



MISSISSIPPI COUNCIL
ON
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Promoting a Better Quality of Life for People with Developmental Disabilities

FY2023 Annual Report

October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023

The Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$923,684 with 100% funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

Council Members

- * Josie Alston, Council Chair
- * Dr. Armerita Tell, Vice-Chair
- + Nick Hartley, NACDD Delegate
- * Dr. Jane Taylor, Evaluation & Monitoring Chair
- * Shirley Miller, Past Chair
- * Mary Allsup
- * Teresa Ayers
- * Gunner Brooks
- * Mary Jordan Fuller
- + LaVonda Hart
- * Cynthia Johnson
- * Vicki Killingsworth
- * Charlotte Myers
- * Antonio Norwood
- + Melissa Parker
- + Betty Pinion
- * Annette Rinehart
- * Glenn Sanford
- + Kimberly Sartin-Holloway
- + Polly Tribble
- * Dr. Alma Turner
- + KenYada Blake-Washington
- + Dr. Rebekah Young

- + *Agency or Organization Representative*
- * *Person with a developmental disability or family member*

Staff

Charles Hughes, Jr., Executive Director
Christy Ashley, Program Coordinator
Toya Bolden, Administrative Assistant



FY2023 Grants Funded by Congressional Districts Total \$637,201

District 1 - \$157,528

- Enhancing Supports for Students with Developmental Disabilities/Autism (Corinth School District) \$67,528
- No More Waiting (Autism Center of North Mississippi) \$90,000

District 2 - \$159,115

- Danny Dollar Academy/Youth Entrepreneurship (Mississippi Council on Economic Education) \$76,448
- College and Career Readiness for Special Education (Mississippi Council on Economic Education) \$57,667
- Project GROW (Vicksburg Family Development Service) \$25,000

District 3 - \$148,093

- U-THRIVE (Mississippi State University Dept. of Counseling and Educational Psychology) \$69,065
- LEAPS Behavior Program (Mississippi State University Dept. of Counseling and Educational Psychology) \$79,028

District 4 - \$172,465

- Higher Education for All (The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies) \$70,000
- Special Education Family Advocacy Network (The University of Southern Mississippi IDS) \$50,000
- Maximizing Independence Through Family Advocacy (The University of Southern Mississippi School of Child and Family Studies) \$52,465



The total federal funding awarded for FY2023 was \$923,684.

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Areas of Emphasis Grants

The following grant projects were funded during FY2023:

U-THRIVE began as a new innovative project on July 1, 2023. Program goals include providing adults with developmental disabilities experiences that increase their independent living skills and opportunities to engage with their community and peers. During the first quarter of FY2023, 11 people with developmental disabilities, nine family members, 10 others, and four organizations participated. The first unit of the program included learning about food groups, how to make a healthy plate, how to read nutrition labels, and understanding serving size. Participants went to a local restaurant to practice reading menus, making healthy choices, and placing orders with servers in the restaurant. This event also served as an opportunity to educate the community about people with disabilities such as sharing with the owner of the business the statistics about the prevalence of adults with disabilities in the state, how different adults with disabilities may present, and provided ways that they, as a business in the community, could support both customers and employees who have intellectual or developmental disabilities. A family member meeting was held virtually to review the goals of the program and provide resources to support their young adult to continue to engage in skills taught in each unit. Over 15 graduate students in the School of Psychology and Applied Behavior Analysis graduate program at Mississippi State University volunteer to support the program.

Grantee: Mississippi State University, Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology, Starkville, \$69,065



Maximizing Independence through Everyday Advocacy program began July 1, 2023 as a new project. This project offers seven face-to-face parent education workshops to help family caregivers of children with developmental disabilities. Some of the topics covered include everyday advocacy, scaffolding, dealing with ambiguous loss, financial planning, and building relationships with their child's teachers. For the first quarter of FY2023, participants included two people with developmental disabilities, five family members, four others, and five organizations. An initial needs assessment was conducted, and three surveys were created. The first survey included questions pertaining to basic demographics, needs, concerns, and parenting self-efficacy. The second survey will be the workshop feedback/satisfaction survey that will be given at the end of each workshop. The third survey includes follow-up measures for parenting self-efficacy, as well as measures pertaining to work-life balance, parenting stressors, and supports.

Grantee: The University of Southern Mississippi, School of Child and Family Sciences, Hattiesburg, \$52,465

Enhancing Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) was in its fourth year and has an overall goal of supporting students with ASD through developing high-quality instructional supports, peer and caregiver support programs, and creating a sustainable model for the support of PK-12 students with ASD. During FY2023, 200 individuals with developmental disabilities, 397 family members, 162 teachers, and 12 organizations participated. The Behavioral Specialist continued to provide intense classroom supports and just-in-time guidance. He participated in 33 Individual Education Plans and 45 Functional Behavior Assessments. The sensory room had a recorded 897 visits. He continued to build the capacity of students to work independently through individualized sessions with specialty products, helping students to gain confidence and enhance existing strengths. Students also worked on several STEM+SEL projects, including an innovative design challenge (design something functional and describe how it can help others) and a multi-faceted artistic STEM challenge (designing, printing, and then painting 3D shapes). He continued to build student capacity through a variety of career-oriented programming in which Corinth Elementary hosted a “Career Day” that featured over 28 booths and 48 community members. The piloted peer mentoring program was expanded to include more students, additional trained staff, and increased opportunities to interact. They continued to provide multiple opportunities for family engagement.

