

RAP Sheet

The Latest in Disability Research, Advocacy, Policy, and Practice

Summer Issue 2016

DREAM BIG



COMMITTED TO LEARNING

Ann Donoghue Dillon, M.Ed., IOD UNH Program and Clinical Placement Coordinator and NH Leadership Series Director

Welcome to the Summer 2016 RAP Sheet. In this issue we urge young people with disabilities and their families to envision a future full of possibilities and to create a plan to get there. For many, including individuals with intellectual disabilities, a college experience can be part of the journey. This issue is dedicated to two remarkable women, Annie Forts and Jennifer McIntosh, who dared to dream big. You'll find their stories and more inside.

The road to earning her college degree has taken some turns over the years, but Amy Frechette is committed to finishing the journey. Amy explained that growing up she was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder. When she was in her late 20's, she was diagnosed with PDD-NOS (pervasive developmental disorder –not otherwise specified, often referred to as atypical autism) and two years later diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome

"I have trouble with reading comprehension and pictures can be helpful," Amy said. "Also, visual-spatial can be challenging and anything abstract is hard for me to imagine. I am very concrete and like 'hand's on' the best." Over the years, Amy has developed strategies like highlighting, making her own charts and visuals, or using PowerPoints to help her succeed academically.

Amy graduated from New Hampshire Technical Institute in 1997 with an Associate's degree in Criminal Justice. In pursuit of a four-year degree, Amy went on to

(Continued on next page)



Photographer – Denise Colby

Amy Frechette, advocate and statewide leader in the area of autism spectrum disorders, also trains her own service dogs. She is pictured here with her dog Judah.

SUSAN COVERT, EDITOR

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BY THE

DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER-NH, INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY, AND NH COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

(Cover story continued)

Plymouth State College (now Plymouth State University). She completed three semesters, but found some of the courses very challenging and did not continue. Seeking a degree in Veterinarian Technology, in 2005 she enrolled in Great Bay Community College. Because of her difficulties with math and science, the program ended up not being a good fit.

In 2007 Amy graduated from the Institute on Disability's New Hampshire Leadership Series, a 9-month training for adults with disabilities and parents or family members of children with disabilities. The Leadership Series provides information on state-of-the-art supports for individuals with disabilities and training on how to use the legislative process and community organizing to achieve change.

Amy's experience in New Hampshire Leadership has led to a whole new career. She is now an adjunct faculty member with the University of New Hampshire's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and currently works with the Institute on

Disability's New Hampshire LEND Program (Leadership in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities). She serves as a Governor appointed self-advocate on the New Hampshire Council on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Amy hasn't given up on her dream to finish college. She is enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts at UNH Durham taking two courses a year towards a Bachelor's of Arts with a Major in Psychology. Amy is half way through her program and doing well with her classes. She is working with the New Hampshire Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to arrange for a neuropsychological evaluation to determine if she is eligible for financial and academic supports at college.

Amy enjoys her career and hopes that with a Bachelor's degree she'll be able to earn more and take on greater responsibilities. "I do want to stay within the health and human service field teaching, researching, and doing public policy work in the area of autism. Doing more of what I currently do, but with more money and more hours!"



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JENNIFER MCINTOSH...THANK YOU FOR A LIFE WELL LIVED

By Beth Dixon, Outreach and Development Coordinator, NH Leadership Series, UNH Institute on Disability

Daughter, granddaughter, sister, aunt, niece, friend, classmate, dancer, actress, college student, writer, teacher, trainer, advocate, leader, community organizer, activist, and so much more - Jennifer was beautiful, smart, independent, and her presence was felt wherever she went.

Jennifer's life journey was comparably short – just 30 years – but she accomplished her goals because she knew exactly what she wanted – a regular life that included a home, college, a job she loved, family and good friends. She wanted to dance and act, go to concerts – especially a Taylor Swift concert – and just have fun. She did it all.

