

Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program

Online News

May 16, 2012

ADAP Happenings

The Alabama Council of Community Mental Health Boards honored ADAP Associate Director James Tucker with its President's Award in recognition of his dedicated service to furthering the cause of community mental health in Alabama. The award was given in connection with the Council's 38th statewide conference which was recently held in Birmingham.

Another honoree at the Conference was the Council's own Executive Director, Dr. Jim Dill, who was lauded for his 30 years of work with the Council. ADAP Executive Director Ellen Gillespie joined almost two dozen speakers who shared stories about Jim and his dedication to his work. The celebration concluded with a "This is Your Life" audiovisual presentation.

Collaborating with our sister agency in Mississippi, Ellen Gillespie recently assisted Disability Rights Mississippi with staff training and working with a growing disability coalition in the state. Delshonda Thomas and James Tucker will be speaking at the Mississippi Disability Mega-Conference in Jackson, Mississippi in June. Mississippi is undergoing major changes after the Department of Justice issued a critical findings letter about services for Mississippians with disabilities in December 2011.

Finally, ADAP will play an active role at the upcoming June conference of the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN):

- Greg Carlson, Chair of ADAP's Mental Illness Advisory Council, will attend sessions that focus on building the capacity of P&A advisory councils.
- Staff Attorney Kirk Walter has been invited to participate in NDRN's Help America Vote Act Advisory Committee as it develops a Voting Action Planner and Guide.
- James Tucker, ADAP Associate Director, will participate in three panels. One of the sessions will explore how P&A's can use litigation and other advocacy tools to ensure the provision of mental health services in schools to students.
- Lonnie Williams, ADAP Staff Attorney, will present on enforcing accessibility in public accommodations, housing, and educational institutions.
- Senior Case Advocate Delshonda Thomas will be a panel member in a session focusing on community monitoring of facilities and programming for persons with disabilities.
- ADAP Executive Director Ellen Gillespie will participate in a panel discussion entitled, "Convincing the Skeptics: Advocacy in Conservative Environments."

Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)

Do you have barriers that impede your ability to work? If so, please contact ADAP. Under the Protection and Advocacy Program for Beneficiaries of Social Security, ADAP provides advocacy or other related services that beneficiaries with disabilities may need to secure, regain or maintain gainful employment. It is also ADAP's goal to assist beneficiaries with disabilities in obtaining information and advice about receiving vocational rehabilitation and employment services. More information regarding the services ADAP provides under the PABSS program can be found at

www.socialsecurity.gov/work/PandA.html

Upcoming Trainings

Medicaid Waiver Training - ADAP will hold a workshop on Alabama's Medicaid waivers on June 8, 2012 from 1- 3:30 pm. at UCP in Birmingham. The training is free but you must pre-register. On a first come basis, limited funds are available to assist with travel expenses for family members or consumers who want to attend. To register, [click here](#) or contact Anita Davidson at 205-348-5107 or email akdavidson@adap.ua.edu. This training is underwritten by a grant from the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities.

Work Supports for Older Youth - The Social Security Administration (SSA) is hosting a webinar on Wednesday, May 23 for young adults who are preparing to enter the workforce. The webinar will review the Ticket to Work and Work Incentive basics and offer information on special supports for young adults. SSA experts will explain the benefits of the student earned income exclusion and dispel myths about working while receiving disability benefits. The 90-minute webinar will start at 2 PM Central. You must register ahead of time. Register by visiting <https://www.chooseworkttw.net/wise/jsp/wise.jsp> or by calling 1-866-968-7842 (V) or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY/TDD).

Does Your Group Need a Training? If so, ADAP staff can provide a training for any size group on a variety of disability issues. One of ADAP's mandates is to provide training to persons interested in disability issues. During our priority setting process, persons completing our on-line survey indicated they need to receive information and be trained on disability issues. Based on these responses, ADAP added training objectives to our latest goals/priorities.

In the past, ADAP has trained persons on the rights of persons with disabilities in some of the following areas: special education, Americans with Disabilities Act, guardianships, Medicaid waivers, and voting. If you are interested in ADAP presenting to your group, please call 1-800-826-1675. Press "0" and inform the receptionist that you would like to request an ADAP staff member present a training to your group. Link: <http://www.adap.net>

News

Seclusion or Restraint Practices

Members of Congress and media representatives have asked for examples of school districts or individual schools that do not use seclusion or restraint practices in addressing student behavior challenges. We ask for your help in identifying districts that might serve as a good example or model for others. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions.

1. Are you a parent or student/self-advocate?
2. Does your local school district use restraint? If so, please describe.
3. Does your local school district use seclusion? If so, please describe.
4. Is data collected on restraint and seclusion use in your school district? Is it reported to parents? To the public?
5. Does your school district have a written policy either barring the use of seclusion and restraint or limiting their use to specific circumstances? If so, could you attach it or give us a link to where it is posted?
6. Could you please share with us your school district's website and the name of your local school district superintendent?

Thank you for helping us assemble this key information so that we are better prepared to educate members of Congress and the media. Please send responses to: Barbara R. Trader BTrader@tash.org, Executive Director, TASH: Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusion for People with Disabilities Since 1975

Feds: Sheltered Workshops May Violate Disabilities Act

The Obama administration is coming out in support of a group of adults with developmental disabilities who say they're being unlawfully relegated to sheltered workshops. To read more, [click here](#).

People with Disabilities Should Make Emergency Plans

First responders are true heroes in times of disaster going above and beyond their job descriptions. We have seen them taxed to their limits time and time again – 911, Katrina and on April 27, 2011. People with disabilities should make their own emergency plans with family, friends, caregivers, and co-workers. To read more, [click here](#).

ADA Transportation Survey—We Want Your Views

DREDF is unveiling a short web survey, Public Transit Choices By People With Disabilities, as part of our transportation research on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We hope many people in the disability community across the country will participate in the survey, which can also be found at:

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/882523/TransitChoices>

Please take the survey, and disseminate this notice so others can take the survey. Your responses will help us understand what factors are most important to riders with disabilities when deciding which transit mode to use.

The confidential results will be part of a national study called Transit Cooperative Research Project B-40: Strategy Guide to Enable and Promote the Use of Fixed-Route Transit by People with Disabilities. The goal is to develop strategies to improve bus and train systems for people with disabilities. DREDF's research partners are TranSystems Corporation, The Collaborative, and KFH Group. Please take the survey, and encourage others to do so! If you have questions, you can contact [DREDF](#).

U.S. Department of Transportation Announcing Launch of Month-Long National Dialogue to Improve Transportation for Veterans, Military Families

WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today announced the launch of a groundbreaking national online dialogue to highlight the local transportation needs, challenges and opportunities facing the nation's veterans, wounded warriors, and military service members and their families.

The web-based dialogue invites military families, veterans and organizations that support them to engage in a lively discussion on overcoming barriers, forming strategic partnerships, and improving communications to ultimately improve access to transportation. On-line registration begins today at <http://veteransdialogue.ideascale.com>. To read more, [click here](#).

Closing Thoughts

“In today's economy, poor gotta have heart” - Rheta Grimsley Johnson, the Georgia-born and Alabama-bred columnist for King Features, recently shared some thoughts on what it takes to fight on behalf of the poor. Click [here](#) to read more.

The University of Alabama
[Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program](#)
Box 870395 - Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0395
web site: <http://www.adap.net>
e-mail: adap@adap.ua.edu

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