Grantee: Corinth School District, Corinth, \$67,528



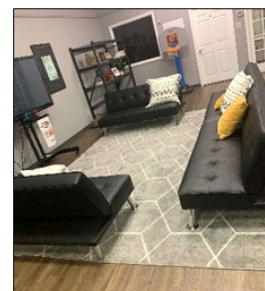
LEAPS Behavior Program was a new project for FY2023. The primary goal was to bring in best practices to improve the assessment process and intervention outcomes for children and adolescents with developmental disabilities in Mississippi public schools by helping partnership schools conduct high-quality functional behavior assessments (FBAs) and develop function-based intervention plans for 8-10 students with chronic and severe behavior challenges. This year, 23 individuals with DD, 16 family members, 178 others, and 31 organizations participated. Educators were trained on best practices regarding functional behavior assessments (FBAs) and experimental functional analysis (FAs). Consultation occurred with several teachers and administrators about students who engage in severe behavior and provided tentative recommendations about strategies that might be useful in decreasing that behavior. One-on-one support has been provided to students who engage in severe behavior, as well as their educators and school administrators. Psychoeducation was provided to ensure that teachers recognized that FBA procedures should be used as needed throughout the school year. Staff have also focused on providing individualized small-group trainings to educators who work directly with LEAPS clients, as well as other educators who may benefit from expanding their knowledge and skills in behavioral assessment and intervention.

Grantee: Mississippi State University, Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology, Starkville, \$79,028



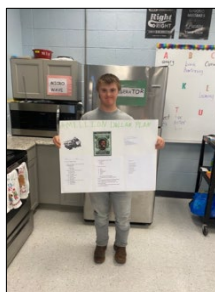
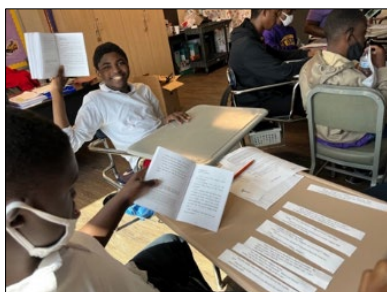
No More Waiting was a new unique program for FY2023 which empowered parents and caregivers to provide children and families on the waiver waiting list with resources, training, and supportive case management services while waiting to receive ABA therapy services. The program had 320 individuals with developmental disabilities, 461 family members, and 203 others participate. Trainers continued to meet one-on-one with caregivers for training, support and resourcing in the community for relevant services and continued to offer group training. An online version was created due to identified challenges of health concerns for in-person group meetings due to rise in COVID. Resource materials were provided to caregivers to equip them to advocate for their family in the community. Caregivers were also provided ABA materials to assist them in practicing behavioral interventions at home. During the first year, a Resource Library was established and continued to be successful during this year. Collaboration has begun with local community libraries to have the same resource books on hand when the office supply begins to run low.

Grantee: Autism Center of North Mississippi, Tupelo, \$90,000



Danny Dollar Academy was in its third year during FY2023. The goal included offering programs where middle and high school students with disabilities and their educators could read *Danny Dollar Academy* and participate in lesson plans written to improve reading skills while also teaching about personal finance and entrepreneurship. During FY2023, 1,061 students with developmental disabilities, 332 teachers, and 23 schools participated. As students completed the program, they submitted final projects to show what they learned. Teachers participated in online teacher workshops for *Danny Dollar Academy* as well as pre- and post-tested their students. Results showed a pre-test of 36.2% average score on financial literacy. As students completed the program, a post-test was administered and showed a 55.7% average score which is a 53.87% increase in financial literacy. This year, staff began working on the “Make Your Own Money” version of Danny Dollar. Topics included how to make money, spend money, and save money. Students learned the difference in credit and debit cards, savings and checking accounts, and profit and loss in business. Five chapters were broken into 16 lessons and modules which walked students step-by-step through building a business.

Grantee: Mississippi Council on Economic Education, Jackson, \$73,448



College and Career Readiness for Special Education was a new systems change project for FY2023. This grant proposed to work with high school teachers and their students to increase student readiness to transition from high school into adulthood. All students in Mississippi graduating from high school with a diploma are required to take a one-year class titled “College and Career Readiness.” The curriculum did not address accommodations needed by students with disabilities. The main goal of this project was to modify the existing Master Teacher of College and Career Readiness (MTCCR) program to equip teachers with the content needed for students with a disability and create a MTCCR program specifically for special education teachers to provide content needed to teach transition skills to individuals with a disability. During FY2023, 70 individuals with developmental disabilities, 74 teachers, and 32 organizations participated.