When she was 21, Jennifer participated in the New Hampshire Leadership Series. At the time her greatest fear was that Maine, her home state, was expecting her to move into a nursing home. Jennifer had very different dreams for her future. She organized people she knew could help make her dream a reality and it worked. Jennifer became a New Hampshire resident and moved into her own apartment in Keene. In 2010 she was recognized as a *Celebrated Monadnock Woman*. She attended Keene State College and completed her degree in Psychology.

Jennifer was a writer and loved to dance to all kinds of music. In college, she had a role in the Vagina Monologues. She was an advocate for people regardless of their challenges and a staff trainer at Chesco, Inc. in Keene. An activist and a member of ABLE NH (Advocates Building Lasting Equality), she loved being in the middle of a good demonstration. Jennifer spoke out, presented at schools and businesses, and lobbied the legislature on issues affecting people with disabilities. Through her words and presence, she changed how others perceived disability.

The creator of change in her own life, she inspired others to do the same. She has left a powerful and



*Creator of change in her own life,
Jennifer McIntosh inspired others to do the same.*

beautiful legacy. Here is but one example, *"Knowing you Jennifer has been an incredible gift. Your spirit has changed so many. You enhance the lives of everyone you meet and your advocacy will live on. Thank you for giving a voice to those who haven't found theirs yet through your education. When you came into my daughter's 7th grade class you opened their minds, changed their perspective, and forever they will see the person - the individual - not just the disability. I am and will always be grateful that you touched my life and the life of my daughter."*

Jennifer's last wish was to swim with the dolphins – she researched the trip, planned all the details, and is likely swimming with them now...

A Celebration of Jennifer's life was held April 30th at Crotched Mountain Rehabilitation Center in Greenfield, NH. **In lieu of flowers, Jennifer requested that people donate in her name to Crotched Mountain, ABLE NH, or the NH Leadership Series at the UNH Institute on Disability.**



THE POSSIBILITY OF COLLEGE!

By Mary Schuh, Ph.D., National Center on Inclusive Education, Institute on Disability - UNH

When you think about the future for your daughter or son, do you think about college? Does your child envision a future that includes higher education? All too often, students with disabilities are not encouraged to consider college as an option, despite the fact that the U.S. Department of Education's latest and most progressive standards were put in place to ensure that ALL students exiting public high school (including students with labels of intellectual and developmental disabilities) are college and career ready.

What can you do to translate the vision of a future that includes higher education into a student specific plan? What steps can be taken during the high school years to ensure that planning includes making a successful transition from high school to college? Whether your child's goal is to be a full time student living on a university campus or to attend a local technical college or to take advantage of educational opportunities closer to home, planning for your child's future will require creativity, flexibility, and commitment. When thinking about options for your daughter or son's transition to adult life, consider these questions:

- ◆ What would the expectations for the future be if your child did not experience a disability?
- ◆ Is higher education a priority in your family?
- ◆ What opportunities could college provide for your child to develop independent living skills, achieve meaningful employment, make friends, and learn from same age peers who share similar interests?

While every student's journey to and through college is different, the following example of one New Hampshire student may help you to envision the opportunities and benefits that college offers to individuals with disabilities:

Tristan, graduated with his high school class when he was 18. Following graduation, he attended a local college, worked in the bookstore, and joined a fraternity. Because Tristan has significant disabilities and an IEP, his local school district continued to provide him with para-

professional support until he turned 21. College tuition and transportation expenses were shared between Tristan's family and the state Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. The Area Agency for Developmental Services facilitated student directed planning meetings to ensure that Tristan's interests and goals were setting the path for his future. While he was in college, Tristan worked with the school's Office of Student Accessibility and Support Services to arrange needed accommodations. When Tristan finished college, he entered the work force as a small business owner providing administrative supports to local companies. The personal connections he made through his fraternity and his college classes have helped his business to grow.

When planning for a future that includes college, keep the following in mind.

