



Partnership for People  
with Disabilities

# PARTNERSHIP CONNECTION

*Linking People. Changing Lives.*

Volume: 5

Number: 2

Fall 2007

## Director's Message

Fred Orelove  
*Executive Director*



The year 2007 is drawing to a close. Sometimes it feels as though the holidays are rolling towards us like the boulder in the original Indiana Jones movie, and we move faster in an effort to avoid being crushed. But the winter holidays also offer an opportunity for reflection. The familiar "Christmas letter," which many families send to their friends and relatives, provides the chance to encapsulate in a page or two the highlights of the year past—a kind of "executive summary," if you will, of busy lives.

Those letters are almost always upbeat. Yes, many of them dutifully report the obvious calamities and tragedies of the year, but their main purpose is to provide an accounting of the family's accomplishments and happy milestones.

In effect, that is the purpose of an organization's annual report. Every organization has its share of misfortune—grants not received, collaborations dissolved—but those items tend not to make the final version. Rather, the report is a litany of the successes.

And so, while visions of sugarplums and latkes dance through my head this holiday season, they are

*Continued on 2*

## CENTER FOR SELF-ADVOCACY LEADERSHIP: WORKING TOGETHER FOR CHANGE



*Christina Draper (l.) and Eric Clark (r.),  
New Voices Planning Committee members (2003)*

Self-advocacy means that individually or in groups, people with disabilities speak or act for themselves or others on issues that affect the quality of their lives and the communities in which they live. Individuals with disabilities are the best judges of their own lives. Every person with a disability has the right to participate to the fullest extent in the economic, social, and political life of the community.

The Partnership for People with Disabilities is committed to providing individuals with disabilities with the knowledge, skills and tools to become self-advocates involved in making decisions about their lives and the communities in which they live, learn, work and play.

A grant in 2003 to the Partnership for People with Disabilities from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities provided the initial support for an emerging self-advocacy effort. The New Voices initiative provided opportunities for individuals with disabilities to speak about issues that were fundamental to the way they lived their lives. Ten self-advocates from across the state participated on the New Voices Planning Committee. Committee members planned events and examined ways that a broader group self-advocates could address some of the critical issues important to individuals with disabilities in Virginia. The highlight of this action was an informative and educational conference that was attended by 173 stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, family members, providers, agency representatives, and others interested in the empowerment of individuals with disabilities. Through talking with self-advocates we learned that :

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## CENTER FOR SELF-ADVOCACY LEADERSHIP: (CONT'D)



- They want a strong network of self-advocates throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- They want to live their lives in the community, but, like all citizens, they need support.
- They want to speak for themselves and tell others what they like and don't like.
- They want to help others advocate for themselves.

In order to further support individuals with disabilities in developing self-advocacy in Virginia, the Partnership formed the Center for Self-Advocacy Leadership, co-directed by a self-advocate and a parent of a child with disabilities. The Center provides information, training, and experience-based learning to teach self-advocates to speak for themselves, to assist others in becoming better self-advocates, and to encourage self-advocates to become contributing leaders in their communities and in state level groups. The Center will create and support a statewide advisory committee to guide the purpose and activities of the Center and to provide a venue for self-advocates to share their perspectives with state level agencies, organizations, and groups.

Recently, the Partnership secured funding for three initiatives that fit within the core goals and objectives of the Center and facilitate our strong desire to promote leadership skills among self-advocates. The first, a cornerstone project that will mobilize individuals with disabilities to foster systems change, was funded in July 2007 by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. The Board awarded a Self-Advocacy Mobilization grant to the Partnership to implement an initiative that will mobilize individuals with disabilities to

create systems change at the local, regional, and state level. This important follow up work to the New Voices initiative will help ensure that self-advocates continue to be active in the shaping of disability policy and practice. The goal of the Self-Advocacy Mobilization initiative is to create and foster

partnerships in selected communities to help individuals with disabilities engage with other community members to advocate locally for issues that are important. Individuals with disabilities will work with other community members to bring about positive change in attitudes and accessibility, creating an open and welcoming environment for all citizens, including those with disabilities.

