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Transcript of Conference Call Presentation

Youth Development and Leadership Programs: Including Youth with Disabilities

presented by:

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Ms. Washenberger: My name is Julia Washenberger, and I am with the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) at the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration. We would like to welcome the participants.

Our topic today is "Youth Development and Leadership Programs: Including Youth with Disabilities." We have Rose Hayden-Smith with 4-H Youth Development. She is a youth development advisor with the University of California Cooperative Extension.

The format is, we will have a brief presentation with a question and answer session and discussion period at the end. I would like to remind individuals to reduce background noise and individuals on speaker phones to press their mute buttons when listening. Just to remind individuals to just announce their name and the state that they are calling from when asking questions or speaking.

The focus of the call today will be increasing opportunities for youth with disabilities to participate in youth development and leadership activities. I would like to now turn it over to Rose. Thank you for being with us.

Ms. Hayden-Smith: Hi. Again, my name is Rose Hayden-Smith, and I am with the University of California Cooperative Extension. I am a county-based academic staff member working in the area of youth development.

Julia was very kind to provide us with a list of questions. The first question is basically a **history of the organization and how we fulfill our mission**. I want to give you some information because I know probably all of you have heard of 4-H and have a perception of what 4-H is.

4-H originated as part of the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service. It was actually created by an act of Congress in 1914 called the Smith-Lever Act. It was a farm subsidy act. The original mission of cooperative extension was to get research information from universities out to farm communities, particularly relating to agriculture, production, animal stewardship, home economics focusing on food preservation, sewing, and home management. The whole concept of the youth development piece was, adults were somewhat reluctant and reticent about having people from universities come out and show them things, but if these county agents, as they were called, could come out and work with youth, they would be training and developing that relationship with the next generation.

4-H is unique among youth development organizations in that it is largely publicly funded. It is funded by the federal government through the U.S. Department of Agriculture with an agency that we report up to. We also are funded by state government because 4-H is affiliated with a land grant university in every state in the union. We also receive county funding because we have county offices. We also do get private funds, but we are by and large publicly funded, and that drives us, I think, very strongly to be inclusive, because as a public institution we have that charge and that ethic of being inclusive.

Originally, 4-H was very agriculture-based, and we still do that. We also use a variety of delivery methods, and every state you go to it's going to be different. In California we have a very strong and extensive community club program that we utilize volunteer extenders. We also do school-based programming, and we have extensive after-school

programs, many of which are funded not only by private corporations but also through federal funds through TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families), say, things like that. So, again, we have a strong agriculture base but we have had a very strong urban presence since the 1970's.

We have a national linkage, which is provided by the National 4-H Center, which is a non-profit organization that's very loosely affiliated with us. So, there is within this vast cooperative extension service in 4-H not very good overall communication among the 50 states about what's going on with disabilities. There is a wide range of practices in terms of including youth with disabilities.

I can talk about what's going on with the University of California. We stress learn-by-doing educational programs. We want to provide youth with the knowledge and the skills that they need to become responsible, self-directed, and productive people. We act as a bridge for the knowledge that comes from research at universities and the pragmatic world in which it's supplied. So, we work hand in hand with people in our communities to solve problems and improve life.

Again, there is a strong commitment in 4-H on a national level to include youth in leadership and program delivery in meaningful ways. We have youth boards. There is always a youth presence on national and state committees. We use youth in program planning and delivery for national events, for our state leadership conferences at the UC campuses, in county training, and the whole bit because we really rely on our team to help us plan and deliver the program.

Getting specifically into the question, **how are youth with disabilities included in leadership and development activities?** Well, again, as a publicly-funded institution we have a very high awareness of diversity and the importance of inclusion. In California some of the specific things that we have done is we, as a state, developed, probably about eight years ago, a program called Walk a Mile in My Shoes. It was basically a program designed to be delivered by youth to youth about diversity and disabilities. We had a number of disabilities represented. We had kids with hidden learning disabilities. We had kids who were visually impaired. We had one youth who had suffered severe burns.

These kids actually presented this curriculum in front of large groups of kids at state leadership conferences and in front of small groups of kids at the county level. The idea was walk a mile in my shoes: this is what I experience as someone who is differently-abled or who is a member of an ethnic minority or a different cultural group. That was a very, very good start, and I think it set an excellent tone for us in the state.

