On the Shoulders of Pioneers

by Brent A. Askvig, Ph.D., NDCPD Executive Director

“Lest we forget, our good works have been built on the shoulders of pioneers.” This is not a direct quote, but rather a paraphrasing of other authors who have told us to look back and give credit to those who put us in a position to do our work. I have been thinking about this frequently over the past year regarding our work in the disability field in North Dakota. We have had so many influential people in our state who have laid the foundation and given us direction for what we need to do now, and what we will need to do in the future. We need to acknowledge and respect that work.

To avoid the risk of inadvertently leaving out names, I will not list individuals. But there have been so many that have influenced our work. We have endured local and state and federal lawsuits that directed us toward a constellation of services and supports for persons with developmental disabilities. We have benefited from state legislation and agency programs by talented professionals who have laid the framework for services and supports. We have learned from talented educators who taught us to provide exemplary educational plans and strategies so that children and youth with disabilities are successful in life. We have watched parent, family and individual advocates work hard to assure that often disenfranchised voices were heard, important changes were made, and lessons were learned about what does, and does not, work for people with disabilities. We would not be where we are today if not for the work of those and others.

Over this past year, we have seen many of these pioneers pass. Respected and trusted self-advocates, fierce parent advocates, thoughtful and calming advisors, and others have died. And I wonder if we have said thank you, and I wonder if we have given them due recognition for blazing a trail for us. But perhaps more importantly, have we really learned what they truly offered to us.
Continued...

and our work? I would hope that this question makes us all a bit uncomfortable.

My hope is that this discomfort pushes us to do at least three things. First, we need to make sure we talk to and continue to learn from those pioneers who are still with us. We each have our own pioneers, and we know others in our field. Connect with them!

Second, we need to thank them. While my experience is that these individuals never did their work for recognition or praise, we at least owe them that. Say thank you, good job and well done! In their own ways, they will know the meaning of their work and will be able to see it in our eyes.

And third, show that we have learned by moving forward. We have the opportunity ourselves to become pioneers for the future. Pass on the knowledge and lessons we have learned from our pioneers. Use that knowledge for continually improving services and supports for people with disabilities. And then become the model for future generations of personnel in our field. We owe that to those who have helped us, and we owe it to those who are to come. So as you stand on the shoulders of pioneers, think about girding your shoulders for others.

Autism Support Internationally

By Hilory Liccini, Project Director

Support Autism in ND (SAND) has rigorously been training the ND medical community on the red flags of autism, use of screening tools such as the MCHAT, and resources for both medical providers and parents. To date, we have trained 375 professionals and have received feedback that positive changes are being made in medical offices across the state. The medical community reports that they are now aware of screening tools and the referral process for those patients suspected of having an Autism Spectrum Disorder. We are very proud to report that our efforts have gone international. As one of the medical professionals who was trained through SAND, a recommendation and referral to the SAND project was made to a colleague, a neurosurgeon and Dean at Dow University of Health Sciences in Karachi, Pakistan who was looking for current and relevant ASD information. We are very excited to see that our efforts are helping those in North Dakota, and are now reaching countries world wide. For more information: visit our website @ http://www.ndcpd.org/sand.
New Fraud Hotline
By Linda Madsen, Project Director

The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging has set up a new toll-free hotline to make it easier for senior citizens to report all types of suspected fraud and receive assistance with resolution.

If you know someone who has been a victim of fraud - or if you suspect that they may become a victim - please call 1-855-303-9470. This recently unveiled hotline will be staffed by a team of Committee investigators weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST. The Committee’s investigators have experience in fraud concerning retirement savings, identity theft, phone scams, Medicare, Social Security, and a variety of other consumer issues important to seniors and the elderly. Due to the nature of the fraud that has been committed or is suspected, individuals often do not know where to turn for assistance.

The investigators, who have experience with investment scams, identity theft, bogus sweepstakes and lottery schemes, Medicare and Social Security fraud, and a variety of other senior exploitation issues, will directly examine complaints and, if appropriate, refer them to the proper authorities.

Anyone with information about suspected fraud can call the toll-free fraud hotline at 1-855-303-9470, or contact the committee through its website, located at www.aging.senate.gov/fraud-hotline.

