support from legislators and included remarks from Governor Nathan Deal, who signed a proclamation declaring it Disability Awareness Day.

“We All Have A Story … What’s Yours?” was the theme of the 16th annual Disability Day at the Capitol. The event also commemorated the 15th anniversary of the *Olmstead* decision and welcomed *Olmstead* plaintiff Lois Curtis who was in attendance. In the summer, GCDD also welcomed the National Center for Civil and Human Rights (NCCHR) to Downtown Atlanta. NCCHR includes in-depth displays of global social activism, including disability rights leaders and movements.

Olmstead plaintiff, Lois Curtis, greeted the crowd at the 2014 Disability Day. In 2014, GCDD commemorated the 15th anniversary of *Olmstead*.

GCDD’s Real Communities Initiative Centenary United Methodist Church congregation in Macon worked to design quilts that display individual gifts and talents and explored how to use them to create inclusive communities.

Governor Nathan Deal proclaimed February 20, 2014 as Disability Awareness Day at GCDD’s Disability Day at the Capitol.
GCDD welcomed the National Center for Civil and Human Rights to Downtown Atlanta. The center has been inclusive of disability rights within its offering of national and international exhibits.
Georgia Institute of Technology’s AMAC Accessibility office works on assistive technology solutions for people with disabilities. With assistive technology, people with disabilities are able to participate in the workplace.
Edgar Victoria learned various skills at the Cartersville Medical Center through his time in Project SEARCH.

Bricio Marban works as a shipping loader after training at Rehabilitation Industries of Northeast Georgia.

Professional dance troupe, Full Radius, employs dancers with and without disabilities.

Cassidy Bradford from Project SEARCH is a full-time employee at Shaw Industries in Dalton, GA.

The priority of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) for Real Careers is to continue promoting a vision where people with significant developmental disabilities can work by replicating best practices such as “customized employment.” During this fiscal year, GCDD focused on the alarming unemployment rate of people with disabilities, which is currently between 70 to 80%. GCDD advocated for employment throughout the legislative session, and also by funding and supporting various projects to reduce this unacceptable number. Through its advocacy and grassroots efforts, GCDD succeeded in getting over $390,000 for 50 supported employment slots for people with developmental disabilities in the 2014 legislative session.

In addition, GCDD spearheaded the Employment First Initiative which promotes employment as the first priority and preferred outcome of people with disabilities. GCDD is also the primary sponsor of Employment First Georgia, a statewide resource promoting innovative, customized employment practices for people with disabilities.

Advocating for life after high school for young adults with disabilities has been a priority for GCDD. Supporting programs such as Project SEARCH, GCDD assists community partners to ready students with disabilities for adult life and meaningful job experiences.
REAL HOMES

To live in and contribute to communities of their choice, the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) believes that people with developmental disabilities deserve decent, safe and affordable housing as well as access to the necessary supports and services. In 2014, the disability community celebrated the 15th anniversary of the Olmstead decision, the landmark US Supreme Court case that found unjustified segregation of persons with disabilities constitutes discrimination in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Olmstead plaintiff, Lois Curtis, was present at the 16th annual Disability Day at the Capitol, which is held during the legislative session. Through advocacy, GCDD’s public policy team succeeded in having the Georgia General Assembly add more Medicaid waivers to allow individuals to move from facilities and institutions to a community of their choice – the basis of the Supreme Court’s Olmstead decision.

GCDD also commemorated the anniversary with a Making a Difference magazine guest column series on Olmstead by Talley Wells, the director of the Disability Integration Project at Atlanta Legal Aid Society. As one of the founding members of the Children’s Freedom Initiative, GCDD continued to work with a coalition of advocates that rallied behind the initiative that ensures children are given the chance to live with permanent, loving families in an community setting rather than institutions or facilities.

Olmstead activists came together to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the landmark US Supreme Court decision last year.

