

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES NETWORK PRESENTS

DD NETWORK NEWS

A Collaborative Publication from MSCDD, DRMS and IDS

FALL 2024

In Loving Memory
Dr. Rebekah Young



Dr. Rebekah Young, IDS' Executive Director from 2018 to 2024, passed away on September 2, 2024, following a courageous 17-month battle with endometrial cancer. Dr. Young began her work with the Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) in 2013, serving in several roles including Program Specialist, Executive Coordinator for Administration and Planning, Associate Director, and Interim Director.

Dr. Young was known by her IDS family as boss, colleague, friend, and even mother to some staff. Her focus on excellence and equal expectations for all, combined with her quick wit made her a unique and loved director. Her IDS family appreciated the high expectations she set forth for everyone, regardless of disability. She had a gift of recognizing strengths and applied this to support the success of the staff at IDS. This was seen in her mentoring of staff and working with community persons with disabilities.

Dr. Young was a fearless leader and worked tirelessly to expand several programmatic areas which resulted in financial gains for our organization. One area she directly impacted and was very passionate about was recreational sports, including wheelchair sports such as basketball, softball, and tennis. She tirelessly sought funding through grants, donations, and sponsorship to assist in hosting and assisting with MS wheelchair sports tournaments and for MS players to attend regional and national events.

Dr. Young's impact on IDS and the disability community is and will continue to be evident for many years to come. One last request she and her family had was for donations to local nonprofits or charities supporting those with disabilities including IDS. To donate in her honor to the Institute contact the USM Foundation, 118 College Drive #5210, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001. Learn more at www.usmfoundation.com.

INSTITUTE FOR DISABILITY STUDIES

Pathway Weavers: Freestyle Expression, Creativity, and Relaxation is a one-year grant-funded program designed to increase availability and accessibility of freestyle weaving to aid in positively impacting the quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities in South Mississippi. Participants come together twice a month for instruction and guidance from an expert weaving consultant. Looms and yarn are set up in a large room outside of class time. This set up allows participants the opportunity for additional practice through open weaving time, if they so choose.

In addition to regularly scheduled weaving classes and open weaving time, participants will have the opportunity to participate in demonstrations conducted by local expert weavers and attend a weaving-focused field trip to the annual Sheep to Shawl event in Ridgeland, Mississippi. During this field trip, participants will be able to observe sheep shearing, fiber preparation, spinning, dyeing, weaving, and knitting. Pathway Weavers is funded through the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities. For more information, please contact Dr. Rebecca Holland at rebecca.holland@usm.edu or 601.266.5168.



DISABILITY RIGHTS MISSISSIPPI

New resource alert! With support from MSCDD, DRMS has created a new booklet, “Disability Etiquette: Tips on Interacting with People with Disabilities and Inclusivity.” This booklet will be available at conferences and upon request for groups (such as libraries, schools, etc.) who wish to share with their audience or complete trainings. This booklet will also be available online.

DRMS has recently expanded its team, hiring a new Children’s Rights Team supervisor, a new advocate for Medicaid/Benefits and a new Monitoring and Investigations advocate who will focus on county jails and juvenile justice. We are excited to see our agency grow and for the opportunity to assist more Mississippians with disabilities through our advocacy.



MISSISSIPPI COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Grants Funded for Fiscal Year 2025

The following grants were approved by the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities for Fiscal Year 2025 from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

- No More Waiting - Autism Center North Mississippi
- U-THRIVE - Mississippi State University
- Family Advocacy Network - The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies
- Maximizing Independence Through Everyday Advocacy - The University of Southern Mississippi School of Child and Family Sciences
- Bridges to Speak: Communication Training - Mississippi State University
- Open Doors Theatre Project - Open Doors Theatre
- Pathway Weavers - The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies
- MSU Adapted Swim Camp Program - Mississippi State University
- I Want to Help: Emergency Management Training - The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies
- Premier Putters Golf Clinic - Ebony Pearls Foundation, Inc.
- Community Autism Project - Autism Center of North Mississippi
- EMPOWER (Education for Maximizing Personal Ownership, Wellness, Empowerment, and Respect) - The University of Southern Mississippi School of Child and Family Sciences

If you have any questions, please contact Christy Ashley at christy.ashley@dmh.ms.gov.

Join the Council

The membership application to the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities is available now! Are you ready to join a group of advocates focused on improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities? Are you a person with a developmental disability or family member? MSCDD is accepting applications to be considered for a Governor's appointment to the Council. The membership application is available at www.msccd.org under "Get Involved." If you have any questions, please contact Charles Hughes at charles.hughes@dmh.ms.gov.



Save the Date for the 2025 MegaConference!

June 12-13

The Hilton Jackson

If you have information you would like to have included in the next issue, please contact Jane Carroll at jcarroll@drms.ms.

