

September 15, 2000

## E-Mentoring Project Designed for Transition Students with Disabilities

Over the past 20 years, this country has seen the beginnings of a transformation of attitudes and an elimination of barriers to employment of people with disabilities. While this trend is encouraging, there is still much that needs to be done. Numerous postschool studies of former special education students have documented that young people with disabilities, as a group, have the highest unemployment rates, lowest participation in postsecondary training programs, and the highest likelihood of remaining dependent on various public assistance programs. Failure to identify, accommodate, and respond to their unique social, emotional, intellectual, and career development needs often results in poor adult outcomes.

Mentoring initiatives hold promise in assisting youth with disabilities to achieve more meaningful and positive postschool outcomes. There is solid evidence that effective mentoring programs can change the direction of a youth's life, reduce substance abuse, and improve academic performance. Also, new opportunities exist for using technology to expand mentoring opportunities. The National Transition Network (NTN) at the Institute on Community Integration and Youth Trust, Minneapolis have recognized this unique opportunity and have begun a one-year, \$75,000 initiative called *Connecting to SUCCESS*, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, to expand and enhance the current Youth Trust electronic mentoring project.

Electronic mentoring (e-mentoring) utilizes a combination of e-mail and face-to-face meetings to facilitate mentoring relationships between youth and adults. By linking students with mentors elec-

tronically, e-mentoring can assist students in improving writing skills and career readiness. Teachers can guide the communication process so that e-mails correspond with academic and career readiness standards. E-mentoring also is compatible with an "all means all" philosophy, providing another format for career development in the classroom that involves all youth, including with disabilities.

The purpose of *Connecting to SUCCESS* is to develop, implement, and evaluate an exemplary e-mentoring model that will promote the successful transition of youth with disabilities to adult life by:

- Connecting youth to positive role models in the world of work;
- Building motivation for academic learning;
- Enhancing self-esteem;
- Improving skills in writing, computers, social interaction and career readiness; and,
- Integrating e-mentoring with achievement of transition/IEP goals.

The project will develop, adapt, and evaluate the *Connecting to SUCCESS* model based on proven models, exemplary practices, and lessons learned. A planning committee with representatives from each of the states, the pilot sites, NTN, and the Youth Trust will be established, and the project will provide training and technical assistance.

David Johnson is the principal investigator for *Connecting to SUCCESS*, and Mary Mack is the project director. For more information, contact Mary at 612/624-7579 or [mackx012@tc.umn.edu](mailto:mackx012@tc.umn.edu).

## Staff Update

- **Staff Arrivals.** Michelle Beinner, Dakota County; Amanda Blount, Check and Connect; Crystal Cullerton-Sen, Check and Connect; Norman Dahl, RRTC; Theresa Estrem, CEED; Ethan Gannaway, CEED; Saahoon Hong, Paraprofessional Project; Jennifer Huisken, Transition; Beth Knoblauch, RRTC; Sondra Koster, Paraprofessional Project; Laura Lofy, CEED; Patricia Marquez, CEED; Rachel Moreau, Check and Connect; Michelle Olson, CEED; Karen Pederson, RRTC; Benjamin Schnoor, Check and Connect; Talley Sjoberg, Partnership for Success; Jerra Smith, National Residential Info System; Sarah Warner, Check and Connect; Jennifer Wendt, CEED; Steve Lauer, Information Technology.
- **Charlie Lakin** has received the 2nd Annual Leadership Award from the Association of Residential Resources of Minnesota (ARRM).
- In August, **Julia Washenberger** received a Courage Center award for achieving financial self-sufficiency without government subsidies.
- **Bob Prouty** spoke at the National Academy of Public Health Policy Conference in Bloomington, MN on June 6. He presented on "Past Trends, Current Status, Future Directions and the Olmstead Decision."
- **Christopher Watson** received \$35,000 from the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning for the 2000-01 *Infant Mental Health Grant*.