Including advocacy for children, GCDD joined the Children’s Freedom Initiative coalition to allow children to live in loving homes in integrated communities.
Attendees signed the petition at the 2014 Disability Day at the Capitol.

Advocates from partner organizations rallied for more services and supports.

Talley Wells and Olmstead activists gathered together to mark the anniversary of the law.

Undeniably, the progress toward equality and civil rights is marked by real and measured accomplishments.
(Photo on reverse) Lady Justice balancing the scales of justice, the American disability flag and GCDD’s Disability Day at the Capitol—aligning symbols of social justice and disability rights.
(Photo on reverse) Lady Justice balancing the scales of justice, the American disability flag and GCDD’s Disability Day at the Capitol—aligning symbols of social justice and disability rights.
Attendees signed the petition at the 2014 Disability Day at the Capitol.

Advocates from partner organizations rallied for more services and supports.

Talley Wells and Olmstead activists gathered together to mark the anniversary of the law.

Undeniably, the progress toward equality and civil rights is marked by real and measured accomplishments.
2014 marked the 15th anniversary of the Olmstead decision, the landmark US Supreme Court case that declared people with disabilities have the right to choose to live in the community. At the 2014 Disability Day at the Capitol, StoryCorps recorded “I am Olmstead” stories documenting transition from institutions and facilities into communities.
**2014 BUDGET - EXPENDITURES**

PERIOD COVERED THIS REPORT:  
OCTOBER 1, 2013 -  
SEPTEMBER 30, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURES</th>
<th>EXPENDED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real Council</td>
<td>$506,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Council Administration</td>
<td>$437,975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PRIORITY AREAS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real Communities</td>
<td>$658,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Awareness</td>
<td>$436,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy</td>
<td>$366,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Advocacy</td>
<td>$149,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>$584,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly Funded System</td>
<td>$264,330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Funds** $2,965,355

---

GCDD Executive Director Eric Jacobson (left) stands before the crowd with Governor Nathan Deal and wife Sandra at the 2014 Disability Day at the Capitol, GCDD’s annual advocacy event.

Andrew Furey speaks to reporters at the 2014 Disability Day at the Capitol.

Attendees advocate for employment, additional waivers, post-secondary education and more at Disability Day.
Lois Curtis, one of the plaintiffs of the Olmstead v. L.C., declares proudly “I am Olmstead.”

Covers of Making a Difference magazine published during the time period of the annual report (right).
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mitzi R. Proffitt, Parent Advocate, Brooklet
Thomas Connelly, Self Advocate, Albany
Josette Akhras, Parent Advocate, Eatonton
Geneice McCoy, Parent Advocate, Augusta
Lisa Newbern, Parent Advocate/Advisory Member, Atlanta

GCDD Council Members (Row 1, l to r) Ruby Moore, Colleen Pirkle, Tom Connelly, Teresa Brenner, Kylie Moore, (Row 2, l to r) Teresa Johnson, Josette Akhras, Evan Nodvin, Teresa Ann Heard, Geneice McCoy, Mitzi Proffitt, Jason Bearden, GCDD Executive Director Eric Jacobson, (Row 3, l to r) Lisa Newbern, Deborah Hibben, Farah Chapes and Daniel Crimmins, (not pictured) Esma Campbell and Dr. Zolinda Stoneman.
Josette Akhras, Parent Advocate, Eatonton
Jason Bearden, Local Nonprofit/Provider, Canton
Teresa Brenner, Self Advocate/Advisory Member, Bryon
Esma Campbell, Parent Advocate/Advisory Member, Savannah
Farah Chapes, Local Nonprofit/Provider, Atlanta
Thomas Connelly, Self Advocate, Albany
Daniel Crimmins, Center for Leadership in Disability – Georgia State University, Atlanta
Deborah Gay, Georgia Department of Education, Atlanta
Dorothy Harris, Self Advocate/Advisory Member, Fitzgerald
Teresa Ann Heard, Local Nonprofit/Provider, Albany
Deborah C. Hibben, Parent Advocate, McDonough
Teresa Johnson, Parent Advocate/Advisory Member, Monroe
Geneice McCoy, Parent Advocate, Augusta
Kylie Moore, Self Advocate/Advisory Member, Roswell
Ruby Moore, Georgia Advocacy Office, Decatur
Lisa Newbern, Parent Advocate/Advisory Member, Atlanta
Evan H. Nodvin, Self Advocate, Atlanta
Colleen Pirkle, Local Nonprofit/Advisory Member, Gainesville
Mitzi R. Proffitt, Parent Advocate, Brooklet
Dr. Zolinda Stoneman, Institute of Human Development & Disability – University of Georgia, Athens

