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Life without Limits for People with Disabilities™

Spring 2007

A Message from the President

Welcome! As we anticipate Spring, it is with a sense of hope for the future for people with disabilities.

Here at UCP/Detroit we are working hard to re-align our mission and our agency actions with the real services and supports that people with disabilities need **today**. In our next issue you will read more about our increasing focus on Cerebral Palsy, our expanded Employment Programs, and our new Person-Centered Advocacy for both families and adult living.

As we reorganize our priorities, it is exciting to contemplate that the return of a Democratic majority to the U.S. Congress seems to make it possible for the disability agenda to be more fully realized, hopefully with a trickle-down effect on state and local policies.

It is, indeed, a time of hope for *life without limits for people with disabilities*.

Leslynn R. Angel, President & CEO

Public Policy & Employment Programs

By Paul Landry, Director of Employment Programs

As the 110th congress begins their work, let us first remind them that unemployment among people with disabilities continues at over 70%. Critical legislation that impacts employment for people with disabilities and are scheduled to be reauthorized are: the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The Rehabilitation Act is the Federal legislation that authorizes the formula grant programs of vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, independent living, and client assistance. It also authorizes a variety of training and service discretionary grants administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The purpose of the Rehabilitation Act is to create and expand job and career opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market by

engaging the talent and leadership of private industry as partners in the rehabilitation process, to identify competitive job and career opportunities and the skills needed to perform such jobs, to create practical job and career readiness and training programs, and to provide a job.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) provides the framework for a national workforce preparation and employment system designed to meet the needs of the community, job seekers and those who want to further their careers. Key components of the Act include enabling customers to easily access the information and employment and training services they need through the One-Stop system.

Many individuals with disabilities could also greatly benefit from the employment and training services delivered through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) One-Stop system. WIA is a community-based workforce development

system that is designed to provide job seekers with the skills necessary to meet the needs of local employers. Physical and programmatic access to WIA services is woefully lacking for individuals with disabilities, despite Federal requirements that such services be accessible. Both the Rehabilitation Act and WIA are scheduled to be reauthorized this year.

Employment, Training, and Wages (taken from the ARC/UCP Disability Policy Collaboration Goals for the 110th Congress)

The 110th Congress should recognize that most of our constituents who are of working age remain unemployed or under-employed. Thus, the 110th Congress should help our constituents reach their full potential and become as independent as possible through integrated employment by:

- Reauthorizing the Rehabilitation Act and the Workforce Investment

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One-Stop Shopping for Long Term Care

By Sheryl Stumbaugh, Adult Advocate

As the Adult Advocate for United Cerebral Palsy of Metropolitan Detroit, it is part of my job to continually monitor political issues which may have impact on the disabled community. In my opinion, one of the most pressing dilemmas facing America today is the tangled web of available long-term care (LTC) options for people requiring assistance with daily living tasks. LTC is not merely traditional nursing home care, but also community-based options such as in-home assistance, adult day care, and special housing arrangements like assisted living. The issue of LTC impacts millions of people including those with disabilities, senior citizens, caregivers, friends, and relatives.

Currently, Michigan's Long-Term Care system is composed of an inconsistent and disjointed variety of supports and services for consumers. Programs are administered by state and private agencies, each with differing eligibilities, rules, availability and standards. Consumers and their loved ones must attempt to navigate this chaotic system, often as a result of a sudden, traumatic event such as an auto accident or stroke. Clearly, those are not the times when families should have to chase after information from a bewildering array of sources, but that's the unfortunate reality facing Michigan families today.

Efforts by consumers, advocates, legislators and providers have long been under-

way to evaluate and reform the LTC system. In 2004, Governor Granholm appointed a Task Force to examine the LTC system. One of their core recommendations for improvement was creating a Single Point of Entry (SPE) system. SPE's are designed to be the regional agency where consumers can go to obtain information about long-term care options, be assessed for all available programs, and receive assistance developing person-centered plans. (Essentially, one-stop shopping for long-term care needs!)

Both the House and Senate unanimously passed Long-Term Care bills in December and the legislation now awaits Governor Granholm's approval. Once signed, it will be the responsibility of the Director of the Department of Community Health (DCH) to create regional Single Point of Entry agencies which will provide consumers with unbiased information regarding all of their long-term care options. The legislation will also:

- Require the DCH to designate up to four agencies as single point of entry agencies; and prohibit the designation of additional agencies until the DCH had reported to the Legislature on the impact of the initially designated agencies.
- Require the DCH to monitor designated agencies; require them to perform specified duties; annually evaluate the agencies' performance; and prescribe fiscal and performance stan-

dards for the agencies.

