



Arizona Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
Newsletter

May/June 2006

RECENT COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Legislative Awareness Day

On February 2, 2006 (Groundhog Day), over 700 people gathered on the Senate Lawn at the Arizona Capitol Complex to take part in the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities' Annual Legislative Awareness Day. Self-advocates from around the state as well as their family members and the professionals who serve them joined policymakers in declaring that individuals with developmental disabilities are "Emerging from the Shadows."

Over 50 state legislators took part in the event, as well as congressional candidate, Gabrielle Giffords. President Ken Bennett kicked off the event.

Several policymakers, including Representative Pete Rios, Senator Toni Hellon and Representative Pete Hershberger, had the opportunity to speak about their support of issues such as preventative dental care, funding for vocational rehabilitation, and special education services.

Council members Matthew Wangeman, Jill Ryan and Sandra Perez spoke about the potential impact of these issues from the perspective of individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members around the state. Attendees were excited to hear testimony from Monica Cooper, a

self-advocate from Phoenix, who spoke about House Bill 2743, which would replace the term "mental retardation" with "cognitive disability" in all statutes pertaining to the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Poignant comments were also provided by Valerie Lintz from the State Rehabilitation Council, Randy Gray from the Marc Center, and Ron Cornelison from Creative Networks. In addition to having the opportunity to hear from the various speakers, participants enjoyed lunch from Carrabba's Italian Grill and were able to visit with over 30 exhibitors from around the state who provided information on supports and services for people with developmental disabilities and their family members.

We are pleased to report that the planning is already underway for next year's event. We look forward to seeing you there!!!
(If you are interested in participating in next year's event as a sponsor or exhibitor, please contact Jason Geroux at 480-983-2977 or jason@azgcdd.org)



Council Member Spotlight:



Jill Ryan
Phoenix, AZ

Jill Ryan grew up in Akron, Ohio. She moved to Phoenix in 1983, and took a job with American Express. Jill met her husband, Daniel, and they were married in 1989. After a 12 year career with American Express, Jill decided to open a new chapter in her life. She and Daniel adopted two sons, Noah in 1995 and Jacob in 1996. Both children were adopted from South Korea.

Soon after the adoptions were complete, Jill and her husband began to notice some developmental delays in both of their children. Noah was diagnosed with multiple disabilities, most of which affect his learning. Jacob was also diagnosed with partial hearing loss, in addition to having been born with a bi-lateral cleft lip and pallet.

Jill immediately took action, deciding that she had a true desire to do something to better the lives of all people with developmental disabilities. She began to serve as a parent volunteer with Raising Special Kids, while also continuing to seek out additional ways to contribute. This personal dedication to her community led a friend to recommend that Jill apply for the Governor's Council, which she did. Jill was appointed to the Governor's Council in 2005.

As a member of the Council, Jill hopes to bring more support to families in Arizona that have children who have disabilities but are not eligible for services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities. She understands the challenges of families who are providing services for their children through other avenues, and believes that the Council should do its best to support these families through the process. According to Jill, the one unexpected benefit of becoming a member of the Council has been the effect that self-advocate Council members have had on her personal life. She joined the Council looking for anything that she could do for others, but has been fortunate to also realize tremendous personal gain since participating. She has learned more than she imagined from self-advocates on the Council, and they have served to bring her hope for her own children because of their drive and ambition. Overall, Jill hopes to bring a personal parent perspective to the Council to ensure that families are supported in order that they might be in a position to support their children in many different ways.

Recently, Jill also obtained her real estate license and is looking forward to a very successful career in that field as well.

Recently Appointed Council Members

Greg Gadarian - Tucson, AZ (Reappointed)
Rich Carroll - Flagstaff, AZ (Reappointed)
Steve Mishlove - Phoenix, AZ (Reappointed)
Art Meza - Phoenix, AZ (Reappointed)
Henry Watkins - Phoenix, AZ
Asim Varma - Phoenix, AZ
Mark Mendibles - Tucson, AZ
Cindy McClung - Flagstaff, AZ
Rex Critchfield - Phoenix, AZ

KUDOS



KUDOS!!! To Self Advocates from around the state, whose testimony helped to pass House Bill 2743. House Bill 2743 replaces the term "mental retardation" with "cognitive disability" in all statutes pertaining to the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Honest and moving testimony from self advocates ensured that this bill made it to the Governor's desk.

"It was the first opportunity that I had to be a part of the legislative process. The most powerful moment that I remember was when a member of the legislature told us that she would never have understood the issue unless we gave our testimony."

- Trisha Jones - Self Advocate - Phoenix, AZ -

KUDOS!!! To Trisha Jones, Monica Cooper, and Jon Britton, who will be attending the Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) conference in Atlanta representing Arizona. The Governor's Council is excited to support these self advocates in their attendance and participation at this year's conference.

KUDOS!!! To former Council Chairperson, Randall Howe, who was featured on the front page of the Arizona Republic prior to making his way to Washington, DC to argue a case before the United States Supreme Court.

KUDOS!!! To the Arizona Association of Providers for People with Disabilities, Carrabba's Italian Grill, and Guthrie Mainstream Services for supporting the Council's Annual Legislative Awareness Day. Without the generous support of these contributors, this event would not have been possible.

Upcoming DD Network Events

NEW FIVE YEAR PLAN TO BE RELEASED SOON

In late May, the **Governor's Council** will be sending out its draft plan for 2007-2011 in order to solicit additional feedback as to whether or not the draft plan is responsive to the input collected by the **Council** over the past year from people with disabilities and their family members through 25 community forums and a telephone survey. The **Governor's Council** will embark on the goals & objectives in its new plan beginning October 1, 2006. If you would like to request a copy of the draft plan once it is released, please contact the **Council** office at 866-771-9378.

ALL POINTS BULLETIN: SEEKING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES' PARTICIPATION

The **Institute for Human Development** at Northern Arizona University has begun a "Consumer Driven - Quality Improvement" project. They are currently seeking interviewers and participants to assist them in collecting feedback on the quality of in home services that they receive from the Division of Developmental Disabilities. If you would like to participate as an interviewer or as an interview participant, you are asked to contact **IHD** at 1-866-213-5716 or via email at srlsupervisors@nau.edu.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!!!

The **Arizona Center for Disability Law** continues to provide trainings related to special education, legal options (including guardianship), and healthcare. Trainings are being conducted statewide throughout the months of May and June. For more information, please visit: <http://www.azdisabilitylaw.org/training.html>, or contact **ACDL** at (602) 274-6287.

Any questions related to the content of this newsletter may be directed to:

Jason Geroux

Public Outreach Coordinator - GCDD

(866) 701-5575

jason@azgcd.org