1. Be sure that participation in higher education is a stated goal in the student's Individual Education Plan.
2. Use all the college planning resources available through the high school and enlist the school's guidance counselor to assist in exploring creative options.
3. Consider all the different ways students can have a college experience, including: enrolling full time, signing up for an individual class or a program, exploring a variety of different classes, or auditing courses. (The cost for auditing a class is significantly less than enrolling for full credit.)
4. Look for opportunities to participate in all that a college campus has to offer. Check into options for employment on campus, take advantage of the fitness center, use campus transportation, enjoy hanging out at the student union, be a regular library user, sign up for intramural sports, join a college club, or run for student government.
5. Seek out the disability supports services office on campus. Every college has one and students with disabilities may be eligible for a range of supportive services, including student mentoring.



College Options for People
with Intellectual Disabilities

To learn more about college options, including financial aid, comparing college programs for students with intellectual disabilities, and advice for students with disabilities visit the national Think College! website -

<http://www.thinkcollege.net/?view=featured>

You can check out personal stories here - <http://www.thinkcollege.net/publications/think-college-stories>



Welcome to the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities' new Executive Director, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre.

Ms. Rodriguez-Legendre comes to the Granite State from New York City, where for the past two years she has managed Jericho Project's Supportive Services for Veteran Families, an initiative funded by the Veterans' Administration to end veteran homelessness through prevention and rapid re-housing services. Ms. Rodriguez-Legendre is bilingual, has experience in grant writing and fundraising, and has a passion for human rights and social justice.

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Foreword by ASAN President Ari Ne'eman



INTELLIGENT LIVES

By Dan Habib, Filmmaker and Project Director, UNH Institute on Disability

If Micah Fialka-Feldman, Naieer Shaheed, or Naomie Monplaisier were born in the first half of the 20th century, their IQ scores would have led to a clinical label of “moron,” or perhaps “feeble minded.” Their parents would have been told to send them to live in an institution alongside hundreds or thousands of other people with disabilities. They might have been among the approximately 60,000 Americans forcibly sterilized in order to “improve the stock” of the human species during the U.S. eugenics movement. As recently as 1975, Micah, Naieer, and Naomie would not have had any legal access to a public education.

But Micah was born in 1984. Today he is a 31-year-old student at Syracuse University. He has a vibrant social life, a job co-teaching university classes, and a love of social media. Naieer was born in 1999. He is a talented artist who is immersed in general education classes, basketball games, and a wide social circle at a public high school in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Naomie has not had the same opportunities as Micah and Naieer. In high school she was in a segregated program for special education students and working in a sheltered workshop in Providence, Rhode Island. Now in her late 20's, she is trying to make the transition to a regular paid job in her community.

Micah, Naieer, and Naomie are the central characters in my new film *Intelligent Lives* (working title) scheduled for release in the fall of 2017. The film will explore how our society's narrow views of intelligence have largely maintained the segregation of people with intellectual disabilities. Most of the 6.5 million Americans identified as intellectually disabled continue to live segregated lives based on low expectations. Only 17% of students with intellectual disabilities are fully included in general education classrooms alongside their non-disabled peers and just 40% receive a regular high school diploma. As adults, more than 75% are unemployed.

The film also will capture an emerging new reality in which people like Micah and Naieer have benefitted from the high expectations of family and educators,



Naieer Shabeed attends the completely inclusive Henderson High School in Dorchester, MA. Naieer is featured in the documentary Intelligent Lives (working title).

Photo credit - Dan Habib/Intelligent Lives Project

grown up among supportive peers, and accessed technology and other supports to successfully participate in all aspects of community life. They have been fully included in general education classes, gone on to college, found paid employment, and have meaningful personal relationships.

Academy Award winning actor Chris Cooper is narrating the film's historical perspective drawing on the research of established experts in the field of intelligence testing and intellectual disability. Cooper also shares his personal perspectives based on attempts to quantify his late son Jesse's intelligence. “The IQ test told us nothing about Jesse's potential. About who he was as a person,” Cooper says in the film preview. “Can any attempt to measure intelligence predict a person's value or potential to contribute meaningfully to the world?”