The hotline’s unveiling also coincides with the committee’s launch of an enhanced senior-friendly website. The site’s new features include large print, simple navigation and an uncluttered layout that enables seniors to find information more easily and conveniently. The new website can be found at www.aging.senate.gov.

To learn more about Medicare fraud and taking steps to prevent it:
visit
www.stopmedicarefraud.gov

or contact ND Senior Medicare Patrol at www.ndcpd.org/smp
or call
1-800-233-1737.

The ND Senior Medicare Patrol provides Medicare beneficiaries with the information they need to PROTECT themselves from Medicare errors, fraud and abuse; DETECT potential errors, fraud and abuse; and REPORT their concerns. SMP uses trained senior volunteers to help educate and empower older adults in the fight against health care fraud. ND SMP helps beneficiaries with questions, concerns or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues.
An Interview with Peter Gravdahl, A-STEP Student at Minot State University

By Linda Madsen, Collaborator Editor, NDCPD

The Adult-Student Transition Education Program (A-STEP) is an educational initiative to provide a transition and postsecondary education program for students with intellectual disabilities (ID) ages 18-21. With the support of peer mentors, A-STEP students have the opportunity to achieve their goals in an inclusive and supportive college environment on the Minot State University campus. Peter Gravdahl has participated in our ASTEP program for two years. Below is an interview of Peter’s thoughts about his experiences.

LM: Why did you decide to go to college and attend MSU/A-STEP?
PG: I graduated from high school in 2012 and wanted to get some training for a future job. My teacher recommended the A-STEP program back in the spring of 2012.

LM: How has A-STEP been beneficial for you?
PG: While at college I have to learn to support myself and be on time for class. Also, it has helped me to get along with others and make friends. I have also learned how to budget money. Academically it has helped me to be on time for classes and to stay focused on classes. These are all things that will help me move on to being an adult.

LM: What do you like best about A-STEP and MSU?
PG: The best thing about A-STEP has been that everyone is nice to me and I learn to focus on the here and now. I can focus on my successes like Special Olympics 2nd place trophy for bowling. There are no bullies in college and it is a very supportive environment. People here actually listen to what I want to do and let me choose my goals instead of others choosing what my goals should be.

LM: Tell me about some of the classes you have taken or are taking?
PG: Right now I am taking racket sports, piano class, history of pop and rock music, and business class, and math 102. In the business class we talk about how the business world operates in the US. In the spring I will take a piano class to hopefully join the MSU jazz band one day, I am taking Intro. to Special Education 101, and a creative writing class. I have liked all of my professors.
LM: Tell me about some of your current employment and what you like about it?
PG: Right now I am a ticket taker at the MSU sporting events such as football and basketball games. I also work as an office assistant filing, scanning and shredding documents for MSU Enrollment Services office. The A-STEP mentors help me to get used to the job and help me to talk about what is appropriate and what’s not while working.

LM: What is your goal when you complete A-STEP in the spring? Or what is your employment goal for the future?
PG: I want to work as a behavioral consultant for students with special needs someday. After I complete A-STEP I would also like to continue taking classes at MSU for more training to learn about helping out students with special needs. I could help them to understand how to deal with problems. I could help students speak up for themselves and learn how to be an advocate.

LM: Would you recommend A-STEP to other students with disabilities and why?
PG: I would recommend A-STEP as an early stage of support for the student who wants to attend college.

LM: What else would you like to tell us about your experiences with A-STEP?
PG: A-STEP helps students get ready for the adult world. I like that through A-STEP we use person centered planning to help me set goals. I think this is a great thing for other A-STEP students along with the peer mentors. A-STEP is a positive experience for students who maybe did not have a positive experience in high school.

The A-STEP program focuses on the development of academic skills in the individual student’s areas of interest; career skills and integrated work experiences that lead to meaningful employment; social relationship and building friendships; and independent living skills and self-determination.

A-STEP students receive supports in all settings from staff and mentors to enhance their academic, social, and employment success. Peer mentors enhance students’ academic, social, and employment successes by providing tutoring, mentoring, and job coaching in all environments. These supports are faded as the student gains skills in each environment in order to foster independence.