The Center's second self-advocacy initiative provides youth and emerging leaders with training and technical assistance to prepare them to become active community participants as adults. Self-Advocacy Leadership: Information, Training, and Resources for Youth is funded by the federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

For many young people, self-advocacy is a foreign concept. Many individuals with disabilities have experienced years of being



told what to do, rather than telling others what their preferences are, and hence have not developed advocacy, choice-making, and self-determination skills. The information, training, and resources provided by the Center will be directed toward youth (ages 13-17), emerging leaders (ages 18-30), their families,

educators, providers, and supporters. Areas of focus will include self-determination and self-direction, education, and health. Youth and emerging leaders with disabilities will gain skills needed to make decisions independently, advocate for themselves and others, and ultimately, influence public policy in a way that improves the lives of young people with disabilities across Virginia.

A third focus of the Center for Self-Advocacy Leadership is to develop the capacity for individuals with disabilities to learn about and to participate in volunteer

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### Director's Message: (CONT'D)

competing for neural space with a year filled with really good news. And I wanted to share all of that with you—but I will ask you to wait until our next annual report.

I want to end with a tribute. Kay Brough, who has served as the Partnership's business manager since its inception in 1985, is retiring this month from Virginia Commonwealth University. It is almost impossible to state how valuable Kay has been to the Partnership's success and how much she will be missed, both professionally and personally. Thank you, Kay, for 22 outstanding years of service!



# Partnership Programs Attract Corporate Support



## CARMAX FOUNDATION AWARDS \$27,000 TO "INCLUDE ME" PROJECT

The Partnership's "Include Me" project was developed to increase the number of child care centers providing inclusive quality education to children with special needs in Greater Richmond.

The "Include Me" project provides information and technical assistance to early childhood teachers to make them more effective at including children with disabilities and developmental delays in their classrooms alongside typically developing peers.

CarMax's Richmond Program supports programs dedicated to education, youth leadership, and community enrichment.

## NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL HONORS LOCAL VOLUNTEER WITH \$10,000 GIFT TO PARTNERSHIP

Henry Fine, a financial representative with Northwestern Mutual in Richmond, was honored for his service and involvement with the Partnership for People with Disabilities. The gift will provide support to "Include Me," a preschool program for children with disabilities. He was one of 25 winners in communities throughout the nation.

Mr. Fine's affiliation with the Partnership began in the fall of 2004, when he agreed to serve as a founding member of the Partnership's first Resource

Development Board. This Board is charged with improving the financial health of the organization and attracting the private funding needed to build capacity for serving individuals with disabilities in Virginia.

Northwestern Mutual is a large mutual company based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and markets its products and services through the Northwestern Mutual Financial Network.



## "LOWE'S HEROES" SUPPORT CLASSROOM MAKE OVER PROJECT

The "Flip that Class: Design to Learn Classroom Make Over Project" was designed by T/TAC staff to meet the needs of a variety of teachers and students. Classrooms were identified from Three Chopt Elementary School and Moody Middle School in Henrico County, and Prince Edward County High School in Prince Edward County as the recipients of the makeovers.



Moody Middle School  
(before)

Program Specialists from T/TAC met with the classroom teachers to identify areas of need and develop plans for improvement.

Lowe's Home Improvement Stores adopted the Flip project as their "Lowe's Heroes" for the year, and subsequently donated materials and labor for all three makeover projects. Their efforts and the hard work of the staff volunteers are responsible for the majority of the physical overhaul in each of the three schools. In addition to this major donation, donations were secured from SmartTechnologies,

Inc., NEC Visual Systems, Charles Yeager Designs, Homemades by Suzanne, A & N Services, Waskey Construction, Cheek

& Shockley RVs, Hushh-Ups, Outwater Plastics, Hale's Electrical Services, Prospect Homes, Key Office Supply and Street & Company.

As a result of all these generous donations and support, the classrooms were transformed into learning environments that are universally designed to meet the diverse needs of all students.

Lowe's Companies, Inc. is a Fortune 500 company operating as a home improvement retailer in the United States and Canada.