Grantee: Mississippi Council on Economic Education, Jackson, \$76,343

NEW POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR MISSISSIPPI YOUNG ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES APPROVED!

Visit the website to learn more! <https://www.usm.edu/ids/transition-to-adulthood.php>

Higher Education for All was in its fourth year with a goal was to increase the number of individuals with intellectual and other disabilities who attend postsecondary education and receive needed supports and services. During FY2023, 167 individuals with developmental disabilities, 32 family members, 179 others, and 63 organizations participated. Seven students successfully completed their classes, received peer-mentoring services, and had the opportunity to participate in the weekly socialization groups. Several collaboration meetings continued with the administration of the University's School of Interdisciplinary Studies and Professional Development to partner on hosting the full program to be located in an academic unit of the University. A final draft of a Certificate Program proposal and application was submitted for RISE To The Top! to begin the overall program approval process. It was approved for a full Certificate Program. Financial aid received information to move forward with the Comprehensive Transition Program application which allows the students to complete a FAFSA. The first official brand-new cohort will begin Fall 2024. A meeting was held with Executive Director of Housing and Residence Life and Associate Director of Residential Learning and Leadership Development to discuss the potential of RISE To The Top! having a residential component beginning Fall 2024, which both agreed to. The Luckyday Citizenship Scholarship program agreed to host 6-10 first year RISE To The Top! students in their residential dorms.

Grantee: The University of Southern Mississippi, Institute for Disability Studies, Hattiesburg, \$70,000



Special Education Family Advocacy Network was in its first year. This project promoted inclusion of families and children in the public school system regarding the development and appropriate implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) while also educating families on federal laws which protect the rights of their children. Utilizing a train-the-trainer model, each family advocate received training from staff to provide quality peer-to-peer advocacy support in and around their region regarding educational support for children and youth needing or receiving services through special education programs. During FY2023, 23 individuals with developmental disabilities, 49 family members, 47 others, and 16 organizations participated. Trainings utilized the Council of Parenting Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) curriculum. There are 19 family leads for the trainings and 20 trainings have been attended.

Grantee: The University of Southern Mississippi, Institute on Disability Studies, Hattiesburg, \$75,000



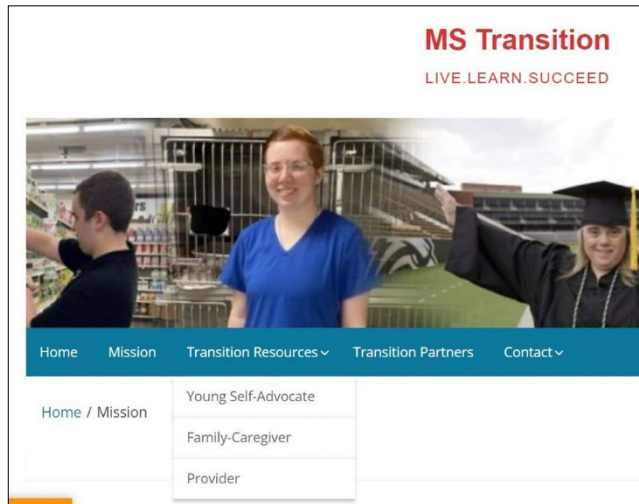
Getting Ready to Work was a short-term project. The goal was to increase the number of youth and young adults with ID/DD that obtain community-based employment through entrepreneurship and self-employment. Fifteen (15) people with DD and one organization participated during the last quarter (which was in FY23). Staff provided training and reviewed new research and best practices to improve current services, curriculums, and lesson plans. Modifications continued to be made to training materials and research on entrepreneurship and business training activities targeting youth with disabilities. Direct in-person training from 34th Street Wholistic Gardens & Education Center Inc. staff continued. IDS Transition Coordinator provided specific training to these participants with a focus on entrepreneurship and advocacy focus areas. Other training activities included: weeding, watering, flower bed maintenance including a complete overhaul of the beds, planting of seeds; business planning, money management, customer service and basic sales skills.

Grantee: The University of Southern Mississippi, Institute on Disability Studies, Hattiesburg, \$24,417

Family Led Developmental Monitoring was a short-term project. The goal was to focus on increasing the capacity of home visiting programs serving expectant mothers and parents 19 years of age or younger with children birth to 5 at high risk for developmental delays and disabilities. Families learned best practices regarding updated developmental milestones for children birth to 5, family led developmental monitoring practices and family led discussions with physicians regarding developmental concerns. During this time, 28 Professional home visitors, 26 family members, and 28 others were trained.