We also have a very good diversity awareness training guide and video. One of the things that UC has done that's very hip is, we have enrollment procedures and we can serve kids between this age and that age. But what we did is we put a clause in, and what we say in our clause is we will generally serve kids age 5-19, but we will serve anyone as long as it is appropriate for them. But what that's enabled us to do is to include developmentally disabled adults in a very significant way, and so we have a lot of developmentally disabled adults enrolled in our community clubs along with kids age 5-19 because the program is educationally appropriate for them.

In Orange County we have a terrific youth advisor, Michael Mann, who has a large enrollment of several dozen developmentally disabled adults in the community clubs. They hold office. They hold positions on the youth boards with the youth, and they participate in the full spectrum of program activities. I think one of the best things we have done is to have that clause and to use it as a tool to sort of increase diversity that way.

I am actually getting ready this next week to start a sabbatical leave, and I will be spending 13 months looking at what we can do to develop strategies for inclusion of the deaf community and making our programs within UC more open to deaf youth and to developing specific strategies and collaborations that we can do to bring deaf youth into leadership roles. Right now I am working with our local deaf council and a group of their teens to develop a brochure that would be given to every UC cooperative extension staff member and every one of our 4-H volunteers in the state to give them sort of a clue about what deafness is and what the deaf community is.

On a national level and again, working somewhat with California, our National 4-H Council has just recently received a Christopher Reeve

Foundation grant, and we are going to be developing and implementing training to increase the capacity of our volunteers and our youth to partner with youth with disabilities. We have disseminated this grant regionally so we have got the four regions within the U.S., and the idea is that each region is taking a chunk of this national money and we are forming a sort of very loose but very firm national core team of these people in the four regions.

We are actually working with youth with disabilities and other adults who are volunteers with other agencies to develop workshops and materials to highlight the current research, resources, and best practices of including youth with disabilities. Then these regional pieces will be represented throughout the U.S. at volunteer training events and through state and county trainings. We chose a regional approach to encourage creativity, foster local partnerships, and be cost-effective.

I have actually gotten the western region piece, and I am working with our local deaf council team, and we are going to be developing a video about working with the deaf community and executing a community-based program to increase awareness about the deaf community. We also have received a grant from the University of California Affirmative Action Office. This year and continuing through part of my sabbatical, I have been working at a county's deaf magnet school to learn more about working with deaf youth and how communication takes place and observing so that we can develop and articulate strategies to enable us to be more inclusive.

Something that we have done also with UC at the state level is we have developed a workshop called Creating Welcoming Communities, and it's part of our statewide staff and volunteer training. The idea is that we focus on what we have to do to make ourselves welcoming to people of different ethnic backgrounds and also to people with different abilities.

The third question is **so what? Why is this important and why do we view this as being important?** Well, as University of California staff, we are charged with it, and it's important, we feel, because we work with vast numbers of youth, and the more exposure they have to differences and the more exposure they have to the ethic of inclusion in what is a multi-ethnic, differently-abled country the better.

California is like the rest of the U.S. except

it's actually more of everything. Our population of youth in California has increased 10% since the last census. So, 10% overall, and this is a vast state. In southern California it's increased 20%, and a lot of that has been immigrant population. We are very diverse here, and we feel that it's very important to be part of our ethic of who we are.

In terms of why I personally think it's important and why I work with the deaf community is that one in ten Americans has a hearing loss. So there are a lot of people with some sort of hearing impairment or hearing loss out there and the whole thing with American Sign Language. If there is a civil rights movement that's waiting to happen in this country, it's, in my opinion, in the deaf community.

I wanted to give you just one example of success, and it's anecdotal. We really believe that if you have the ethic of inclusion at the institution and you work with volunteers and include youth with disabilities or differing abilities that you want to include, that it will work and it will roll down because people want to be inclusive, I think, on a basic level. I think most people are not resistant to inclusion. It's just sometimes uncomfortable—especially, I have noticed, working a lot with the deaf community.