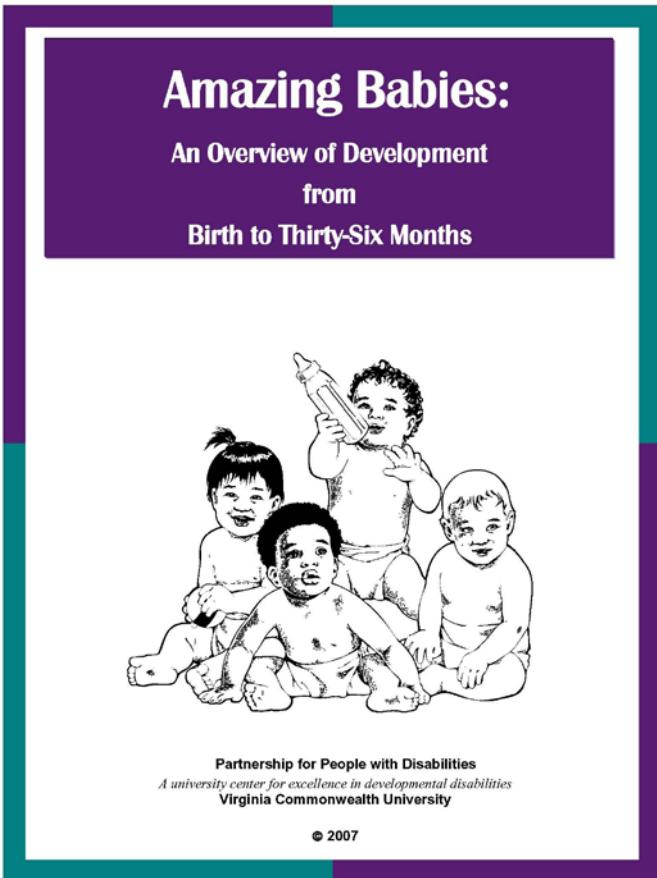


Moody Middle School (after)



# OUTREACH & Publication

## Amazing Babies: An Overview of Development from Birth to Thirty-Six Months



This booklet is the perfect tool for early interventionists, early childhood educators, special educators, students, childcare providers or parents. Providing an overview of development from birth to thirty-six months, the booklet is divided into sections by ages. Each section provides information about babies' physiological, sensorimotor, cognitive, language, psychological, and self-care development. Also featured in each age level are ideas for play and age-appropriate toys. "Action Alerts" and "Something to Think About" provide readers with evidence-based research and current trends and issues related to infant and toddler development. A competency test is included.

To obtain this booklet, visit the Partnership's website at [www.vcu.edu/partnership/products](http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/products) and click on the "Education" icon.

## Technology 2007

This conference was collaboratively sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education Training and Technical Assistance Centers at Virginia Commonwealth University, Old Dominion University, James Madison University and in conjunction with the Hospital Education Program at Children's Hospital in Richmond, Va. Fiscal support was provided by the Virginia Department of Education.

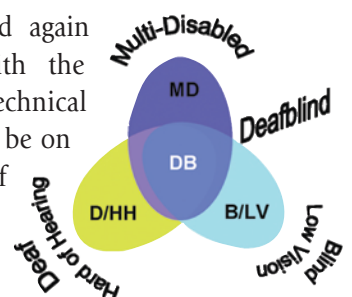
National speakers presented at this conference on best practices and state-of-the-art applications in assistive technology. The information was designed for general and special educators, related services personnel, assistive technology teams, instructional technology specialists, administrators, family members and others interested in helping students with disabilities achieve success!

For information regarding "Technology 2008," contact: Fran Smith at [fgsmith@vcu.edu](mailto:fgsmith@vcu.edu)

## Pathways to Possibilities

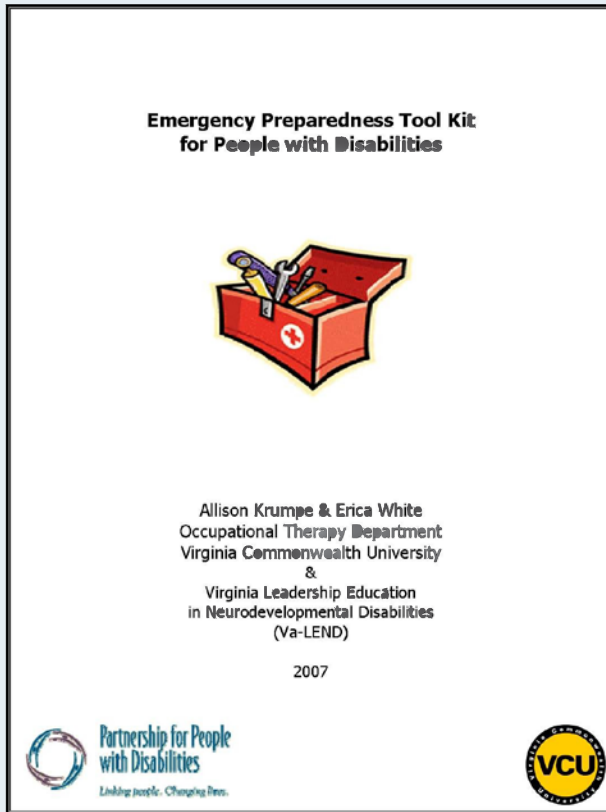
The conference, attended by 87 participants, focused on professionals and family members who work and live with students with visual impairments and/or multiple disabilities including dual sensory impairments such as deaf-blindness. The goal of the conference was to combine different professional disciplines to create much needed supports and learning for individuals serving, teaching, or living with individuals (0-21) with unique combinations of sensory and cognitive challenges.