Grantee: The University of Southern Mississippi, Institute on Disability Studies, Hattiesburg, \$25,000

Transition Clearinghouse and Live Chat was a short-term project. The goal was to develop a Mississippi statewide transition to adulthood clearinghouse website, connecting existing resources, directories, and information. It is a one-stop location on transition services provided in three targeted groups: youth/young adults with disabilities including those with intellectual and other developmental disabilities, their parents/guardians/caregivers and those who provide transition services. During this time, 122 individuals with DD, two family members, and 21 others participated in the project. After the extensive reviews, tawk.to was chosen which is a customizable live chat and customer communication platform packed with premium features. It allows for a widget to be placed on the clearinghouse



website that will use artificial intelligence to answer basic questions, provide assistance and direct the user to resources and information on the site or request follow-up or specific information. In addition to the automatic artificial intelligence assistance, a live person, in this case a self-advocate, can directly answer questions through real-time chat services which can be written communication and/or video option. The website address, www.mstransition.org, was launched May 2023. Chat assistance can be provided through any computer/laptop/tablet as well as through a mobile phone device via tawk.to application. **Grantee:** The University of Southern Mississippi, Institute on Disability Studies, Hattiesburg, \$19,598



Career Success Guide was a short-term project. The goal was to provide individuals with IDD with a comprehensive Guide that contained information and resources needed to self-advocate for their employment. It included resources that affect employment, social security limits and regulations, legal and banking resources, conservatorships, continuing education, job skills training, listings of employment agencies, how to dress for success, transportation, proven employers, as well as templates such as resumes. During this time, 331 individuals with DD, 431 family members, 1268 others, and 125 organizations participated in the project. The Career Success Guide was completed, and 3000 printed copies were made. **Grantee:** Disability Connection, Gulfport, \$20,061

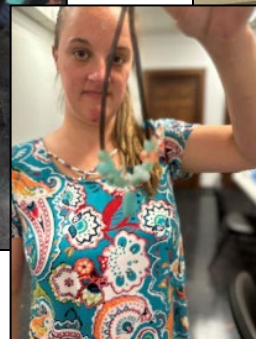
Play the Same was a short-term project. The goal was to train and support childcare teachers in best-practice as it pertains to inclusive learning and communication providing direct Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) training to childcare teachers and paraprofessionals through hands-on experience, direct training, and modeling from the interdisciplinary team in best-practices as it pertains to inclusive learning. During this project, 19 people with DD, 36 family members, 91 others, and nine organizations participated in the project. In each training event, childcare teachers received 120 minutes of training including 30 minutes of hands-on training with an individual with a disability. All childcare teachers were able to take multiple no-tech AAC supports to use in their classrooms after the training.

Grantee: The University of Southern Mississippi, Children's Center for Communication and Development, \$25,000

All Hands on STEM was a short-term project. The goal was to help students with DD identify, prepare for, and apply to experiential learning opportunities like internships and experiences as a student with disabilities and ultimately a professional in the field of STEM. It was an informal after-school STEM program that combined the key components of a STEM-based curriculum, mentor engagement, engineering professionals as instructors, and the benefits of pursuing a career in STEM. During the project, 13 people with DD, five others, and two organizations participated. **Grantee:** STEM Advancement, Pinola, \$22,075



Art is for All was a short-term project. The goal was to provide diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, which created a vital expression for the individual and culture. Each activity provided an inclusive environment by encouraging people with disabilities to connect with their personal, creative expression through art. During the project, 86 people with DD, 5 family members, 58 others, and 6 organizations participated. A total of six projects were completed. **Grantee:** Art for All Mississippi, Hattiesburg, \$19,563



Empowering Workforce Readiness was a short-term project. The goal was to expand The Canopy School's pre-employment program to include more experiential learning through workplace readiness training components to include a learning lab kitchen, a manufacturing lab, a mobile coffee shop, popcorn machine, and a new social skills curriculum and transition to work curriculum to provide soft-skills instruction alongside work training. During the project, six family members and four others participated.

Grantee: Canopy Children's Solutions, Canopy School, Ridgeland, \$25,000

Project Grow was a 3-month project. During that time, 11 people with DD, three without DD, 47 family members, eight others, and three organizations participated in the program. Staff from Shape Up Mississippi and a registered dietician with Nutrition Matters conducted five in-person cooking classes and one shopping trip class to 14 program participants of the Early Intervention component of Vicksburg Family Development Service. During the classes, participants prepared healthy, nutritious meals. They were also given information on how to stretch their food budgets through SNAP and how to prepare the items they received through community food boxes.

Grantee: Vicksburg Family Development Service, Vicksburg, \$25,000

Community Collaborations

- ❖ LIFE of Mississippi, Bridging the Gap
- ❖ Lauderdale County Foundation for Excellence in Education, Access to Arts Events
- ❖ Disability Connection, Arbor Day 5K Awareness
- ❖ The University of Southern Mississippi IDS, IDS Hub City Wheelchair Basketball Tournament
- ❖ Oxfilm, Oxford Film Festival 20th Edition Sensory Screening
- ❖ Gallant Hearts Guide Dog Center, Guide Dog Handler/Teams
- ❖ T.K. Martin for Technology, Express Yourself Art Program
- ❖ Brain Injury Association of MS, Neurotrauma Conference
- ❖ The University of Southern Mississippi, Rock N Roll Tennis Tournament
- ❖ Mississippi State University, ICan Swim Camp
- ❖ Mississippi State University, ICan Bike Camp
- ❖ The Arc of Northwest Mississippi, Camp BOLD
- ❖ Alzheimer's Association of Mississippi, Caregiving Conference
- ❖ Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities, Special Education Law Conference
- ❖ Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities, Mississippi disAbility MegaConference
- ❖ Hope Hollow Ministries, Hope Hollow 2023 Summer Camp
- ❖ Central Mississippi Down Syndrome Society, Buddy Blend Coffee Setup
- ❖ Disability Rights Mississippi, Educational Material for Students with Disabilities
- ❖ Disability Rights Mississippi, Institution of Higher Learning Training
- ❖ The University of Southern Mississippi, Wheelchair Softball World Series
- ❖ Mississippi State University, Autism and DD Summer Academic and Behavior Camp
- ❖ NAMI, Trauma Informed Care Conference
- ❖ Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities, Mississippi Autism Conference
- ❖ Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's Educational Training