In addition to the full-length film, I'm also creating a 30-40 minute companion documentary showing successful post-secondary transition approaches across the country, from Peterborough, New Hampshire to Tempe, Arizona, to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. The transition strategies explored in this film include entrepreneurship development; self-determination strategies; leadership opportunities; workplace-based learning; and interagency collaboration between schools, vocational rehabilitation, area agencies, post-secondary schools, and others.

The Intelligent Lives Project will include extensive educational and outreach resources, including a website, educational materials, a “take action” campaign, and social media components. The films are currently in the production stage and the project will launch in the fall of 2017.

Watch a 14-minute film preview and learn more about this project at www.intelligentlives.org. If you would like more information about my previous films, visit the Inclusive Communities Project at the University of New Hampshire's Institute on Disability: www.iod.unh.edu/inclusivecommunities.

Photo credit – Intelligent Lives Project



Academy Award winning actor Chris Cooper (right) narrates the new documentary Intelligent Lives (working title), directed by Dan Habib of the UNH Institute on Disability (left). Cameraman Steven Ascher is at center.

This project has received financial support from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the New Hampshire Department of Education, the New Hampshire Association of Special Education Administrators, and many national funders.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS: WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

By Jameyenne Fuller, Intern, Disability Rights Center - NH

Going to college? It's important to know there are differences between your rights when you were in high school and your rights in higher education. Your primary and secondary schools were required to identify you as a student with a disability, evaluate you, recommend accommodations, and provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Higher education institutions are not required to provide FAPE. They are required to provide appropriate accommodations, but you still need to meet the basic requirements for participation in the program.

All public and most private higher education institutions are subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, or both. This means that a higher education institution cannot discriminate against you based on your disability. They cannot deny you admission based on your disability and cannot charge you higher fees than students who do not have a disability. They also are obligated to provide reasonable accommodations, at no additional cost, which allow you to participate in their programs. Examples of accommodations include: early registration for classes and advance access to course information, assistance in note taking, written and verbal instructions for assignments, permission to audio record lectures, arrangements to meet frequently with professors, and extended time for exams.

The institution is **not** required to provide accommodations that would fundamentally lower or change requirements for a course or degree, or would present an undue financial burden. For example, extended time for exams is a reasonable accommodation, but altering the substance of the exam would not be. If the school provides housing to its students, it must provide you with accessible housing. Institutions for higher

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ANNIE FORTS – MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

By Beth Dixon, NH Leadership Series, Institute on Disability - UNH

Annie Forts came into this world with a mission to spread joy and friendship to all she encountered.

As young child, Annie told her parents she wished she didn't have something called Down syndrome because she was an "UP" kind of person. With her boundless energy, poise and determination, Annie helped break down the stigmas attached to those with physical and mental disabilities. She was a motivational speaker and effective advocate who traveled the country spreading her message of living on the "UP" side of Down syndrome. A Class of 1995 NH Leadership graduate, Annie loved coming back to give leaders in training her "You can do anything!" speech.

In 1997, with the support of the Moultonborough Lion's Club, she created the Annie Forts



Annie Forts was a woman on mission to make a positive difference in the world – she succeeded.

UP Syndrome Fund. To date more than \$325,000 has been raised, with funds going to provide enrichment opportunities for persons with Down syndrome and scholarships for students pursuing careers in special education. The fund also has supported individuals with "UP" syndrome or their family members to attend the New Hampshire Leadership Series.

A believer in hard work and volunteerism, Annie was someone who made a difference. Appointed by President Clinton, she served three terms on the President's Committee on Mental Retardation. She was on the Boards of Directors of the National Down Syndrome Congress and the Direct Support Professional Association. She served three terms on the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities, the last as the Council's Vice Chair. Locally, she was greeter at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Meredith, a 20+ year member of the Moultonborough Lion's Club, and a regular volunteer at community schools and the Golden View Health Care Center.