- Authorize the DCH to take disciplinary action against a designated agency that failed to meet the bill's criteria or intentionally provided biased information about long-term care.
- Provide that Medicaid reimbursement for health facilities or agencies could not be reduced below the level of rates and payments in effect on October 1, 2006.

What does this mean for Michigan residents regarding Long-Term Care?

The federal government awarded 43 grants to states across the country to establish these agencies, recognizing the need for the LTC services they provide. The Michigan Department of Community Health received its award in September 2005 and is in the process of establishing pilot sites with the expectation that there will eventually be coverage across the state. The state is trying out its new Michigan Long-Term Care Connection, a single-point-of-entry system that can help residents find out what long-term support and services are available in Michigan. The system is being demonstrated at four pilot sites. The four pilot SPE agencies (located in Detroit, Western Michigan, Southwestern Michigan, and the Upper Peninsula) are expected to be ready to serve consumers in 2007! The goal of developing single points of entry statewide is to control the high cost of long-term care services and coordinate the delivery of high quality services. Stay tuned for further updates.

Farewell *By Leslynn Angel, President & CEO*

In January our local disability community lost a hero: Tony Filippis, Sr.



A teenage accident at age 13 resulted in the double-amputation, below the knees, of his legs. This was undoubtedly a life-changing event, especially for a young man in the 1920's. But as we at UCP/Detroit believe, obstacles **can** be turned into opportunities. After being fired from a variety of jobs simply because of his prosthetic legs, Tony went on to co-found Wright & Filippis, Michigan's largest supplier of home health care products and services.

The success of that business provided Tony the opportunity to become a strong, visible and vocal champion of the rights of people with disabilities to live, to work, and to play just like anyone else. A strong believer in athletics and recreation, Tony developed a number of sports programs for people of all abilities in metro Detroit and established the Athletes with Disabilities Hall of Fame. He was well-known for his generous spirit and his philanthropy.

So, I am sad today, particularly for Tony's family as they mourn his loss. But I am also sad for us in the disability community. We have lost a friend, advocate and champion for disability rights.

QuickRamps for Kids:

A UCP/Detroit Program that Makes a Difference

By Carolyn Das, Director of Program Development

In September 2006 we were awarded a small grant from the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan to implement “QuickRamps for Kids,” as a pilot program.

We wrote the grant proposal as a way to test a hypothesis: that families need ramps for their children who use wheelchairs and that portable ramps are a quick, easy, inexpensive way to fill that need. In addition, they are flexible: not only can they be used at the family’s own home, but they can be transported and used at friends’ and neighbors’ homes that were previously inaccessible.

The community response has been overwhelming! After just beginning to market the program in January we were inundated with 82 family requests for applications. Because this is a small pilot program, we only have funding for up to 25 ramps. However, based on the clear need, we are seeking additional funding that will enable us to fill all of that community need.

This experience validates our belief that there is a huge community need for small, tangible supports for families whose children have disabilities. Each portable ramp costs only a few hundred dollars—a small price for freedom and safety for many families who would otherwise be carrying their children



When YOU donate to UCP/Detroit you do make a difference. Just ask a “QuickRamps for Kids” recipient family!

and/or their wheelchairs up and down stairs...or be left stuck in their homes

Yet, freedom and safety do have a price. And by helping to pay that price for families, UCP/Detroit makes the difference between people being segregated and lonely, trapped in their homes, and out and about—full participants in the community.

Thank you to all who helped to make our 2006 Annual Appeal so successful: \$7,000 raised as we go to press. With a decrease in United Way funding, your donations are more important than ever in helping us to coordinate great programs like QuickRamps for Kids.

Thank you!

Public Policy & Employment Programs (continued from page 1)

Act (WIA), including strengthening the linkage between WIA and the Rehabilitation Act, preserving the integrity of the Rehabilitation Act, increasing the emphasis on employment by strengthening and expanding the supported employment program, improving transition policy, expanding work experience opportunities, removing barriers to participation by people with disabilities, and ensuring full due process protections;

- Increasing funding for the state vocational rehabilitation program significantly above the required Consumer Price Index (CPI) level and increasing funding for supported

employment, projects with industry programs, and workforce development programs that help our constituents find and keep jobs and have more career choices;

- Assuring that people with intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, and other disabilities can access all relevant work programs, including business development opportunities;
- Assuring that federal employees with disabilities do not lose their federal employment status due to outsourcing;
- Expanding employment opportunities by establishing federal procurement preferences for employers

who employ significant numbers of people with disabilities;

- Assuring that people currently earning sub-minimum wages in supported or sheltered employment have their federal and other benefits and supports protected if any wage and hour policy shift would result in the loss of employment, benefits, or supports;
- Conducting oversight on the Department of Labor’s monitoring of compliance under the Fair Labor Standards Act and other federal non-discrimination requirements;
- Increasing the federal minimum wage;

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Join the Fun: Red Wing Alumni Skate for UCP

By Carolyn Das, Director of Program Development

The Red Wing Alumni Skate is the biggest fundraiser of the year for United Cerebral Palsy of Metropolitan Detroit.

This year's event promises to be more exciting than ever with the UCP Pucksters (all amateurs) facing a roster of Wings alumni players that includes Igor Larionov, John Ogrodnick, Shawn Burr, Nick Libet, Dennis Hextall, Craig Wolanin, Pat Peake, Mickey Redmond and Dino Cicarelli. The Viking Ice Arena's Olympic-size rink will undoubtedly challenge all players!

The Wings Alumni Skate is preceded by a Sled Hockey demonstration and followed by a Pizza/Pop Afterglow. Our annual Silent Auction will run throughout the event; doors open at 4:00 p.m. and bidding can begin immediately!

We are accepting donation for the Silent Auction! Items such as sports memorabilia, tickets to events, restaurants, store and service gift certificates, art work, time shares, and other tangible items are all appropriate. Thank you for supporting this event.



Please Come!

What: UCP Pucksters/Red Wing Alumni Skate

When: Sunday April 1, 2007

Doors Open at 4:00 p.m.

Where: Viking Ice Arena in Hazel Park

Tickets available at the door: \$10 per individual, \$25 for a family of 5, children under 5 free.

This year's event is dedicated to the memory of Tony Filippis, Sr.



Why are fundraisers and donations so important?

With decreased funding from United Way, private donations are more important than ever. Why? It is private donations, combined with United Way funding, that literally keep the lights on and the doors open at UCP/Detroit.

Without these two sources of income we would not be able to run great programs like Adult Advocacy, Family Advocacy, Customized Employment, Employment Benefits Counseling, QuickRamps for Kids, the annual Life without Limits through Assistive Technology conference and more. 85% of dollars raised at our Hockey Event support programs like these.

Please support us in doing this work...either by attending the Hockey event or taking a moment to send in a donation in the enclosed envelope. Every dollar counts and every dollar is well-used to support people with disabilities live life without limits.

Thank you to volunteer Mike Ward, a longtime UCP/Detroit Board member. Although not currently serving on the Board Mike is still active and chairs the Hockey event.

We couldn't do it without volunteers like you, Mike!

Community Helpers

By LaToya Jones, Chief Financial Officer

This Holiday Season UCP/Detroit and its staff joined together to provide six families who experience disability and are in particular need with *overflowing* food baskets.

With the agency providing the baskets and gift cards for perishables, staff members filled our conference room with personal donations of canned goods, dry goods, and all manner of foods. Staff hand-packed the baskets, which were then picked up or delivered to families.

I would like to offer a heart-felt thank you to our staff for their generous spirit.

Impacting Education Policy through Advocacy

By Pat Dwelle, Family Life Advocate

There are many opportunities for a parent, foster parent, adoptive parent, or other family member to let your voice be heard on pertinent issues. For example, you can become involved with public policy on the federal, state and local levels regarding education, employment, housing and other issues that are of concern to people with disabilities. Your VOICE is important and can make a difference in the community. You can become involved by:

- writing effective letters
- sharing your personal story
- working together in numbers to resolve issues
- meeting with Legislators
- calling your Legislators
- knowing and understanding the process for “Making Your Case”

If you are interested in advocating and creating policies that support **self-determination** contact:

Michigan Partners for Freedom...a statewide movement that promotes Self-Determination for all Michigan citizens. Groups are comprised of persons with disabilities, parents, advocates and community agencies.
www.self-determination.com
800-292-7851 ext. 106