Total participants in the grants and community partnerships for FY2023 were 13,210. This included people with developmental and other disabilities at 3,648; family members at 2,662; and others (professionals, caregivers, policymakers, etc.) at 6,900.

Developmental Disabilities Network Collaborations

Mississippi's Developmental Disabilities Network include the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities, Disability Rights Mississippi, and The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies. Each year, they collaborate on various activities, such as the following:

DD Network News

Winter 2023

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES NETWORK PRESENTS

DD NETWORK NEWS

A Collaborative Publication from MSCDD, DRMS and IDS

WINTER 2023 ISSUE



HAPPY NEW YEAR from the DD Network!


Wishing you a wonderful 2023. Our resolution? To continue improving the lives of Mississippians with disabilities!

The disAbility MegaConference will be back in 2023!

Stay tuned for more information about the amazing speakers, sessions, and resources that will be featured at this year's conference. Keep an eye out on our social media pages for the date, which will be announced soon!



DISABILITY RIGHTS MISSISSIPPI





A core part of Disability Rights' mission is to ensure students with disabilities have full inclusion in education. We have released our new Education Support Guide resource booklet (with support from MSCDD) to help parents and guardians of students with disabilities learn more about their rights and how to best advocate for their child in the educational setting. The booklet contains tools, tips, and resources to ensure you are equipped to advocate for your student throughout the IEP planning process and what to expect. When you have these resources available, you can not only better advocate for your student but also know when their rights are being violated and how to proceed. If you would like a copy of the Education Support Guide mailed or emailed to you, contact jwanton@drms.ms.

The DRMS team is growing! We have two open legal positions: Correctional Facility Legal Fellow and Monitoring Attorney. If you know a legal mind who is passionate about serving people with disabilities, please share! All open positions and applications can be found at www.drms.ms/category/job-openings.

INSTITUTE FOR DISABILITY STUDIES

Happy 2023! The Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) wishes you all a happy and healthy new year.

On November 30, 2022, collaborated with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services to host the first Mississippi Job Extravaganza event on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Job Extravaganza is a fun-filled and educational experience for students with disabilities ages 14-21 with the primary purpose of providing an inclusive business learning experience. This "personal career fair" consisted of local businesses providing hands-on skill experiences for high school students with disabilities. The ultimate goal of Job Extravaganza is to provide an environment in which students can freely explore a variety of careers at their own pace and hopefully discover career options that best fit their preferences, strengths, and interests. For more information IDS, Job Extravaganza, or other pre-employment programs, please visit www.usm.edu/ids, call 601.266.5163 or email ids@usm.edu.



MISSISSIPPI COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Applications for Membership to the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities 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, parent, immediate relative, guardian, or non-governmental agency or non-profit organization leader? The Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities is accepting applications to be considered for a Governor's appointment to the Council.

The Council currently has 24 members. At least 60% of our membership are people with developmental disabilities, parents, guardians, or immediate family members of children or adults with developmental disabilities. Major responsibilities of a Council member include: attending and participating in quarterly Council meetings; actively serving on one or more committees; and reviewing grant proposals and applications to achieve five-year state plan goals.




Quarterly Council meetings are held in January (South Mississippi), April (Jackson area), July (North Mississippi), and October (Jackson area). Review of grant proposals and committee meetings occur an additional one or more times per year. Council member travel expenses are reimbursed. The Membership Application is available at www.msccd.org. If you have questions or need assistance completing the application, please call 601-359-6238 or email charles.hughes@dmh.ms.gov.

Two Grant Opportunities Available Now!

The Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities currently has two grant opportunities available for Mississippi's public, private, non-profit, or for-profit organizations and agencies! Projects should provide new ideas to improve the self-determination, independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities. Examples include developing self-advocacy and leadership skills; demonstrating new approaches or access to community services, such as employment, transportation, housing, health, education, early intervention, recreation, and other supports; or providing resources to families to plan for the future care of aging adults with developmental disabilities.

A Request for Proposals and an Innovative Quality of Life Grant Application can be found at www.msccd.org. With the two opportunities, approximately \$525,000 is available to fund 10 or more projects. If you have questions, please call 601-359-5533 or email christy.ashley@dmh.ms.gov.

If you have information you would like to have included in the next issue, please contact jason@dmh.ms.



