

March 15, 2011

ICI Staff to Focus on Autism in Zambia

A delegation from the Institute on Community Integration (ICI) will fly to Zambia on March 30 for two weeks of work with disability rights leaders developing and improving services and supports for people with disabilities and their families. The trip is part of the work of the Twin Cities Zambia Disability Connection – a partnership of ICI, Arc Greater Twin Cities, Fraser, Opportunity Partners, and Zambian disability rights leaders – which was formed in 2008. This will be the fourth time ICI staff have traveled to Zambia (Zambian delegations visited the Twin Cities in 2008 and 2010), and it will be the first time there has been an emphasis on autism.

The ICI staff making the trip are Amy Hewitt, one of the founders of the project who has traveled to Zambia previously, along with Kelly Nye-Lengerman, Jean Ness, and Matt Schuelka, who are making the trip for the first time. “This will be an amazing journey,” says Kelly. “I am eager to share our knowledge and expertise, but am also excited about what they will teach and share with us. The knowledge exchanged will hopefully lead to improved supports for individuals with disabilities in Zambia, and provide us with more real-world experience in cultural competence.” Asked about her part in the trip, Jean says, “I expect to share specific skills that I have developed in working with American Indian students around learning styles and transition planning, and compare and contrast the value of those supports. In addition, I hope to learn new skills in working with diverse indigenous populations that will assist and inform all of my work.” And Matt adds, “I expect to experience a richer understanding of education issues related to students with disabilities. Since disability is very culturally located, it will be interesting to experience it in a different culture and with a different set of resources.”

While there, the ICI team will conduct trainings with teachers, clinical staff, policymakers, and families on autism, autism assessments, and behavioral interventions and tools for children with autism, as well as on supporting all youth with disabilities as they make the transition from adolescence to adulthood. They will also conduct observations in classroom and home-based settings of children who might have autism, and partner with the Zambian Institute for Special Education and University of Zambia faculty on participatory action research related to autism observations and assessments. Additionally, they will meet with families, teachers, disability rights organizations, and others to discuss living with a disability in Zambia, self-advocacy, inclusion, and disability policy.

“The last time our Zambian colleagues were here they had a chance to visit the autism spectrum disorders clinic at the University and a number of autism-specific programs in Minnesota,” notes Amy. “They asked us to help them build autism expertise in Zambia. This trip is hopefully the first of many exchanges that will focus on autism.”

A recent grant from the University’s College of Education and Human Development supports some of this travel. FFI about the trip and project contact Kelly at knye@umn.edu and visit <http://twincitieszambiadisabilityconnection.blogspot.com/>.

Staff Update

- **Staff Hire:** **Nora Murphy**, GRA, Transition. **Staff Departures:** None.
- **Amy Hewitt, Kelly Nye-Lengerman, Jean Ness, and Matt Schuelka** are accepting donations of school and teaching supplies for their trip to Zambia on March 30 (see related feature article). They are particularly interested in new teaching materials, pens, jump/flash drives, iTouch and iPads (into which they will load augmentative and alternative communications aids), and other useful materials for teachers and families of children with developmental disabilities. Deliver donations to 204 Pattee Hall by March 25. With adequate notice, they can pick up donations. They also accept cash donations.
- **Vidhya Shanker** presented at the Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute 2011 Conference in St. Paul, March 7-11. **Kent Hamre, Amelia Maynard, Mary McEathron, and Amanda Morse** also attended the conference, and **David R. Johnson** gave “Welcome” remarks.
- **Jason Altman, Laurene Christensen, and Mai Vang** presented at the Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children conference on March 3. Their session was titled, “Universal Design and Accommodations in Classroom Assessment.”
- **Tom Donaghy** officially received his M.A. in Strategic Communication on February 28.

Dates to Remember...

