

Recreation and Disability Summit White Paper

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As part of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, and with a strong belief that the American Dream belongs to everyone, three organizations formed a collaborative network to service individuals with developmental disabilities living in North Dakota. The network was named the North Dakota Developmental Disabilities Network (NDDDN), and includes: The North Dakota Protection and Advocacy Project, the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, and the North Dakota State Council on Developmental Disabilities. The trio strives to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of and have access to culturally competent community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion in all facets of community life.

The activities of each entity belonging to NDDDN fall within core emphasis areas established at the federal level. Emphasis areas include:

- quality assurance activities
- education and early intervention activities
- child-care related activities
- health-related activities
- employment-related activities
- housing-related activities
- transportation-related activities
- recreation-related activities
- other services available/offered to individuals in a community, including formal and informal community supports that affect quality of life

To gather current input on these emphasis areas, a series of summit meetings were designed. The summits were structured to encourage discussion and input from participants, and to gather information from professionals working in the emphasis areas. Each summit meeting covered one emphasis area, began with a keynote speaker, involved the audience in small group work, and featured a panel of presenters who discussed their particular experience with some aspect of the emphasis area. During the small group work, participants developed lists of actionable steps that could be used by NDDDN agencies in planning yearly goals and objectives. Results of the summit meetings were published in white papers and broadcast through websites to make information available to a broader range of constituents.

On June 25, 2009, the Recreation and Disability Summit took place at the Grand International in Minot, ND. The summit opened with an explanation of the NDDDN network and its purpose. Participants of

the workshop were introduced, and asked to identify their expectations for the summit. Identified expectations included:

- More recreation activities
- Increase involvement in community activities
- Activities for people with sign needs
- Network with others
- Special Olympics, recreation
- Knowledge
- New ideas especially in regards to autism
- Recreation DVD
- Accessibility and transportation
- Recreation in rural towns
- Building accessibility
- More supports for recreation
- Learn about recreation
- Community accessible
- Better service
- Funding
- Accessible playgrounds

Cyndi Collins of Freedom Resource Center was the keynote speaker. She presented an overview of why fitness and exercise are important for people with disabilities, as well as ideas for providing adaptive changes to fitness activities.

Based on the information presented by the keynote speaker, five main topic areas were developed and written on flow charts, which were then placed around the room. Following the keynote presentation, summit participants were directed to pick the topics they were most interested in, and spend fifteen minutes in discussion to identify actionable steps that could address each topic area. This process was completed two additional times, which provided participants the opportunity to discuss a total of three topic areas. Topic areas and actionable steps identified during the small group work included:

#### Recreation for Rural Communities:

State:

- Resource web. . . that showed 80 cool ways to get people involved in rural and frontier communities
- Use “MySpace” or “Facebook” to help people connect
- More funding
- Work with legislatures
- Special Olympics
- Statewide transportation
- State funding
- Discount Bus Tickets

Local:

- Make the community aware of recreation options /choices and it helps every one

- Get new ideas for new options that work in small communities especially in the winter
- Make as many events as affordable as possible
- Learn how to step out of our comfort zone to build community
- Activity center for people with disabilities
- Networking with others that may have similar interests I.E. scrapbooking, fitness
- Involving more seniors in senior programs
- Getting people involved in civic groups
- Getting on local committees
- Getting involved in integrated activities such as bowling, softball
- Community Action
- Volunteer driving program
- Independent transportation training

Funding for Recreation Activities:

State:

- Grants
- Relay for Life
- Participation – Membership fees on recreation activities
- Sponsor a person or persons
- Bremer banks
- Federal grants
- Electric coop
- West River coop
- State grant State Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Federal funding (stimulus)
- Networking (Contacts, referral) Regional
  - ✓ Corporations
  - ✓ Government
  - ✓ Advocacy groups
  - ✓ Support agencies
- Research available funding – Internet, library
- “Winning Lottery Ticket”

Local:

- Raffle tickets
- Bake sales
- Collection jars, etc
- Stores
- Car washes
- Ask for donations
- Craft sales
- Sponsors – businesses
- Garage sales
- Community foundations

- Partnering with a non-profit organization
- Pancake breakfast

#### Informal (non-organized) Recreation Activities:

- Have Plan B for an option – Start informal and leads to organized activity and keep going
- Places you can go in own area, community sources, events
- Include community/integrate
- Utilize community resources, informal activities/friends/ be flexible, spontaneous, be able to adapt, creative
- Informal activities include
  - ✓ Swimming pool/aerobics/exercises
  - ✓ Ball games
  - ✓ Bowling
  - ✓ Biking
  - ✓ Walking/hiking park/biking
  - ✓ Coffee club
  - ✓ Get togethers/discuss hobbies/crafts to include people with disabilities
  - ✓ Shoot pool
  - ✓ Learn how to understand a community map
- Better information for children and families above the preschool level
- Idea resource that fits individuals with multiple disabilities
- Assistive technology labs that inspire activities
- A low cost mechanism providing on-going training to private fitness agencies.