Sometimes I get very uncomfortable because I am not that good with sign language, and I am not a good communicator, and it's a difficult situation for me. But what was really interesting is that we have several deaf people in our community club programs, and they are not linked formally. They might run into each other at the different county events, but we don't have—we would never have a deaf unit because you get absorbed into your community clubs and that's why they are so diverse and wonderful and they are a microcosm of the community.

But what was really wonderful is we have a young boy who is just coming into 4-H in a very small rural community that has four 4-H clubs because all the kids want to be in 4-H. It's a rural community as opposed to some of the urban communities we work with. All the kids in the community know him, and there was a great deal of interest that since Jeffery was going to be coming into 4-H and his mom is on the 4-H staff and he comes to all the 4-H events, that people wanted to have a better opportunity to communicate with him.

So, what happened is there arose an American

Sign Language project that two adult volunteers led and kids from a number of the clubs in this rural community enrolled because they wanted to be able to communicate with Jeffery and some of the other kids in the program who are deaf. That's very anecdotal, but I think again, if you give people the means and you say, listen, okay, you want to learn this, we can provide an ASL project for you, and you will learn some basic signs so that you can better communicate with people, people will do it. It's a good ethic in terms of the role that youth with disabilities would play in leadership in our organization, any at all.

That's it for me. I talk fast.

Ms. Washenberger: Thank you very much, Rose. Now we're going to move on to Lori Powers, the Co-Director of the Center on Self Determination; and Marissa Johnson, Executive Committee Member of the National Youth Leadership Network. Thanks for joining us, Lori and Marissa.

Ms. Powers: Thank you for inviting us. Actually, I am going to not talk too much about the NYLN and instead speak to the questions from a number of perspectives. Our center and I personally have been involved in youth leadership activities primarily focused on youth with disabilities or health issues for about the last ten years. We started a youth leadership program statewide in New Hampshire when I was there. We have a youth leadership program in Oregon specifically in the Portland metro area focused on teens with disabilities who are from diverse cultures.

Then most recently our center has been honored to have the opportunity to sponsor the National Youth Leadership Network, which is a network of youth leaders from across the nation who are involved at the national level in providing education and providing support to one another and most importantly in developing policy related to youth with disabilities. I am going to leave the rest of talking about the NYLN to you, Marissa.

With regard to the questions that we are addressing here, I think what I really want to do is emphasize the importance of involving youth with disabilities in leadership opportunities. Those might be existing opportunities that exist through in-school leadership programs or they might be through workforce development boards or they might be county or state youth commissions. Certainly I am hoping

many of the folks on the call are familiar with the state youth leadership forums that have developed.

There are many cultural organizations in communities that sponsor activities for youth involved in their organization's leadership. We have certainly heard of some great activities through 4-H as an example of a community organization. It's providing many different leadership opportunities to youth. There really are a vast array of leadership options for youth with disabilities, and I think that we really have two—well, three major responsibilities:

1. One is to let youth know about those opportunities because typically youth with disabilities don't walk in the same circles as other youth or adults who might know about them, unfortunately.
2. Another thing we can do is work with organizations to provide them with information that they might need to make their entry requirements accessible to youth with disabilities. I know that traditionally, for instance, many school-based leadership programs tend to focus on youth who are popular, who get the highest grades, who are already involved in community service activities. I think that it's really important to get to the coaches and the people who are involved in supporting those groups and give them some information about inclusion and ways that youth with disabilities might be able to contribute without necessarily having to come in with straight A's or with the typical resume that a young leader might bring.
3. The third way to promote access is to understand that often there really do need to be accommodations and supports, particularly with an inclusive group, to support the active participation of youth with disabilities, particularly those who might have learning or cognitive or communication or certainly physical accommodation challenges. It's just really important to understand that those accommodations need to be identified and that youth need to certainly be involved in identifying what they need and then supported for that.

I have been talking a lot about access to existing groups, but I think that another thing that we have certainly learned about is the opportunity to create opportunities for leadership. We have had a couple of instances where we have worked with

local Centers for Independent Living, for instance, where they have, out of some of the other things that they were doing with regard to transition and self-determination, decided that they wanted to be involved in sponsoring youth leadership groups. We provided them with the technical assistance to be able to do that.