- March 18: University Closed
- March 25: Pizza Forum, 12-1, 118 Pattee
- April 12: ICI Council, 10-12, 118 Pattee
- April 15: Pizza Forum, 12-1, 118 Pattee

From the Front Office

News from ICI's Administrative Staff

- **P&A Performance Reviews.** Materials for the Professional and Administrative (P&A) Performance Review process were due March 14. If you have not already done so, please submit your materials to Amy Kurowski in 102A Pattee Hall.
- **CS/BU Staff and Student Employee Performance Reviews.** Information about annual performance reviews for Civil Service and Bargaining Unit (CS/BU) staff, and for Undergraduate and Graduate student employees, will be sent out by March 31.
- **CS/BU Personal Holiday.** Civil Service and Bargaining Unit staff have until June 30 to use their 2010-2011 personal holiday. Please indicate its use, entitled "Personal Holiday," and selecting "Personal Holiday" in Workgroup Calendar. Questions? Contact Beth at 6-8042.
- **Job Openings.** There are two full-time openings at the Institute's National Center on Educational Outcomes: Program Associate (Job # 170761) and Research Fellow (Job # 170733). To view and apply for these positions, visit <http://employment.umn.edu>.

Miscellaneous

- **PACER Benefit Concert.** On May 9, nine-time Grammy winner Sheryl Crow will perform a benefit concert for PACER Center at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The event begins at 6 p.m. with a reception, auctions, a program emceed by local television announcers Frank Vascellaro and Amelia Santaniello, the concert, and a patron party. FFI, visit <http://www.PACER.org>.
- **IES Grant Competitions.** The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) has released FY2012 funding announcements for grant competitions in education and special education research and training. The six competitions are: Education Research Grants (84.305A); Special Education Research Grants (84.324A); Postdoctoral Research Training Program in the Education Sciences (84.305B); Postdoctoral Research Training Program in Special Education (84.324B); Statistical and Research Methodology in Education (84.305D); and Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies (84.305E). IES will soon announce additional competitions. FFI, visit <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/>.
- **Transition Resource Directory.** *Strengthening Transition Partnerships: Building Federal Technical Assistance Center Capacity: A Transition Resource Directory* from the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) includes descriptions submitted by federally supported projects and centers with work that focuses on youth transition. FFI, visit <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/whats-new>.
- **Birthdays.** **Chris Bremer** (3/19), **Lori Sedlezky** (3/25), **Angela Amado** (3/26), **Lee Cain** (3/26), **Mike Sharpe** (3/27), **Dave Welter** (3/29), **Maureen Braam** (4/1), **Nora Murphy** (4/4), **Allise Wuorio** (4/5), **Jenna Larson** (4/8), **Jeffrey Nurick**, (4/15), and **John Smith** (4/19). Did we miss your birthday? Let us know! Call 4-2380 or e-mail kuro0008@umn.edu.

Bits & Pieces

Information on New Publications and Web Sites

- **New Publication.** The following new ICI publication is available:
 - *Policy Research Brief: Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A Critical Review of the State of Knowledge and a Taxonomy to Guide Future Research* (March 2011). Published by the Institute's Research and Training Center on Community Living and available from the Publications Office and on the Web at <http://ici.umn.edu/products/prb/211/default.html>.
- **Fact Sheets from LEND.** The Minnesota LEND, a partner center of ICI, has published the *U of M LEND Fact Sheets*, which are in PDF format and on the Web at <http://lend.umn.edu/resources/index.asp>. Titles currently available are:
 - *What is Challenging Behavior?*
 - *Request Assistance*
 - *Choice-Making*
 - *Preferred Item as a Distracter*
 - *Communicative Alternatives to Challenging Behavior*
 - *Functional Behavioral Assessment of Young Children*
 - *High-Probability Request Sequence and Embedding*
 - *Rejecting Response*
 - *Request for a Break*
 - *Tolerance for Delay of Reinforcement*
 - *What are Autism Spectrum Disorders?*
- **Response to Intervention Book Chapter.** Renáta Tichá (ICI), Teri Wallace (formerly of ICI), Doug Marston, Matthew Lau, and Paul Muyskens have published "Evaluation of Implementation," a chapter in *Models for Implementing Response to Intervention: Tools, Outcomes, and Implications* (2011). The book, edited by Edward S. Shapiro, Naomi Zigmond, Teri Wallace, and Doug Marston, was released in February by Guilford Press. FFI, visit <http://www.guilford.com>.
- **FYI Deadline.** Items for the next FYI should be submitted to Tom (donag003@umn.edu) by April 11.