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Spring 2023

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES NETWORK PRESENTS **DD NETWORK NEWS**

A Collaborative Publication from MSCDD, DRMS and IDS
SPRING 2023 ISSUE



June 6-7
Hilton Jackson
Jackson, MS
msmegaconference.org

Keynote Speakers



Maggie Wade Dixon

Jonathan Martinis Esq.

Kristin Smedley

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Kristin Smedley

SEE: Set Extraordinary Expectations How to Reframe Challenges and Setbacks and Adopt a Thriving Mindset

Kristin teaches conference attendees that their perception of their challenge is driving their experiences, good or bad. It is how we SEE the problem or crisis that directly impacts whether we stay stuck in a setback or launch a great comeback. As Kristin demonstrates through stories from her own journey, a proper perception enables us to Set Extraordinary Expectations, and ultimately, cause positive outcomes. Kristin guides attendees to think outside of what is typically expected, to move from ordinary expectations to extraordinary, and thrive no matter the challenges that come along.

Jonathan Martinis, Esq.

Supported Decision-Making: From Justice for Jenny to Justice for All!

Study after study has shown that when people with disabilities have more control over their life and make more decisions for themselves - when they have more self-determination - they have better lives: they are more likely to live independently, work, be active in their communities, and avoid abuse. However, research also shows that when people are ordered into guardianships that are unnecessary or remove more rights than are necessary, they may suffer significant negative impacts to their physical and mental health. This session will introduce the audience to Supported Decision-Making (SDM) and how to work with others to understand choices and make individual decisions without the need for a guardian. Using the "Justice for Jenny" trial as a case study, this presentation will discuss how people with disabilities can use SDM to be more self-determined, have better life outcomes, and avoid unnecessary guardianship.

Maggie Wade Dixon

Caregiving and Call to Action!

The main focus of this presentation is the role of the caregiver and self-care. Maggie will share her family's experiences with her father who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. She will present some of the legal and medical issues which many families face. She will focus on the availability of resources and advocating for services to help families, while maintaining a career, family, and other relationships.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Kristin Smedley — The Greatest Equalizer: Uncovering the True Competitive Edge in Business and Life

Kristin will take you through the journey of a person that is thriving with blindness, highlighting how they developed and honed critical skills of a highly valued employee, long before and at a higher success rate than their sighted counterparts. Kristin uses stories of her own successful sons who are blind and fellow mentors in Thriving Blind Academy to demonstrate her unique point of view. Not only will Kristin open your mind to the fact that people that are blind have an edge over their peers and colleagues in several areas, but she'll also convince you that companies with blind and disabled employees have an edge over their competition.

Jonathan Martinis, Esq. — Education, Employment, & Independent Living: Building Self-Determination through Special Education Planning

Studies show that when students are empowered to have more self-determination - when schools provide supports designed to help them make their own decisions and direct the lives - they are more likely to be successful in school and as adults. For example, students with more self-determination are more likely to be employed, live independently, and access higher education as adults. This session will provide information and practical strategies to help students and families identify and receive supports that will help meet educational goals and be more self-determined throughout their lives.

Anita Ballard — Adult Protective Services and Mandatory Reporting

This session will provide an overview of what Adult Protective Services (APS) is in Mississippi. The presenter will explain the structure of the APS program. She will discuss the meaning of vulnerable adults and explain some signs and symptoms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults. She will discuss mandatory reporting requirements for Mississippi.

Dr. Joy Hogge — Mental Health and Dual Diagnosis Support for People with Disabilities

Having any kind of disability can present barriers to access and individual challenges. Barriers and challenges can become even more pronounced when a person has both a mental health challenge and a developmental or intellectual disability. The promise and hope of an inclusive system in keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not change when barriers and challenges increase. In fact, the ADA only becomes more important and relevant. This session will focus on practical ways to address systemic barriers and find individualized support when people have both mental health challenges and developmental or intellectual disabilities.

Janice Buckley, Mary Anne Gee, and Kimberly Thomas — Social Security Disability Benefits and Work Incentives

A panel of Social Security specialists will explain SSA's two disability programs. They will cover a few of the work incentives for both programs, so attendees will know what happens if they chose to go to work. They will also provide updates for 2023.

Kimberly Sartin Holloway and Paulette Johnson — Medicaid Waiver Services: What You Need to Know

This presentation will provide a general overview of the Medicaid program and detailed information on the Medicaid Waivers. The following information will be discussed for each waiver: eligibility criteria, application process, services provided, and contacts to receive additional information.

Richard Courtney — Mississippi ABLE and Special Needs Planning

This presentation will address asset ownership and protection, personal decision-making, and healthcare financing, including Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. The focus will be on preserving the independence, protecting the assets, and maintaining the security of people with disabilities through the use of trusts and ABLE accounts.

Leslie Junkin — From First Steps to Next Steps: Transition from Early Intervention to Early Childhood Special Education and Community Supports

What is early childhood transition? What are the next steps? Families are often overwhelmed with all the changes that take place when their child turns three years of age. This session will provide an overview of the process, resources and information on how to prepare for the future.