Our center is currently finalizing a guide for starting up a grassroots youth leadership group, which will be available in the fall. This whole question of whether to create or whether to access something that's already in existence begs the discussion of what's better or what are the relative advantages of youth with disabilities participating in existing groups that might not be focused on disability or youth with disabilities forming their own groups. I have to say that I think both of those options can really work well, and we have been involved in supporting both of those options.

I am 100% on the inclusion bandwagon, and I think that we need to encourage and promote youth having access to those leadership opportunities. But I also don't want to downplay the real benefits that there can be for youth with disabilities being able to engage in some leadership activities whether it be peer support or community education or community service and having connections with other youth with disabilities. I think that it can really build self-esteem and a sense of real respect for one's expertise, and I think both of those options are really important and they give different opportunities to youth.

With regard to supporting youth in leadership, I just think it's really important that we understand that leadership development of youth, at least as I am conceiving of it, is youth directed. That means that youth are up front, that youth make the key decisions, that youth make the policies, that youth really call the shots in terms of what their priorities are. Our job is then to provide mentorship, to provide some structure so that youth can identify what decisions need to be made and what their options might be as they are deciding on their leadership priorities, to facilitate connections between these leaders and other leadership groups or other organizations that they might want to be connected with and to do the legwork to ensure that youth can be successful.

I think that as usual it's not very helpful if we put youth with disabilities in a leadership role and

yet don't provide the support that's necessary to really allow them to be successful. This whole support issue is a careful balance because mentorship and support are necessary, but the bottom line is we really have to respect youth as decision makers and honor what it is that youth leaders believe are the most important priorities for them to be working on.

So, that's a general spiel in terms of our involvement with youth leadership and strategies and support perspectives we have found to be successful. I think I will turn it over to Marissa to talk specifically about the National Youth Leadership Network.

Ms. Johnson: The National Youth Leadership Network developed out of the National Leadership Conference for Youth with Disabilities, which started out very much run and directed by adults and not really very youth directed at all, but after a couple of years the youth said, if this is going to be for us, we would really like to be in charge of it and plan it and implement it and really just be involved with doing the whole thing. So slowly that process has taken place and has changed over to be much more youth directed.

We had started out the first year, the youth just helped with the planning, and over the last couple of years it has really become completely youth directed. Just this year we developed the National Youth Leadership Network which, as we develop, will become a list of youth around the country who are qualified to serve on boards and committees at the local, state, and national levels to try to provide leadership towards the things that affect us.

At this point in the history of the conference and the network, youth with disabilities are doing pretty much the whole thing. We plan it, we select the executive council, which is made up completely of youth members, and we plan the retreats. We select all the participants and leadership council members. The network is made up of 8 executive council members who do the majority of the planning, and then we will have an additional 12 members who serve as the youth leadership council, which helps with the planning and the implementation of the conference which is an annual event that brings in approximately 10 other youth leaders from around the country to give them some specific leadership training and experience and a chance to meet with national leaders in the disability community.

We feel that including youth and having youth do everything is just really important for youth—to be seen as the leaders in the country and as able to have a voice and to implement things that they want to see happen rather than sitting back and watching people implement rules and policies that affect us but we don't have any say over. So, we just have really taken over the leadership of that.

It definitely has had some challenges. One of the challenges is definitely getting people to listen to us and getting people to let youth really take over that role, and at several levels it's been a fight to get the staff members and the adults to really step back and let the youth make those decisions. We found in our planning that it's often been necessary for us to have conferences alone without our staff, without the adults that are helping with that but to be able to get together and then let them know what we want and work with them to figure out how best we can accomplish that. When that has happened it's been really successful—we have been able to have a voice and work within the boundaries that we have set with them. That's, I think, pretty much the outline.

Ms. Washenberger: Okay. Well, thank you very much, Marissa, Lori, and Rose. We really appreciate having you. Now I will open it up for questions. We have quite a lot of time so hopefully you folks have some questions. I would just like to remind you to announce your name and the state that you are calling from and the organization that you are representing. Go ahead with any questions from the audience.

Ms. Sullid: Marissa, this is Sharon Sullid in Cincinnati with the Transition Roundtable. You spoke about the participants in the National Youth Leadership Network. How does one become qualified?