Partners in Policymaking...a leadership program that provides training for adults with disabilities and parents of young children with disabilities on how to bring

about policy changes that will improve lives for persons with disabilities.

www.partnersinpolicymaking.com/makingyourcase

If you are interested in getting involved with policy concerning **Michigan’s Early On** support for families of children birth through 3 years old contact:

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC’s)...a partnership of representatives from families, state and community agencies, and other groups. The primary role is to advise and assist the state as it implements programs for infants and toddlers as required under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.
Contact: schinderleb@michigan.gov
517-241-2591

For issues related to **education** there are many ways to get involved:

Beginning at the local level, consider joining your local PTA. Too often families of children who utilize special education supports are under-represented on school PTAs.

At a county level, identify your school district’s Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) representative; let him/her know that you are interested in providing input and receiving information about what is happening at the county (Intermediate School District) level regarding special education services. Going to PAC meetings is a great way to become informed.

At the State level you can start by becoming familiar with the Michigan Department of Education and the State Board of Education. (www.michigan.gov/mde) In 2006 the Board approved a policy framework for Universal Education, a process for making decisions that ensures that the needs of all diverse learners are taken into account. Meetings of the State Board are open to the public. The schedule is as follows:

State Board of Education Meetings

April 10, 2007
May 8, 2007
June 12, 2007
July 10, 2007
August 14, 2007
September 11, 2007
October 9, 2007
November 13, 2007
December 11, 2007

Contact the State Board of Education Office at 517-373-3900 to confirm time and location

There are many ways to make a difference. Gaining knowledge and acquiring information can be a first step. This can be done by attending conferences, researching using the internet, and participating in online trainings that are available, such as those provided by the Early On Training and Technical Assistance project, Partners in Policymaking/Making Your Case, Children’s Special Health Care Services, and others.

Public Policy & Employment Programs (continued from page 3)

- Supporting policies that expand work place flexibility;
- Modernizing the Javits-Wagner-O’Day (JWOD) Program to expand employment opportunities and ensure that people with significant disabilities remain a priority for participation in the program;
- Assuring that part-time, supported, or periodic employees are included in any proposal that expands or extends fringe benefit coverage; and
- Restoring the funding and requiring the Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy to fulfill its role regarding policy, programs, and research to advance the employment of people with significant disabilities.

At a national level, United Cerebral Palsy is a major force in shaping policy that affects the lives of people with disabilities. The Disability Policy Collaboration with the Arc of the United States and the web-based tool “Get Active” are designed to help you, the citizen, to learn about and advocate for disability-friendly public policy. Visit www.ucp.org and choose the “Public Policy” button to learn more.

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2007 Trainings and Workshops



Over the past five years UCP/Detroit has continued to provide education advocacy and parent workshops although our funding has greatly decreased. We are not at the point where funding is inadequate to continue providing these services at any level. Therefore, in keeping with our re-alignment of our mission and priorities, we are discontinuing current workshop offerings that center on education advocacy and parent training. Resources for training and workshops include:

THE ARC MICHIGAN (www.arcmichigan.org) - The Arc Michigan has a wonderful matrix of training, workshops and information resources called *Learning Opportunities*. View or download the matrix from their website.

CAUSE (www.causeonline.org) – Citizens Alliance to Uphold Special Education, the federally-funded agency for this work, can be reached at 248-424-9610.

MAFI (www.arcmi.org) – Michigan Alliance for Families, the state-funded program for parent leadership and mentoring, is run through The Arc Michigan. Their initial work is focusing on connecting with parents in the county Parent Advisory Committees (PACs) and the Early On Local Inter-agency Coordinating Committees (LICC)s. Contact The Arc Michigan at 800-292-7851.

MPAS (www.mpas.org) – Michigan Protection and Advocacy is the state agency responsible for protecting the rights of people with disabilities; they offer training in the community at your invitation. Contact them at 517-487-1755.

Additional resources to check out:

Detroit Parent Network
www.detroitparentnetwork.org
313-832-0617

Michigan Family to Family Health
Information Education Center
800-359-3722

Local Arc Organizations
Contact Arc Michigan at www.arcmi.org or
800-292-7851”

Mark your calendar!

What: Life without
Limits through
Assistive Technology
2nd Annual Confer-
ence and Expo

When: October 8

Where: The Marriot at
Centerpoint in
Pontiac, Michigan

More Information is
available on our
website
www.ucpdetroit.org.