The conference will be held again in 2008 in collaboration with the Partnership's Training and Technical Assistance Center. The focus will be on children who are deaf or hard of hearing. For more information, contact Mark Campano at (804)828-8252.





## PUBLICATIONS



### Emergency Preparedness Tool Kit for People with Disabilities

The tool kit was developed by the Partnership's Va-LEND office to help individuals with disabilities and their families plan ahead in case of emergencies such as hurricanes, tornadoes, fires or terrorist attacks. Individuals with disabilities have special needs to consider in an emergency. Having a disability will almost always require extra planning and preparation.

The tool kit contains a detailed preparedness checklist that can be used as a step-by-step guide for developing an emergency plan. To access the free booklet, visit the Partnership's website at [www.vcu.edu/partnership/valend](http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/valend)

### Virginia's Medicaid Waivers for Persons with Disabilities, Their Parents and Caregivers

Medicaid waivers provide funding for people who are eligible for long-term care in institutions such as hospitals, nursing facilities, and intermediate care facilities. Through Medicaid waivers, states can waive certain requirements including the requirement that individuals live in an institution in order to receive Medicaid funding.

*Virginia's Medicaid Waivers for  
Persons with Disabilities,  
Their Parents, and Caregivers*



July 2007

This guide was created by Jessica Cann and Elaine Ogburn of the Virginia Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Program (Va-LEND), in collaboration with Terry Smith, Division Director, Division of Long-Term Care, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), and Maureen Hollowell, Director of Advocacy on Services, Medicaid Waiver Technical Assistance Center, Independence Center, Norfolk, Virginia. Va-LEND is an interdisciplinary leadership training program at the Partnership for People with Disabilities, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia (telephone 804-628-0073). The guide is available at the following website address: <http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/valend/MEDICAID%20WAIVERS%20GUIDE%207-07.pdf>.

The guide, co-written by Jessica Cann, 2006-2007 Va-LEND trainee and Elaine Ogburn, Family Mentorship Specialist, focuses on five of the waivers currently available in Virginia.

- Mental Retardation/Intellectual Disabilities (MR/ID) Waiver
- Day Support Waiver
- Individual and Family Developmental Disabilities Support Waiver
- Elderly or Disabled with Consumer Direction Waiver
- Technology-Assisted Waiver

To view a copy of the free booklet, visit the Partnership's website at [www.vcu.edu/partnership/publications](http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/publications)



and community service programs. With funding from the National Service Inclusion Project - a collaboration between the Association of University Centers on Disabilities and the Institute for Community Inclusion - the Partnership is working together with New Voices alumni and the Virginia Commission for

National and Community Service to increase the enrollment of individuals with disabilities in volunteer and community service experiences in Virginia. The service inclusion program has two purposes: (1) It supports individuals with disabilities in volunteer or member positions within national and community service projects and (2) the program increases knowledge among AmeriCorps service programs about how to recruit, enroll, and support individuals with disabilities as volunteers and members. The belief is that communities will be enriched and learn to value the contributions of individuals with disabilities, who will in turn gain valuable experience in volunteerism and community service.

The Center for Self-Advocacy Leadership at the Partnership recognizes that self-advocates, along with their allies and supporters, can work together to promote leadership activities that will enable more self-advocates to become involved in decisions that affect their lives. The Center mobilizes local self-advocates, brings together information and resources to support training for youth, and provides a structure for increasing meaningful volunteer experiences in communities.

"The Partnership is excited about the opportunity to partner directly with self-advocates to provide the knowledge and skills needed for individuals to become active community participants. We expect that as more individuals speak out in their own behalf, they will compel professionals and communities to think differently about their approaches and attitudes towards individuals with disabilities," said Dr. Fred Orelove, executive director of the Partnership for People with Disabilities.

