

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!**

## **MSCDD Announces FY2024 New and Continuation Grants Funded**

The Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities approved nine one-year new 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 to succeed in career opportunities beyond high school.

**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. Lessons are taught using the book by Ty Allen Jackson: *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 Corinth School District supports 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: survival (listening and following directions), interpersonal, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. The DD/Behavioral Specialist provides continuous instructional coaching and support to teachers. Parents and caregivers are provided training and support sessions.

**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. This project will implement the first year of a full postsecondary 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 children and adolescents with DD and co-morbid severe behavior (e.g., aggression, 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 to partnership schools, and full-day trainings will be provided to relevant 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 family caregivers of children with DD. Topics include daily advocacy, financial planning, improving interactions with teachers, and more.



## MSCDD CONTINUED

**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 empowering 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 community supports. Staff will continue to address the well-being of siblings through Sibshops.

**Special Education Advocacy Family Network** at The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies increases availability and accessibility of community-based peer support 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 an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP), while also educating families on federal laws which protect the rights of their children and families.

**U-THRIVE** at the Mississippi State University Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology provides adults with DD 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

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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. RISE To the TOP! is a four-year inclusive college 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, Sylvester Crosby and Robbie Sullivan, and their Deep South Hurricanes wheelchair softball teammates participated in the 2023 Wheelchair Softball World Series. This international wheelchair softball tournament was held August 3-5 in Crestwood, Illinois. The Deep South Hurricanes proudly represented Mississippi and finished the tournament tied for 5th place out of 20 teams, including teams from Japan and Ghana.

# DISABILITY RIGHTS MISSISSIPPI

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](http://www.drms.ms) under "Higher Education Resources." If you would like a printed copy of the booklet, email [jwalton@drms.ms](mailto:jwalton@drms.ms).

DRMS, along with IDS and MSCDD, also hosted trainings for higher education professions in Jackson, Starkville 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](http://www.drms.ms/publicinput-and-goals) to complete our survey and tell us what issues matter to you most!

## DD Network News Word Search

E B Z M T M J L O P  
P K E M P O W E R B  
M X Q Z T U F V 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 P  
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 Q S W Q

Advocate  
Empower

Inspire  
Choice

Support

Able

Stay tuned for the Word Search key in our next issue!

If you have information you would like to have included in the next issue, please contact Jane Walton at [jwalton@drms.ms](mailto:jwalton@drms.ms).