Ms. Johnson: We have just completed the application process for the Youth Leadership Council. For the Council, the members are required to have participated in a past conference and then to have shown some leadership experience at their local level, whether it's working with their colleges or their city or state and just have shown some leadership experience and ability there. As far as being qualified to attend the conference, again, we are looking for people with some leadership experience who have really shown that they are interested in

affecting policy that affects them and who seem to have some leadership skills that we can work with.

Ms. Sullid: After one participates, are there some other activities that they graduate on to?

Ms. Johnson: Yeah, after you go through the conference, then you are eligible to apply to become a member of the Youth Leadership Council. As time goes on here, the executive council will slowly resign and Youth Leadership Council members will take over for us.

Ms. Sullid: Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Powers: I might add that I think the executive committee is considering some really exciting additions to the network: official opportunities for the leaders who are involved to be involved in putting out newsletters, as you said, being involved in participating in boards and commissions and doing public speaking around the country, providing mentorship to other youth in their communities, really broadening out the activities that youth leaders might be involved in through the network.

Ms. Washenberger: I have a question; actually it's a two-part question. My first question would be how are you involving youth with disabilities, where are you accessing youth, and after accessing those youth, how are you making those connections with them? Is it mainly teachers that are connecting the youth or how are you going about doing that? And my second question is, if you can just briefly describe a youth activity; just walk us through for any individual, any youth with a disability that you can sort of describe for us.

Ms. Hayden-Smith: Okay. Well, in terms of involving youth with disabilities, again, in California there is a wide range of practice because at the community club level in Orange County what we would do to access these developmentally disabled adults that we invite into the youth program is we would work with, say, the Association of Retarded Citizens or Special Olympics organizations. We would go to the community-based organization or social service agency that works with them and say this is the invitation. Here is information about our organization. Let's open it up. So, we would do that and that's how we would access them.

A lot of it also goes out through the grass-roots in the community. You may have a younger 4-H member who has an older sibling that's de-

velopmentally disabled and then the family learns through our recruitment materials that this is an opportunity that would be available to the older developmentally disabled person.

We also do a lot of work with youth with disabilities in terms of I wouldn't say involving them in leadership roles but in delivering programs to them, particularly in the area of therapeutic horseback riding. I think that's important and it's great and what we do again is partner with the agency, but to me that's more where the youth is a recipient instead of actually being part and taking on a leadership role.

We would also access youth through school-teachers. I will give you an example of one of the programs that we are doing now, and it's with younger youth. They are third through fifth grade, and they are enrolled at the public magnet school for the county school system for the deaf. So basically, it's a regular elementary school but there is a deaf magnet for deaf kids—and some of them are mainstreamed at the public school and some are not. We worked with their teacher there to actually take some Texas A&M junior master gardener activities and deliver a program there. But again, it was less of, I think, their taking a leadership role in the program and more being the recipients.

Some of the work that we are starting to do with the deaf council is quite different and that's involving teens in helping us develop programs and develop collateral materials where they are the experts who are helping make the video and helping us actually design the content. That's quite different. I am not sure if I answered the question.

Ms. Washenberger: Yes, you did. Thank you.

Ms. Hayden-Smith: Okay. Sure.

Ms. Mahoney: This is Marie Mahoney at the University of Wyoming. I have about 750 questions. I have a question about the Christopher Reeve Foundation grant, but I think that's lesser in importance so I am going to go directly to the National Youth Leadership Network. Is there a Web site for that, Marissa or anybody?

Ms. Johnson: Yes, the Web site is *www.nyln.org*. It's under construction, but there is a brief introduction of the network. If you want to call, that number is 503-232-9154.

Ms. Powers: Allison Turner is the staff coordinator. Her extension is 113, and she can help

connect you with any of the youth leaders in the network.

Ms. Mahoney: Okay. I am affiliated with our state youth leadership forum, so is your conference different from all of us, and how?

Ms. Powers: Yeah, well, I am certainly not an expert in NYLN; however, I think historically what—first of all, there has been for the last four years a National Youth Leadership Conference. There is not this summer because of the transition in the NYLN and the President's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities to our center. There is not a national conference per se. There will be one next summer, and what there is this year is a retreat of our newly formed National Youth Leadership Council who will provide the leadership for the network and for the conference in the coming year.