Tammy Crane and Cassie Tolliver — The Do's and Do Not's of IEPs

This presentation will educate individuals on commonly occurring issues within Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and potential solutions. This presentation, followed by Q&A, will provide the required knowledge to be less intimidated in the IEP meeting and spot issues to address concerns before they manifest in negative outcomes for IDEA-identified children. The presenters have years of experience serving children of varying ability levels, both as a service provider and a special education teacher. The two advocates will provide attendees with their tips to addressing issues in what can be a very hard setting to navigate.

Disability Support in Higher Education



FREE!

Open for all education professionals!
Lunch will be provided.

Gulfport: July 11, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Knight Nonprofit Center, 11975 Seaway Rd.

Starkville: July 18, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
The Mill, 100 Mercantile Lane

Jackson: July 19, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Embassy Suites, 200 Township Ave, Ridgeland

Email jwalton@drms.ms to reserve your spot!!

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



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DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES NETWORK PRESENTS

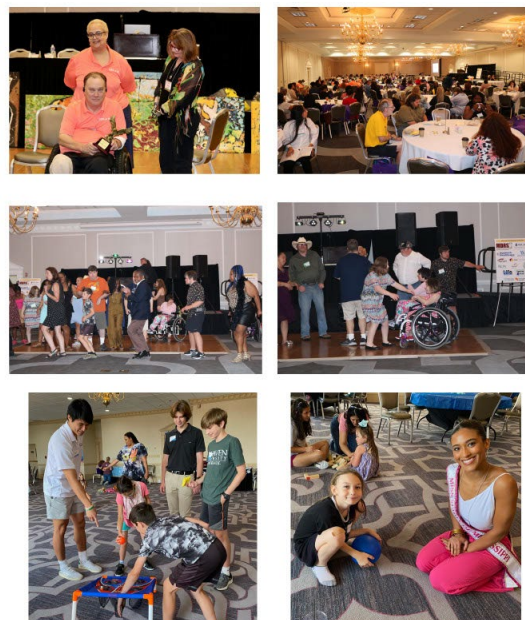
DD NETWORK NEWS

A Collaborative Publication from MSCDD, DRMS and IDS

SUMMER 2023 ISSUE

Looking Back at MegaConference 2023!

The 2023 Mississippi disAbility MegaConference was one for the books! We learned lots of valuable information in breakout sessions, got inspired by our keynote speakers, and made new friends and connections in the disability community. Didn't get to join us? Stay tuned for news about next year's conference! We hope to see you there!



Mega Fun at the MegaConference!

Thank you to our sponsors and exhibitors, and to Joni and Friends for providing respite care!

MSCSD Announces FY2024 New and Continuation Grants Funded

The Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities approved nine new year-one and continuation grants for Fiscal Year 2024, with grants beginning July 1, 2023. Total funding for all projects was over \$604,000. A brief description of each follows.

College and Career Readiness for Special Education at the Mississippi Council on Economic Education focuses on the Master Teacher of Career Readiness program for teachers of students with cognitive disabilities who are seeking an alternate diploma. The project provides resources to educators for these students and supports their families.

Danny Dollar Academy/Youth Entrepreneurs at the Mississippi Council on Economic Education focuses on educating middle and high school students with developmental disabilities (DD) on financial literacy with an emphasis on entrepreneurship. The program is a partnership with the *Entrepreneur Magazine* and *Make Your Own Money: How Kids Can Earn It, Save It, Spend It, and Dream Big*, with Danny Dollar.

Enhancing Support Structures for Students with DD/Autism at the Corinthian School District focuses on students with DD through developing high quality instructional supports, peer and caregiver support programs, and creating a sustainable model for the support of PK-12 students with DD. The research based structured support systems enhance the quality of life for students with DD through developing social skills across four domains: social (listening and following directions), interpersonal, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. The DD/Behavioral Specialists provide continuous instructional coaching and support to teachers. Parents and caregivers are provided training and support.

Higher Education for ALL at the University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies increases the number of people with intellectual and other disabilities who attend postsecondary education and receive needed supports and services. The program provides a variety of services and resources for higher education program with the primary focus area placed on students with intellectual disabilities. The students will participate in a two-semester certificate program. In addition, students with autism will continue to be offered an inclusive socialization group experience.

LEAPS Behavior Program: Lending Expert Assistance to Partnership Schools at Mississippi State University Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology continues improving assessment processes and intervention outcomes for students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) and trauma related issues (e.g., self-injury). Training is provided for current and future educators (e.g., special education teachers, board certified behavior analysts, school psychologists) on how to conduct high-quality functional behavior assessments, outreach behavioral consultation, crisis intervention, and crisis training. The program also provides professionals on best practices for managing severe behavior in the classroom.

Maximizing Independence through Advocacy at The University of Southern Mississippi School of Child and Family Sciences offers parent education workshops to help parents learn how to become effective advocates. Topics include advocacy, financial planning, improving interactions with teachers, and more.

