

Today's Quotes: *"Remember that you are needed. There is at least one important work to be done that will not be done unless you do it."* Charles L. Allen

It's Our Anniversary! Olmstead Implementation and Planning Advisory Council commemorates first formal 2007 Meeting

DDD is pleased to recognize the anniversary of the Olmstead Implementation and Planning Advisory Council's (OIPAC) first meeting, which was held on June 29, 2007. The division created OIPAC to help ensure that New Jersey meets the goals contained in the *Path to Progress*, the state's eight-year action plan for transitioning more people into the community while reducing reliance on large institutions. The plan was developed in response to a legislative mandate, also known as "Olmstead."

OIPAC served an important role in the plan's first year of implementation, by helping DDD to meet and also exceed an early goal. In FY 2007, the division's goal was to move 100 people from a developmental center into the community. Instead, DDD was able to move 121 individuals.



The role of OIPAC is to provide division leadership with the ongoing review and feedback, based on DDD-generated reports, on both the progress and difficulties that arise during implementation. With this information and feedback,

DDD is able to collaborate with stakeholders to revise, modify or develop new action steps as needed. OIPAC's members include service recipients and their families, service providers, division leadership and members of the community; their collective experience, perspective, and knowledge is critical to establishing effective methods for ensuring positive outcomes for people transitioning from developmental centers to the community.

OIPAC consists of a 29-member steering committee that meets four times a year and five work-groups, or subcommittees, that meet as often as

(continued on page 2)

The week of September 8th -12th marked National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week, as designated by the US Senate, as a time to officially recognize the dedication and vital role of direct support professionals in enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities. For more information, see the [press release](#) from the NJ Direct Support Professional Workforce Development Coalition.

Olmstead Anniversary (continued from page 1)

necessary. The workgroup members do not have to be part of the steering committee and their numbers may vary.

The five workgroups are:

- Clinical Decision Making Processes,
- Quality Improvement,
- Self-Advocacy and Family Partnership,
- Service Delivery, and
- System Redesign.

These workgroups are allowed to let their member's interests and expertise guide them in choosing which topics they want to work on and/or address. Each workgroup provides an ongoing summary of its work, which is then posted on DDD's Olmstead website. You can follow the work of the OIPAC via the website at <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/pac.htm>. If you are interested in participating on one of the workgroups, please contact Joan Lewinski at 609-631-2298.

Foster Grandparents Serve by Helping Children Succeed

While growing up, Mary Jane Northey learned the importance of volunteers through some personal experiences in her own family. So as an adult, volunteering has become an important part of her life. In addition, she raised her two daughters to be volunteers, and her husband is a frequent volunteer as well.

That may be why Northey feels well suited to her job as Coordinator of New Jersey's Foster Grandparent Program in Mercer County. The federal grant-funded program, which was started in the 1960s and is administered by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service, pairs adults age 60 and over with children who have special needs.

Northey is one of seven coordinators in the program, which statewide has more than 300 volunteers serving approximately 600 individuals, most of them children. The program's goal is to allow older adults to contribute to their community by using their unique talents, experience and expertise to help children in need.



Although the seniors do volunteer, those with annual incomes under \$17,550 are paid a small stipend, reimbursed for travel if they drive or given a bus pass if they don't. They also can earn sick time and vacation time.

Northey, a social worker, has worked for the Department of Human Services, both at DDD and the Office of Education (now located at the Department of Children and Families) for 27 years. She is one of seven program coordi-

nators who work across the state to help make the program successful.

In Mercer County, Northey works with about 25 volunteers who serve two children each. She recruits the foster grandparents, arranges places for them to work, and monitors each placement to help make sure it succeeds.

"I love my job," Northey said. "I am able to spend time both in the community and back in the office,

(continued on page 3)

Foster Grandparents (continued from page 2)

where I do my paperwork. I'm in contact with agencies that provide services for children, as well as the Mercer County Office on Aging and the many different senior citizen groups in the county. But the foster grandparents are at the heart of it. To me, they are very special people who truly care about the children coming up in the world today."