Mitzi R. Proffitt, Council Chair

Eric Jacobson, Executive Director

Dottie Adams, Individual and Family Supports Director
Dawn Alford, Public Policy Planning Specialist
Gary Childers, Chief Financial Officer
Caitlin Childs, Organizing Director, Real Communities Initiative
Eric Foss, Front Receptionist
Eric Jacobson, Executive Director
Jhai James, Public Information Associate/Social Media Coordinator
Cheri Pace, Organizing Coordinator, Real Communities Initiative
Kim Person-Hudson, Executive Assistant/Meeting Planner
D’Arcy Robb, Public Policy Director
Sharon Strandberg, Grants Manager
Valerie Meadows Suber, Public Information Director and Making a Difference Magazine Editor-in-Chief

GCDD STAFF
Funded and Supported Activities - FY 2014

- 16th Annual GCDD Disability Day at the Capitol, Theme: “We All Have A Story ... What’s Yours?”
- 2013 Annual Report
- ASPIRE – Active Student Participation Inspires Real Engagement
- CARE-M Georgians for a Healthy Future
- Conference Sponsorships
- Employment First Georgia Initiative
- Georgia Microboards Association
- GCDD Social Media:
  - Capitol Impact
    - Database/List Serve & Advocacy Network
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - YouTube
- GCDD Website:
  - Blogs
  - Events Calendar
- Funding Opportunities
- Making a Difference Magazine online
- Making a Difference Cartoon Gallery
- Moving Forward Legislative Newsletter online
  - News & Media
  - Photo Gallery
  - Public Policy
  - Real Communities
  - Resources
- Making A Difference Magazine print
- Moving Forward Legislative Newsletter print
- Partnership Funds
- Partnerships for Success:
  - Barrow County
  - Bartow County
  - Bryan County
  - Cobb County
  - Colquitt County
  - City of Decatur
  - Douglas County
  - Hall County
  - Thomas County
  - Walton County
  - White County
  - Whitfield County
- People First Georgia
- Post-Secondary Programs:
  - Columbus State University
  - East Georgia State College and Univ.
  - Inclusive Post-Secondary Consortium
  - Kennesaw State Univ. Academy for Inclusive Education and Social Growth
- Real Communities Initiatives:
  - Clarkston Global Growers
  - Centenary UMC, Macon
  - Forsyth Farmers’ Market, Savannah
  - Georgians For Alternatives to the Death Penalty
  - Korean Coalition
  - Women on the Rise
- Youth Summit
- SOPOS Housing Coalition
- Unlock the Waiting Lists! Campaign

Student members of Partnerships for Success participate in social activities and community service projects to develop self-determination skills.
COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Frank Berry,
Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities

Commissioner David Cook,
Georgia Department of Community Health

Commissioner Gretchen Corbin,
Department of Community Affairs

Commissioner Peggy Fitzgerald,
Georgia Department of Public Health

Commissioner Clyde L. Reese, III Esq.,
Georgia Department of Human Services

Commissioner Greg Schmeig,
Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Photo: The American disability flag is waved proudly by Carol Jones over the crowd of advocates at the 2014 Disability Day at the Capitol.