No More Waiting at the Autism Center of North Mississippi provides children and families on the state planning list with resources, training, and supportive case management services while they wait to receive ABA therapy. The project continues to empower parents and caregivers with information and skills needed to help their children at home. The project will continue to provide a well-developed resource library equipping parents with the knowledge and skills for other relevant interventions and supports. Staff will continue to address the well-being of siblings through Sibshops.

Special Education Advocacy Family Network at The University of Southern Mississippi for Disability Studies increases availability and accessibility of community resources to families with children receiving services through local education agencies. Support will promote inclusion of families and K-12 students in the public school system regarding the development and appropriate implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Individualized Intervention Plan (IIP), while also educating families on federal laws which protect the rights of their children and families.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology provides students with OD experiences to increase their opportunities to engage with their peers and community. The project provides community partners and family members with education and resources about inclusion.

INSTITUTE FOR DISABILITY STUDIES

In late spring 2023, the Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) learned that the Reaching, Including, Supporting and Educating (RISE) to the Top! program had been approved by The State Institutions for Higher Learning and will enroll its first students in August 2023. This approval reflects over four years of collaborative efforts by IDS and the School of Interdisciplinary Studies and Professional Development (ISPD) at The University of Southern Mississippi to provide new opportunities for higher education and job training for young adults with intellectual disabilities. To be eligible for the RISE to the Top! wheelchair softball certificate program that incorporates academics and employment preparation, peer mentoring and service involvement, RISE to the Top! began as the Higher Education for All pilot program funded by the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Two IDS staff members, Sylestry Crosby and Robbie Sullivan, and their Deep South Hurricanes wheelchair softball teammates participated in the 2023 Southeastern Conference (SEC) Division II wheelchair softball tournament which ended August 5-15 in Crestwood, Illinois. The Deep South Hurricanes represented Mississippi and finished the tournament tie for 5th place out of 20 teams, including teams from Japan and Ghana.

DRMS, with support from MSCDD, just published a new resource, "Disability Support in Higher Education." This booklet provides students, parents and guardians, and education professionals with information about rights and accommodations in the postsecondary education setting. If you are thinking about college, are in college, or are concerned with postsecondary education rights for students with disabilities, the booklet is now available on [www.drms.ms under \"Higher Education Resources\"](http://www.drms.ms under \). If you would like a printed copy of the booklet, email jwalton@drms.ms.

DRMS, along with IDS and MSCDD, also hosted trainings for higher education professors in Jackson, Starkeville, and on the Gulf Coast over the summer. Nearly 50 ADA coordinators, attorneys, and other higher education professionals joined us to learn about the rights of students with disabilities and best practices on accommodating students in accordance with the ADA and The Rehabilitation Act, as well as the Fair Housing Act.

Each year, DRMS solicits input from the public to help shape our agency's goals and priorities for the year. We want to hear from you! Visit www.drms.ms/publicinput-and-goals to complete our survey and tell us what issues matter to you most!

DD Network News Word Search

B E K M T M J L O P
P E Z M T P O W E R B
M X O Z T U P J I W
I N S P I R E T N M
C R A D V O C A T E
H T Z E A B L E K L F
O Q L E P F J S I F
I N X N U Z D I J W
C E Y S U P P O R T
E T I N A H O S W Q

Advocate


Inspire

Support


Advocate

Stay tuned for the Word Search on our next post!


If you have information you would like to have included in the next issue, please contact Wendy Nelson at pratt@drms.ms



MISSISSIPPI
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
DISABILITY RIGHTS



INSTITUTES FOR
DISABILITY STUDIES



DISABILITY
RIGHTS

The program was developed, largely from 2008-2010 by IDS, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, in partnership with MSCDD, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and the University of Mississippi, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The program is a joint effort of the three organizations.

Mississippi disAbility MegaConference

Over 300 people with disabilities, family members, professionals, and students attend the 2023 Mississippi disAbility MegaConference at the Hilton Jackson on June 6-7, 2023. Over 30 organizations and companies provided information and resources to attendees.

Keynote speakers included:

Kristin Smedley



Jonathan Martinis

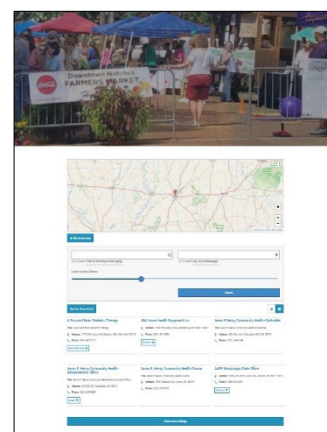


Maggie Wade Dixon



Mississippi Community Resource Directory

MSCDD continues to maintain the Mississippi Community Resource Directory. This is an online, searchable database of resources for people with developmental and other disabilities, family members, providers, professionals, policymakers, and others in the community. Technical assistance for the directory is provided by the Institute for Disability Studies. Visit www.mscred.org.



239 N. Lamar St., Suite 1001
Jackson, MS 39201
Phone: 601-359-6238
Web: www.mscred.org
Resource Directory: www.mscred.org

Alternative formats available upon request.