Historically, the conference has been attended by a number of folks who have been active on their state youth leadership forums and that really, I believe, has been a major experience base that many youth who have participated in the national conference have brought. But the basic distinction is really one of operating at a state level versus moving up to operate a bit more on the national level—being involved in national boards and committees, and I am beginning to have opportunities to give input and, for instance, to formulate a policy agenda as the Youth Leadership Council did last year. That agenda is distributed to everybody from the White House to Congress to several agencies. So, it's really just a shift from a focus on state issues to a focus on national issues. Marissa, does that—am I on with that?

Ms. Johnson: Yeah, I think that sounds right, and probably the defining difference would be the youth policy agenda and the development of that.

Ms. Mahoney: Okay. Thank you. Then, can you recommend or would anyone have some mentoring program materials that could be sent out to me?

Ms. Johnson: Do you have any real materials, Lori?

Ms. Powers: Well, there are materials out there on mentorship, per se. I know we have found some through another series of projects that we have called Take Charge that are focused on self-determination enhancement, but there are a number of additional sources for mentorship materials as well. You could

call that same number, and Allison could provide you with those materials as well. We are actually just finishing up a final draft, so it will be this fall, but those will be available. But there are others as well.

Ms. Mahoney: Right. I think someone else has asked about just giving an example of a youth-directed activity for a leadership program. I know that there are many facets of the leadership program, but maybe, Marissa, could you just real briefly describe what you would consider a good—something that the youth would like, not something that was necessarily thought up by the adults?

Ms. Johnson: Well, I am not sure what was thought up by adults and what was thought up by youth, but I think that probably the development of the policy agenda is a major step for youth to take. The way we do that is we discuss different questions regarding what we want to see in policy that affects us and then put those together into a series of statements that reflect what we want to see in those policies. Then, as part of the conference, youth are required to set up appointments with their state legislators and go and bring them a copy of the agenda and say, “This is what we feel is important for us,” to get that message out to them. They are responsible for setting that up and getting themselves there, and that’s a large task for them. Is that what you are asking or are you —

Ms. Mahoney: No, that’s fine. I don’t want to hog the rest of the time here, so thank you.

Ms. Stone: Hello, this is Belinda Stone, and I am calling from the Institute on Human Development and Disability at the University of Georgia. I have a question for Rose Hayden-Smith. You talked about some training that you are working on—Creating Welcoming Communities—as focusing on staff of 4-H programs, I am assuming? We are doing some similar work and I am really interested in what you have in that curriculum, whether these are materials that could be shared, if you would talk a little more about that? Thank you.

Ms. Hayden-Smith: Sure. Actually the piece—and it’s about a half-day piece, and it’s part of a new training that we are rolling out for staff and volunteers. The training has been somewhat controversial because we are actually training staff right alongside volunteers. So, some of the staff members are seeing it at the same time as some of the volunteers, and

it’s been very controversial. But that has been the one piece that everyone has been like okay, and it was basically—the lead person on it is one of our young docs named Charles Go up in the Bay Area. It focuses very, very heavily on ethnic and cultural diversity and inclusion because that’s where Doctor Go’s work has mostly been. However, the principles and the activities that they have outlined in there would absolutely apply to youth with disabilities.

The focus is, it’s got to be integrated into everything we do. It’s about inclusion. It’s not about quotas, and it’s broader and richer than simply ethnic diversity—and what we are telling people and what we are trying to make as part of our core selves is that it’s part of everyone’s job description. It has to be integrated into every conversation we have about programs, policy, practice, and incentives like additional curriculum. So, anyway, what I could do is if you send me an E-mail, I could get a copy of that piece for you.

Ms. Stone: That would be wonderful. Why don’t you give me your E-mail address?

Ms. Hayden-Smith: Okay. It’s *rnhaydensmith@ucdavis.edu*. And again, the principles will work for youth with disabilities.

Ms. Stone: Outstanding. Thank you.