For more information about A-STEP, please contact Amy Armstrong at 1-800-333-1737 ext. 3578 or email amy.armstrong@minotstateu.edu. Or visit www.ndcpd.org/astep.
Upcoming Trainings

28th Annual North Dakota Association of Community Providers Conference
May 7-9, 2014
Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center
Bismarck, ND

Featured Speakers:

- **Positive Exposure** by Rick Guidotti, New York, NY
- **30 Behavioral Support Tips in 60 Minutes** by David Lennox, Southborough, MA
- **Leadership and Laughter** by Chicken Lips, Denver, CO.
- **Customized Employment** by Bob Niemiec, St. Paul, MN
- **Dual Diagnoses** by Michael Mayer, Mebane, NC
- **Understanding and Supporting Individuals with Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders**, by Kathy Giordano, Bayside, NY
- **Non Verbal Communication for the HR Professionals and Supervisors**
  by Jerry Balistreri, Anchorage, AK

NDCPD’s “Ram Good Job” Award

NDCPD’s “Ram Good Job Award is given to staff members to recognize them for going above and beyond. This award is given by the preceding month’s award recipient and honors the staff member’s work to enhance the lives of people with disabilities and further NDCPD’s mission. Recipients for over the past few months include:

**Neil Scharpe**
January Recipient

**Tom Alexander**
November Recipient

For more information contact:
Vickie Brabandt at 1-800-233-1737 ext. 3047
or email vickie.brabandt@minotstateu.edu
NDCPD WELCOMES

New Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Heather Wittliff</td>
<td>Project Specialist</td>
<td>10/28/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. John Sandeen</td>
<td>Volunteer Training Specialist</td>
<td>11/1/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Conner Oliver</td>
<td>Student Assistant</td>
<td>11/12/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Melody Brown</td>
<td>Early Interventionist</td>
<td>12/2/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Kristie Lawson</td>
<td>Early Interventionist/OT</td>
<td>01/02/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. ZoeAnn Winkler</td>
<td>Research Associate</td>
<td>01/02/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Kylie Mundt</td>
<td>Cons Housing Res Spec</td>
<td>01/13/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Kimberly Vosseteig</td>
<td>Administrative Secretary</td>
<td>01/13/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Melissa Naslund</td>
<td>Research Associate</td>
<td>01/16/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Katie Hanson</td>
<td>Research Associate</td>
<td>01/16/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Christin Stoll</td>
<td>Student Assistant</td>
<td>01/22/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Jody Demars</td>
<td>Early Interventionist</td>
<td>01/23/14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Soup Day

By Ashley Dhuyvetter and Emily Rodacker

A long standing tradition NDCPD is Soup Day. Held once a month during the fall and winter seasons, Soup Day is an opportunity to enjoy delicious food, network with co-workers and raise money for a good cause. Volunteers bring in homemade soup and bread for employees and friends to enjoy an all-you-can-eat style lunch for a small donation. At the end of each soup day, the money is totaled and then donated to a local organization. Soup Day was such a success and enjoyed by so many, that NDCPD started Salad Day during the summer months. Similar to Soup Day, volunteers bring salads and breads for all to enjoy.

Employees of NDCPD suggest different beneficiaries for the donations. This past season, employees and friends of NDCPD raised over $650 and donated funds to the following organizations:

- Talk, Walk and Roll
- The Welcome Table
- Special Olympics local basketball team
- Domestic Violence Crisis Center Fundraiser
- Project Night Light
- Minot Backpack Buddies Program
- Pennies for Patients – Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
- Serenity Therapeutic Equine Program
- 2nd Story, Social Club for Exceptional Persons, Inc.
- Minot Air Force Base Operation
The Collaborator

The Collaborator is the quarterly newsletter for the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD). NDCPD is a University of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities in Education, Research, and Services at Minot State University. It is part of a network of similar programs at universities throughout the United States.

Our mission:
The mission of NDCPD is to provide service, education, and research with empowers communities to welcome, value and support the well-being and quality of life for people of all ages and abilities.

Vision Statement:
◆ People with disabilities have the right to expect that services they receive will appropriately promote their independence, productivity, integrations, and inclusion.
◆ People with disabilities have the same rights as all citizens
◆ People with all abilities will be included in all aspects of life and receive services they need.

Goal Areas:
◆ Inclusive Communities
◆ Workforce Development
◆ Self Determination
◆ Healthy Citizens

Preparation of this newsletter was supported by a grant (#90DD0604-02) to the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. The opinions expressed here are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or opinions of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities.