April 15, 2013

ICI Helping Faith Communities Support Employment of People with Disabilities

Faith communities are well known for providing their congregations with spiritual, emotional, and social supports. Less well known are the employment and career assistance that many faith communities also offer to their members, including members with disabilities. A new Institute on Community Integration (ICI) project, Putting Faith to Work, is looking at research-based ways to more fully equip faith communities to assist their members with disabilities in finding and keeping employment.

In 2012, four University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) began collaborating to develop and test a model of employment supports in faith communities for members with disabilities. The centers are the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center at Vanderbilt University, the Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky, and ICI at the University of Minnesota. With a $50,000, 10-month grant from the Kessler Foundation, ICI was chosen from among the consortium partners as the site to pilot test this capacity-building model.

Putting Faith to Work, which began on February 1, will provide customized training, tools, and technical assistance to specific Minnesota faith communities, building their capacity to use best practices in employment and career development with their members with disabilities. It will utilize person-centered employment planning tools within the faith communities to connect participating members with disabilities to quality employment opportunities, and then enhance the communities' ability to provide other appropriate, individualized supports to those individuals. It expands the reach of what faith communities do so well: acknowledge the gifts and needs of their members, maintain strong community connections, and address local community needs. This model supplements, rather than replaces, other service providers or employment agencies, contributing to development of a fuller range of formal and informal employment supports in local communities.

"There have been great advancements in employment services and supports for individuals with disabilities in the last two decades," says project director Derek Nord. "Yet, today the labor force participation and employment rates of people with disabilities continue to lag far behind that of the general population. This is an unacceptable problem with far-reaching consequences for people with and without disabilities. Though there is no single solution, it is clear that we cannot ignore the role of 'community' in solving this problem. Faith communities have many assets. By helping to identify, harness, and build on these assets, we believe their members' employment needs can be met."

A number of Minnesota faith communities have already been recruited for the pilot study, and more are being sought from around the state. FFI on the project or possible participation, contact Derek at nord0364@umn.edu or 612-624-0386, or project staff Joe Timmons (timm0119@umn.edu, 612-624-5659) and Angela Amado (amado003@umn.edu, 651-698-5565).

Staff Update

- **Staff Hires/Departures:** None.
- **Eileen Klemm** and **Angie Pohl** presented a poster session entitled, "Check & Connect: A Comprehensive Student Engagement Intervention," at the School Social Work Association of America's national conference March 21 in San Diego.
- There were numerous ICI presenters at CEHD Research Day at McNamara Alumni Center on March 26. They were: **Eileen Klemm** and **Angie Pohl** ("Check & Connect: A Comprehensive Student Engagement Intervention"); **Brian Abery, Renáta Tichá, Kate Welshons**, and **John Smith** ("Consumer and Staff Characteristics that Facilitate Support for Self-Determination in Small Residential Settings for People with IDD"); **Renee Hepperlen** and **Derek Nord** ("Differential Item Functioning of the National Core Indicators Community Inclusion Scale"); **Derek Nord, Amy Hewitt**, and **Kelly Nye-Lengerman** ("Economic and Programmatic Indicators Explain Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Rates of Persons with Cognitive Disabilities"); **Renáta Tichá, Sherri Larson**, and **Amy Hewitt** ("National Core Indicators (NCI): Research Findings and Policy Implications for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities"); and **Michael Moore, Rebekah Rieke, Sheryl Lazarus**, and **Jennifer Hodgson** ("Online Training to Improve Accommodations Decision Making").

Dates to Remember...

- April 18: ICI Pizza Forum, 12-1, 118 Pattee
- April 22: CEHD Spring Assembly, 2-4, Memorial Hall, McNamara Center
- May 14: ICI Council, 10:30-12, 118 Pattee

From the Front Office

- **Performance Reviews**. Information regarding the annual performance review process for Civil Service staff, Bargaining Unit staff, Undergraduate and Graduate Students, and hourly employees, was sent out in early April. The deadline for completing reviews is May 31. Questions? Contact Beth at nelso106@umn.edu.

- **GRA Summer Appointments**. Information about Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) summer appointments was e-mailed to supervisors on April 8. The deadline for summer information is April 29. Note that Spring Semester GRA appointments end May 26. Questions? Contact Amy at kuro0008@umn.edu.