### KALEIDOSCOPE: NEW PERSPECTIVES IN SERVICE COORDINATION

January 17-18, 2008  
February 11, 2008

Hampton Healthy Families Partnership Building  
Hampton, Virginia

Contact: Cori Hill, VA Early Intervention  
Training Specialist at (540)943-6776

### AUDITORY/VERBAL ORAL INTERVENTION IN AN ACADEMIC SETTING

Course: Spoken Language Model  
March 14-15, 2008

Course: Development of Auditory Function  
April 25-26, 2008

Stonewall Jackson Hotel and Conference Center  
Staunton, Virginia

Contact: Ann Hughes, Training and Technical  
Assistance Specialist for Deaf/Hard of Hearing,  
at (804)828-1342



# Welcome Aboard

# KUDOS

**Sheila Ashley** joined the Partnership as a Program Specialist for Mild/Moderate Disabilities. She was employed previously as a teacher of students with mild mental disabilities. She earned a Master's degree in Education from the College of William and Mary and is currently a doctoral candidate at the College of William and Mary.

**Lanett Brailey** joined the Partnership as a Program Specialist, Secondary Curriculum and Instruction. She previously served as the Director of Special Education, Petersburg, Va. public schools. She earned a Master's degree in Education from The Ohio State University.

**Kelly DuBose** joined the Partnership as a Service Coordinator/Case Manager, Richmond Infant Council, Infant and Toddler Connection. Her previous assignment before coming to the Partnership was Targeted Case Manager, Mental Health Children's Unit, Richmond Behavioral Health Authority. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Longwood University.

**Joy Engstrom** joined the Partnership as a Program Specialist for Autism at the Secondary Level. She was employed previously as the Autism Resource/Positive Behavior Support Specialist for Hanover County Public Schools in Virginia. She earned a Master's degree in Education from Virginia Commonwealth University.

**Bobbi Piguet** joined the Partnership as an Administrative Assistant. She was employed previously as an Administrative Assistant and Event Planner at the VCU Rehabilitation Research and Training Center. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts from Bridgewater College.

**Mary Swingle** joined the Partnership as a Program Administrator for the Infant and Toddler Connection of Richmond. She was employed previously as an Early Childhood Educator, Infant and Child Development Service, Arc of Richmond. She earned a Master's degree in Education from Virginia Commonwealth University.

**Shantelle Taylor** joined the Partnership as an Administrative Assistant. She was employed previously as a Student Services Specialist in Rheumatology, Allergy, and Immunology at VCU Health Systems. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Real Estate and Rural Land Development at Virginia Commonwealth University.

**Mary Tobin** joined the Partnership as a Program Specialist in Early Childhood Education. She was employed previously by Chesterfield County Public Schools, Chesterfield, Va. as a Special Education Teacher.



**Donna L. Gilles**, recently hired Associate Director for the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Gilles joined the Partnership from the University of Florida-Gainesville where she served on the professional staff in the Department of Psychiatry, and was Co-Principal Investigator and Director of the Florida Outreach Project for Children and Young Adults who are Deaf-Blind. She was also the Associate Director of the UF-Gainesville Center for Autism and Related Disabilities. Dr. Gilles received her doctorate in Education from Johns Hopkins University.



**Kay Brough**, Business Manager for the Partnership, was a finalist for VCU's PRIDE Ambassador Award. The award recognizes staff members who exhibit PRIDE in the work place. The acronym stands for Professional, Responsive, Innovative, Dedicated, and Excellence. Kay has 22 years of continuous service to the Partnership and its mission as a university center for excellence in developmental disabilities. Kay will retire at the end of the calendar year.

## Partnership Service Awards:

- |                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cheryl Bishop – 5 years  | Sue Palko – 5 years         |
| Parthy Dinora - 5 years  | Linda Oggel – 10 years      |
| Rosanne Eanes – 5 years  | Sandra Wilberger – 10 years |
| Betty Harrell – 5 years  | Tera Yoder – 15 years       |
| Ann McMillan – 5 years   | Kathleen Lynch – 15 years   |
| Kristen Stahr – 5 years  | Sharon Jones – 15 years     |
| Cori Hill - 5 years      | Deana Buck – 15 years       |
| Peggy O'Neill – 20 years |                             |



# Partnership Connection

*Linking People. Changing Lives.*

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The Partnership for People with Disabilities is a university center for excellence in developmental disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University. VCU is an equal opportunity, affirmative action university providing access to education and employment without regard to age, race, color, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, veteran's status, political affiliation or disability. If alternative formats of this document are needed, please contact Bill Tinsley at 804.828.8243 (Voice), or 800.828.1120 (TDD Relay). This newsletter is funded in part by a grant from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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