

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES NETWORK PRESENTS

# DD NETWORK NEWS

A Collaborative Publication from MSCDD, DRMS and IDS

WINTER 2021 ISSUE



## SAVE THE DATE

June 17, 2021

[www.msmegaconference.org](http://www.msmegaconference.org)

The 2021 Mississippi disAbility MegaConference will be held virtually on June 17, 2021! Visit [www.msmegaconference.org](http://www.msmegaconference.org) for updates. One of the speakers will be Gabe Adams. Gabe was born in Brazil with a genetic disorder called Hanhart Syndrome, which left him with no arms or legs. Had he stayed in Brazil, who knows how his story would have been shaped, but one miracle changed his path. He was adopted by an incredible family from Utah, who already had 12 children, but they knew they could give Gabe the love that he would need, to be the best he could be. In his speech, Gabe will share his journey and inspire everyone to believe in the power of their own heart, mind, and body as a vehicle to achieve the impossible and live their best lives!



Gabe Adams

## MISSISSIPPI COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

*MSCDD Request for Proposals: New Innovative Projects Needed to Improve the Lives of People with Developmental Disabilities*

The Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities is accepting proposals for new, innovative one-year grants beginning July 1, 2021. The deadline to submit proposals is noon on March 1, 2021. MSCDD expects to fund several one-year grants with approximately \$150,000 available. Proposals may include any new, innovative approach to address needs of people with developmental disabilities and families, self-advocacy empowerment, leadership development, future planning of care for aging adults with disabilities, improved access to services or systems, or educating policymakers. The Request for Proposals is available at [www.msccd.org](http://www.msccd.org). For more information, call Christy Ashley at 601-359-5533 or email [christy.ashley@dmh.ms.gov](mailto:christy.ashley@dmh.ms.gov).

*State Plan Public Input Needed by March 8, 2021*

The Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities' mission is to improve the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities and their families. MSCDD is required by the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-402) to develop a 5-Year State Plan. The purpose of this survey is to obtain public input on the proposed state plan goals and objectives for FY2022-2026.

Your opinion is very important and will remain confidential. The review period is 45 days with a deadline of March 8, 2021. All comments will be reviewed by the Council staff and members to determine if adjustments are needed to the goals and objectives. A final state plan document containing state plan goals and objectives will be posted to the Council website: [www.msccd.org](http://www.msccd.org) by the end of April 2021. The survey is available at: [tinyurl.com/MSCDD2022Plan](http://tinyurl.com/MSCDD2022Plan).

## INSTITUTE FOR DISABILITY STUDIES

Happy 2021! With the start of the new year, the Transition to Adulthood Program at the Institute for Disability Studies has launched the #What'sYourPurpose campaign. This campaign will feature videos of young adults with and without disabilities and their families and service providers highlighting successes and future goals and encouraging others to keep working toward their own goals.

To view the campaign videos and monthly Facebook posts, please like the IDS Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/msusmids](https://www.facebook.com/msusmids). We invite you to share campaign posts and include the hashtag #WhatsYourPurpose2021.

If you would like to recommend a young adult, family member or service provider to be highlighted in the campaign, please contact Self-Advocacy Coordinator, Taylor Carley, at [robert.carley@usm.edu](mailto:robert.carley@usm.edu) or 601-266-4763.

## DISABILITY RIGHTS MISSISSIPPI

2021 has been off to a busy start for DRMS! We unveiled a rebrand of our agency, including a new logo and website. We're excited that our new look feels more representative of our mission of full inclusion for all Mississippians with disabilities. Also, we're thrilled to be offering new accessibility features on our website to better assist Mississippians with disabilities, including those who do not speak English. Check it out at [www.drms.ms](http://www.drms.ms)!

Additionally, DRMS recently released a public report entitled "Cruel & Unusual Punishment in Mississippi Prisons: A Tale of Abuse, Neglect & Undue Death Sentences." While the findings in the report are nothing short of atrocious, we are hopeful that the release of the report will usher in a new urgency for lawmakers to act to reform our systems to better protect all Mississippians with disabilities, including those who reside in correctional facilities. The full report is available at [www.drms.ms/prison](http://www.drms.ms/prison).

DD NETWORK'S

# CREATIVITY CORNER

## SAVANNA THOMPSON

Savanna is 22 years old. She has Williams Syndrome (WS), a rare genetic disorder that causes developmental and learning disabilities. WS is caused by a change in the genetic structure of chromosome 7. One of the joys of Savanna having WS is that she is almost always happy.

Savannah graduated from Petal High School in 2018. During 2019, she completed the Transition of Teens to Adult Life and Project SEARCH programs at the Institute for Disability Studies. During 2020, Savannah served a year with AmeriCorps at Southern Miss. She also participated in an internship at the Petal School District Central Office through Vocational Rehabilitation at the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services. Her internship was completed on January 31, 2021. She has been offered and accepted a part-time job with the Petal School District Central Office continuing the work she began as an intern.

Savanna's hobbies include reading, watching videos on YouTube, and cheering on the Cheer Abilities Team at Ace Cheer Company in Hattiesburg.



"Blue Bug Rock Critter"  
by Savanna



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