- **GRAs, Summer, and Classes**. Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) received information via e-mail on April 12 regarding Summer Term and whether they are taking classes. The deadline for submitting this information is April 29. Questions? Contact Amy at kuro0008@umn.edu.

- **Personal Holiday Reminder**. Employees have until June 30, 2013 to use their Personal Holiday. To record your Personal Holiday in Workgroup Calendar, select the leave type "Personal Holiday." Can't remember if you used it already? Visit the Self-Service Web site at http://hrss.umn.edu and see the link and more information under "Personal Holiday" on the right side of the page. Questions? Contact Amy at kuro0008@umn.edu.

- **ICI Staff to be Recognized**. The CEHD Spring Assembly and Recognition Event will be held in the Memorial Room at McNamara Center on April 22, 2-4 p.m. ICI staff being recognized for their years of University Service are: **Libby Hallas-Muchow, Shawn Lawler, Mary McEathron, Lori Sedlezky**, and **Mai Vang** (5 years); **Tri Tran** (10 years); **Connie Burkhart** and **Karen Stout** (15 years); **Jean Ness, John Smith**, and **Dave Welter** (20 years); and **Sherri Larson** (25 years).

Miscellaneous

- **Think College! Webinar**. Think College!, a project in which ICI participates, will host "Family Perspectives," the fifth in a series of six Think College! Webinars on April 17, 1-2:30 p.m. CDT. This Webinar will provide a guide to and through college, through the experiences of several parents who have been there. Outcomes and pitfalls for students, the changing role of families, and ways to navigate the process will be shared. FFI, visit http://tinyurl.com/c7vc55v.

- **NCWD/Youth Releases Policy Brief**. The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) has released a policy brief, *Using Individualized Learning Plans to Produce College and Career Ready High School Graduates,* which summarizes findings and recommendations from a multi-year individualized learning plans research and demonstration project. FFI, visit http://www.ncwd-youth.info/ilp/produce-college-and-career-ready-high-school-graduates.

- **Voices 4 Hope Web Site**. Voices4Hope is a Web site created by a group of young adults with mental health challenges who work in the Transitions Research & Training Center (Transitions RTC) at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester. The goal of this site is to connect young adults with mental health challenges across the country so they can talk to each other about things that are important to living happy and independent lives. FFI, visit http://www.voices4hope.net/.

- **Birthdays. John Smith** (4/19), **Tim Moore** (4/20), **Chris Opsal** (4/21), **Pat Salmi** (5/5), **Brett Nelson** (5/5), **Michael Moore** (5/6), and **Amanda Ryan** (5/15). Did we miss your birthday? Let us know! Call 4-2380 or e-mail kuro0008@umn.edu.

Bits & Pieces

- **New Publications.** The following new ICI publications are available:

- *NECO Synthesis Report 89: States' Flexibility Plans for Phasing Out the Alternate Assessment Based on Modified Academic Achievement Standards (AA-MAS) by 2014-15* (March 2013). Published by the Institute's National Center on Educational Outcomes and available at http://www.cehd.umn.edu/nceo/OnlinePubs/Synthesis89/default.htm.

- *Frontline Initiative: Autism Spectrum Disorder* (Volume 11, Number 1, March 2013). Published by the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals and the Institute's Research and Training Center on Community Living (RTC). Available from 204 Pattee Hall or on the Web at http://rtc.umn.edu/docs/Frontline_Initiative-ASD-Vol11-No1.pdf.

- **Amy Hewitt Guest Blogs for AUCD Digest**. RTC director Amy Hewitt is the April 2013 guest blogger on "Early Career Professionals," a blog hosted by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). Her April 9 post, titled "Just Some 'Food for Thought'," is at http://www.aucdecp.org/2013/04/just-some-food-for-thought.html.

- **Journal Article on AA-MAS Policy**. Sheryl Lazarus and Martha Thurlow were among the authors of "An Analysis of the Rise and Fall of the AA-MAS Policy," which was published in *The Journal of Special Education* on January 29, 2013. It can be viewed at http://sed.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/01/28/0022466912472237.full.pdf+html.

- **Journal Article on Social Ministry and People with IDD**. Angela Novak Amado co-authored "BeFrienders: Impact of a Social Ministry Program on Relationships for Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)," which was published in the *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health, 17*(1) in February 2013.

- *FYI* **Deadline.** Items for the next *FYI* should be submitted to Tom (donag003@umn.edu) by May 9.