Northey first encountered the Foster Grandparent Program soon after she went to work as a substitute teacher at the Burlington County Day Training Center in Mt. Holly in 1978. At the time, the day training centers were administered by DDD and served children who were developmentally delayed and had intense medical needs.

"We had three foster grandparents who helped out with the students," said Northey. "They would push the children on the swings in the play ground, rock them in a rocking chair when they were upset, help with circle time and do various activities such as art projects. They were an extra set of eyes and hands in the classroom, and they were a great asset to the program."

The foster grandparents set their own schedule in conjunction with the needs of the agency. Some work only a few hours a week, while others work almost full-time.

"I only ask them to be consistent with their days and hours," said Northey.

Before the volunteers start work, Northey reviews the program's rules and regulations with them and provides training in federal privacy laws. She also reviews the mission of the agency (with which they will work). The agencies sometimes provide additional in-service trainings on topics such as recognizing child abuse and neglect or CPR. Each agency assigns the foster grandparents, who take direction from the classroom teacher, to work with two children who need a little extra help or guidance. Once in the classroom, however, the seniors usually find that they become everyone's grandparent, helping out with all the students.

Northey continually scouts out new agencies that serve children and can make use of the program's volunteers. She works hard to make sure a placement is a good fit, and tries also to assist foster grandparents who encounter

problems in their personal life during the period in which they are also in the program.

"Being in the community, you get to know the needs of the foster grandparents and also the needs of the agencies they work with," said Northey. "In today's world, everyone's budgets are being cut and everyone is looking for help. This program is good for the grandparents, it is good for the agencies and it is good for the children who are being served."

For more information on this program, please see our brochure located on the web:

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/publications/GPPProgram%20Brochure.pdf>.



DDD Funds Trainings for Families of Children with Developmental Disabilities

Each year, most of the 1,300 to 1,500 individuals who become eligible for services funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities are children. Today, in fact, almost 45 percent of the approximately 40,000 people currently eligible for services are under age 22.

As more young people come into the system, there is an ongoing need for information that can help them and their families. In response, DDD has contracted with the Family Support Center of New Jersey to develop and present a series of trainings designed to provide accurate, current and consistent information across the state to families of children at different stages of development. The trainings also teach families appropriate advocacy strategies and encourage them to develop a person-centered approach to planning for their children. A brief description of each of the trainings is below:

Life Line for the Journey is an interactive training session for families of children from infancy through age 14. At this stage, young families typically are concerned about their children's future and have little knowledge of the systems that exist to serve them. This training focuses on vision building and includes discussions about the different systems and services families may encounter. The sessions include time for networking so that families have an opportunity to connect with other families facing similar concerns.

Pathways to Adult Life is dedicated to the needs of children between the ages of 14 and 19. It is intended to assist individuals and their families in making informed choices as they transition from

school to adult life. This training session is produced through collaboration among DDD and our department's Division of Disability Services, the Department of Education, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities. Representatives from each agency provide an overview of their agency's responsibilities and the services they provide for transitioning students. Families have an opportunity to meet their local contact representatives and to discuss individual concerns.

Life after 21 is a two-part training series designed to address the specific concerns of students, ages 20 and 21, with developmental disabilities and their families as they approach the end of their education entitlement. This training provides detailed information on traditional day programs and the option of self-directing day services, DDS programs and services, and DVRS services. Participants also receive information on NJ WINS, which helps SSI/SSDI beneficiaries make informed decisions about employment. Through a segment called "The Provider Marketplace," families also have an opportunity to learn about agencies that provide supports and services in their neighborhoods.

Each fall and spring, trainings are offered throughout the state. DDD mails invitations to individuals who are currently registered with the division. Families also can find a schedule and register online at www.FSCNJ.org or register by calling 1-800-FSCNJ.org. You also may find information on these sessions by visiting the DDD website at <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/index.html>.

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It's not too late! You have until **October 15, 2008** to file.**

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