## Dates to Remember . . .

- **Sep. 22: Pizza Forum**, 12-1 p.m., 118 Pattee.
- **Oct. 2: ICI Council Meeting**, 10-11:30 a.m., 118 Pattee Hall

## From the Front Office

News from ICI's Administrative Staff

- **Fall Kickoff— Mark Your Calendars!** The 2000 ICI Fall Kickoff and 15-Year Anniversary Celebration has been scheduled for Friday, November 17 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It will be held at the Radisson Metrodome. More details will be coming soon. If you have any questions in the mean time, please contact Julia Washenberger at 624-2380 or [wash004@tc.umn.edu](mailto:wash004@tc.umn.edu).
- **Brown Bag Session.** Pam Stenhjem and Kris Schoeller will present a model and video demonstration titled "Family Transition Weekend for Students With and Without Disabilities." It will be held on Sept. 15 at noon in room 214. If you have any questions, please call Julia at 624-2380.
- **Attention P&A staff:** Academic vacation records for the quarter (June–August) were due at the end of August. Please submit them as soon as possible to Beth in 107 Pattee.
- **Attention Graduate Research Assistants/Supervisors:** Letters of appointment for new and continuing Graduate Research Assistants will be disseminated within the next few days. Supervisors and GRAs should verify appointment information and then sign. Please return to Beth in 107 when complete.
- **ICI Council Update.** At the September 11th meeting, the topics discussed were: 1) Fall Kickoff planning, 2) AAUAP reporting, 3) ICI listserv update, 4) publications displays at conferences, and 5) SEAC update. The next council meeting is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 2 at 10:00 a.m.
- **ICI Council Guest.** At the Oct. 16 Council meeting, Jim Ysseldyke, new Associate Dean for Research in the College of Education and Human Development, will attend to share the college's research agenda. All PIs are welcome to attend this meeting.

## Miscellaneous

- ICI's first year at the Minnesota State Fair was an overwhelming success. During our 2.5 days there, an estimated 200 people took our computer quizzes on "What do you know about people with disabilities?" and engaged in conversations/information sharing with our booth volunteers: **Christopher Watson, Kris Schoeller, Ann Mavis, Ann Eggebeen, Lynda Anderson, Robin Spanier, John Sauer, Matt Ziegler, John Smith, Julia Washenberger, Michael Moore, Martha Thurlow, Dorene Scott, and Vicki Gaylord.**
- **Child Psychology Symposium.** The 32nd Symposium on Child Psychology, entitled "Child Psychology in Retrospect and Prospect," will be held from Thursday, Oct. 19 to Saturday, Oct. 21, 2000 at the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota. The symposium is sponsored by the Institute of Child Development and is free and open to the public. A gala evening including a reception and dinner will be held on Saturday evening. For more details, contact Lujean Huffman-Nordberg at 625-6549.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Forum.** A forum to discuss the development of rules and policies to guide Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation Program into the 21st century will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 26 from 1:00–5:30 p.m. at the Brookdale-Hennepin Area Public Library in Brooklyn Center. For more information or accommodations, contact Steve Serkland at 800/328-9095, ext. 6-7869 or TTY 800/657-3973.
- **Birthdays.** Ann Arkell (9/22), Talley Sjoberg (9/22), Christopher Watson (9/23), Robin Spanier (10/2), Kristin Liu Kline (10/7), Mary Hayden (10/9), Laura Lofy (10/10), Marco Vasquez (10/10), Colleen Kaibel (10/14), Lucinda Hahn (10/15).

## Bits & Pieces

Information from the Institute's Web Development Team (110 Pattee, 6-8649) and Publications Office (109 Pattee, 4-4512)

### Web Group Activities

- **Training/Informational Sessions.** After a well deserved hiatus in July and August, the Web Development Team held its first meeting since launching the new ICI Website. The group will meet again in October to discuss "lessons learned" during the ICI Website revision process. The team will then begin offering sessions on particular topics of interest. The list of possible sessions includes: new Web statistics software, creating and managing databases on the Web using FileMaker Pro, and troubleshooting computer problems without having to call technical support (i.e., Jon and Steve). If you have any questions, please contact Megan Dushin at 626-8649 or [dushi001@tc.umn.edu](mailto:dushi001@tc.umn.edu)
- **Web Accessibility.** Megan Dushin has been making small but significant improvements to the ICI Website to ensure that people with disabilities, especially those who use screen readers, can have full and easy access to the site. If you'd like more details, contact Megan at 626-8649.

### From the Publications Office

- **New Publications.**
  - A Guidebook on Consumer-Controlled Housing for Minnesotans with Developmental Disabilities – 2000 Edition*
  - Doing Whatever It Takes: All Means All School-to-Work Award Recipient Profiles*
  - Changes in Mathematics Achievement and Instructional Ecology Resulting from Implementation of a Learning Information System*
- **FYI Deadline.** Submissions for the next FYI should be sent to Mike Vosika in 109 Pattee or e-mailed to [vosik003@tc.umn.edu](mailto:vosik003@tc.umn.edu) by Thursday, Oct. 12.