Ms. Washenberger: Okay. I just want to mention that those that have been presenters today, if you have materials, I would be more than happy to help in distributing those to the participants on this call today. So, just get that information to me and we would be happy to provide it. We still have time for questions, about ten minutes here. So, if you have questions, just go right ahead.

Ms. Sword: I have a question. This is Carrie Sword with NCSET. I am a technical assistance provider, and I had a question from one of my clients about designing a leadership institute for youth with disabilities. I am wondering if you have any specific suggestions on things that you have seen that have worked, activities of any kind?

Ms. Powers: Are you thinking about a leadership institute that’s focused on development of leadership skills?

Ms. Sword: Yes.

Ms. Powers: Okay. Well, there are certainly a number of leadership development approaches such as the Greenleaf model and Steven Covey’s model.

There are a number of those out there, and I think that that certainly is one thing to explore in terms of development of general leadership skills.

I don't know what population of folks you are thinking about but, for instance, S. E. Peterson in Cincinnati and Tia Nelis, who is at the University of Chicago, have developed an adapted form of the Covey Seven Habits Training specifically aimed at individuals with disabilities. It can be delivered inclusively as well to a variety of folks. That's one example of adaptation of an existing curriculum. But there are some really great general leadership development trainings and curricula that are out there.

Ms. Sword: Thank you.

Ms. Washenberger: This is Julia Washenberger. I have a brief question for Marissa. If you wouldn't mind, to help clarify, what are some of the policy agenda items that stand out the most, that have been most important to you to come around or that you have really seen have made an impact on any of the policy issues that are out there and impacting a variety of youth with disabilities? If I can just briefly help you understand my question, it's just basically structured around what have you seen have been some of the outcomes from the materials that you all have been working on and what has stood out most for you?

Ms. Johnson: Well, if I can cover all the agency names correctly, we have a whole section that includes employment such as recommending that the Social Security Administration create a program specifically for youth in transition, redefining eligibility for SSI, things like that. That was probably one of the biggest impacts that we had.

I think some of the most important ones for us were probably making sure that information gets out to youth about what the policies are that affect them and using technology to do that and also funding things like ADA and IDEA. Probably the most important to me is to look at teacher training because I am also a teacher—just the importance of training teachers on how to work with youth with disabilities and how to inform them about the policies that affect them.

Ms. Washenberger: Thank you.

Mr. Roamer: I have a question. This is John Roamer from the University of Cincinnati. I applaud your efforts to include youth of all abilities,

but I have a question about the adults you talked about with DD. Where is that coming from and what's the status of that?

Ms. Hayden-Smith: Okay. Yeah, well, there are two ways that we are trying to bring adults along. One way is to develop collateral materials and training that would let our adult extenders and adult volunteers know that we place a premium on including youth with disabilities. The second way is to enable adults who are developmentally disabled for whom the program would be educationally appropriate to participate. If we had a visually impaired adult, if they were not developmentally disabled, they won't be able to participate. But for that one area of disability we can accommodate that even if the person is 50 years old.

Mr. Roamer: I guess my question is why are you doing that?

Ms. Hayden-Smith: Well, because what our idea is, is as long as the program is educationally appropriate for them, then they ought to be able to participate in it. So, you may have a developmentally disabled adult who is 50 chronologically, but developmentally they are 7. If the program is appropriate for them educationally and if they can benefit from the program, we want to be able to include them. So, it's an interesting clause, and I am not sure that everyone would view it the way that we view it.

Mr. Roamer: I would really encourage you to look at that again.

Ms. Hayden-Smith: Well, I will pass that on to the state 4-H office.

Mr. Roamer: There are plenty of youth with disabilities to be a part of this, I think.

Ms. Hayden-Smith: Oh, I don't think that—we certainly don't fail to include youth with disabilities because of that. I mean, it's not like taking a place from the table away from a youth with a disability to include a chronological adult with a developmental disability. It's not the case of either/or. I mean, I will certainly pass it on to our state office.

Ms. Washenberger: I would just like to again thank the presenters for their time and commitment to making this teleconference happen. If there are no other questions, I think we will just go ahead and close here. If you have any comments or questions, you can feel free to reach me at 612-624-2008, and I would like to thank you all for participating today.

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