#### Creating Better Supports for Recreation Participation:

##### State:

- Funding grants
- Special Olympics/Statewide
- Accessible transportation
- Building accessibility
- More workshops like this
- Opportunities for rural areas
- Education for people that work with athletes, Special Olympics, support staff to bring out creativity
- Education in general – exposure for general population to break down barriers
- Wish we had a state or regional network of churches that you could reach out and pass information on support for members.
- Provide training for state legislators on this issue
- Teach rec skills in school

##### Local:

- Staff to assist
  - ✓ Special Olympics/statewide
  - ✓ Local events have a Special Needs Day

- More events through local ARC's
- Accessible transportation
- Fitness classes for people with disabilities
- Singles events/speed dating, dances
- Buildings more accessible
- More programs like ARC buddies
- Opportunities for rural areas
- Sponsorships/donations
- Educate younger people (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> graders)
- Send out flyers
- More volunteer opportunities
- Ask local businesses to support recreation through fundraisers
- Find grants to help start up a recreation activity
- Have someone with a skill, willing to volunteer their time to 1-2 people in a fun social environment

Both State and Local:

- Expand people involved with self advocacy and focus on recreation
- Rec and Park involvement with youth activities – helping out coaches, players

Access to Organized Recreation Programs and Facilities: (9 Votes)

- Facilities not providing enough time for programs, especially for severely disabilities needs
  - ✓ Work with facilities on hours
  - ✓ Work with to see if flexible
  - ✓ Seasonal issues
- Need instructors that are trained with working with disabilities
- Getting the word out by advertising existing programs
- Recruiting/keeping people that are qualified to lead existing programs
- Creating new programs
- Sliding fees/schedules at Y's and fitness center for people with disabilities
- Transportation funding
- Businesses to sponsor activities
- Working with businesses to modify programs
- Adaptive playgrounds
- More volunteers for programs
- Accessibility and more money for educating

After completion of the small group work, a panel presentation took place. Panelists shared their perspectives and experiences, identifying challenges they face, unmet needs they have identified, and potential solutions for those needs. The panel, composed of a combination of professionals, included the following individuals:

Mark Coppin – Director of Assistive Technology at Anne Carlson Center for Children. He has also served as director of summer programming for four years.

Michael Freeman – Information Specialist for Independence, Inc. He manages the Integrated Recreation Program for Persons with Disabilities.

Stephanie Tornatore: Client Services Representative for NDAD in Minot.

Cathy Haarstad – Project Director of ND FamNet at NDCPD. She also serves on several statewide advisory committees. Cathy has coordinated several community-based recreation programs for families of children with special needs.

Outcomes/Lessons Learned:

Upon completion of the panel discussion, participants of the workshop were asked to vote on what they felt were the highest priority steps that had been identified during the earlier small group work. Each participant was instructed to cast three votes, and had the options of voting for three separate issues, or casting all three votes for one issue that they felt the strongest about. Actionable steps identified as highest priorities as well as the number of votes cast for each are as follows:

<u>Number of votes:</u>	<u>Issue</u>
9	Access to Organized Recreation Programs and Facilities
9	Education in general – exposure for general population to break down barriers
4	Activity center for people with disabilities
3	Learn how to step out of our comfort zone to build community
3	Independent transportation training
3	Statewide transportation
3	A low cost mechanism providing on-going training to private fitness agencies
3	Find grants to help start up a recreation activity
3	Fitness classes for people with disabilities
3	Need instructors that are trained with working with disabilities
2	Federal grants
2	Resource web. . . that showed 80 cool ways to get people involved in rural and frontier communities
2	Get together/discuss hobbies/crafts to include people with disabilities
2	More programs like ARC buddies
2	Special Olympics/Statewide
2	Accessible transportation
1	More workshops like this
1	Sponsorships/donations
1	Educate younger people (5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> graders)
1	Include community/integrate
1	Learn how to understand a community map
1	Grants
1	Sponsor a person or disability
1	Collection jars, etc.
1	Volunteer driving program
1	Idea resource that fits individuals with multiple disabilities

1	Send out flyers
1	More volunteer opportunities
1	Accessible transportation
1	Staff to assist Special Olympic/state wide; local events have Special Needs Day
1	Funding grants
1	Have someone with a skill willing to volunteer their time to 1-2 people in a fun social environment
1	Transportation funding
1	Accessibility and more money for educating
1	Recruiting/keeping people that are qualified to lead existing programs

The identified issues and proposed actionable steps can now be used in strategic planning for the agencies belonging to NDDDN, providing the agencies with a road map of needs and priorities to look at when designing programs and work tasks for the future. Although the summits were originally designed to elicit feedback from constituents on priority issues and actionable steps, other outcomes also resulted from the interactive group work, including:

- Networking among professionals from various agencies
- Education regarding services offered by agencies and programs
- Identification of new/increased priority areas for agencies
- Identification of possible funding sources for additional training
- Discussion of how agency personnel can collaborate on various issues

The objective of the Recreation and Disabilities Summit to gather current information on issues and identify actionable steps was successfully met. As a result of the excellent interactive group work and lively discussion among attendees, participants unexpectedly identified individual action steps for themselves and their agencies.

NDDDN agencies now have current information to carry forward into planning processes. Using the information gleaned from the summit meeting, NDDDN members can structure work plans and design programs that are relevant to the needs of consumers and that ensure individuals with developmental disabilities have access to high quality programs and services that will promote self-determination, independence, productivity, integration and inclusion in all facets of community life.

Sponsored by the

North Dakota Developmental Disabilities Network (NDDDN)