Widely recognized for her contributions, Annie's awards included: first recipient of the Kennedy Foundation's International Self-Empowerment Award, the American Association of People with Disabilities' Paul G. Hearne Leadership Award, National Down Syndrome Congress Exceptional Merit Award, and the Boston Celtics Heroes Among Us Award. In 1997 she was named the ARC of New Hampshire Citizen of the Year.

If you were lucky enough to be counted among Annie's many friends you were the recipient of regular phone calls – just checking in to make sure your life was as great as it could be. If you met Annie for dinner you had to share her with everyone in the restaurant – it was like traveling with the mayor. Her goal was to have as many friends as there are stars in the sky – and she succeeded!

To keep Annie's work and high expectations growing, donations may be made on the contribute page of the UP Fund's website - www.anniefortsupfund.org.



THE CITIZEN'S POLICE ACADEMY

By Julia Freeman-Woolpert, Disability Rights Center-NH

Nate Webb loves everything about law enforcement. As a young boy, he was fascinated with policemen. Today that fascination has grown into a deep respect and admiration for police officers and the work they do. Recently, Nate was thrilled to be accepted to the Citizen's Police Academy run by the Concord Police Department. He said, "It was a dream of mine."

The Academy, headed up by Master Police Officer Ryan Howe, provides an opportunity for Concord residents to gain a better understanding of both the excitement and day-to-day aspects of police work. The program is designed to strengthen the connections between the police and the community. One of the Academy's goals is to encourage people to give back to their community by volunteering.

In April, Nate and 11 other Concord residents began the Academy's ten-week program with a tour of the Concord Police Department. At weekly Thursday evening classes, they learned about the inside workings of the department and covered topics that included everything from computer crimes, evidence collection for DUI investigations, to the use of force. They also met with Resource Officers at Concord High to find out how the police and the school are working together.

Nate was especially excited to participate in a ride-along with Officer Ryan Howe on his morning patrol. After stopping for coffee, they went to a private residence to serve papers, only to discover the person wasn't home. They brought a person to the courthouse for a hearing and later clocked speeding violations with a radar gun. That afternoon, Nate spent time with the police dispatcher as she received and routed calls from 9-1-1. Nate listened in on officers' radio calls, including traffic stops when officers are required to maintain radio contact with the dispatcher.

Officer Howe is impressed with Nate's enthusiasm. "He's got a good relationship with both the Concord and State

Police," he said. "He does a good job being involved in our community." Nate goes to as many police sponsored events as he can. He participated in the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics. He can be counted on to attend every Coffee with a Cop event in Concord, and volunteers for National Night Out, an event to strengthen neighborhood and community police relationships. (This year Concord's National Night Out is Tuesday August 2nd from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at Rollins Park.)

For Nate, one of the highlights of the Academy came on the last day of class when he used the police department's simulator; this provides a virtual reality experience that puts a person into a real life police situation. The simulator is one of the tools used to train police officers on how to respond to emergencies and handle crises. Talking about the Citizens' Police Academy Nate said, "It was one of the best experiences of my life. I really, really loved learning new things."

To learn more about the Concord Citizens' Police Academy or to apply for the next Academy session, go to: <http://www.concordnh.gov/index.aspx?NID=1159>. There are Citizen's Police Academies throughout New Hampshire, contact your local police department to find out if there's an Academy in your community.



Nate Webb and Master Police Officer Ryan Howe



COLLEGE - LIFE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

By Jameyanne Fuller, Intern, Disabilities Rights Center – NH

Participating in extracurricular and social activities at college was very important to me, but sometimes it wasn't the easiest thing to pull off. Not only did I have the usual pressures of classes, homework, and exams to balance, I'm also blind. I read Braille, travel with a Seeing Eye dog, and need special accommodations to participate equally in activities. As a student at Kenyon College, the first thing I learned was that if I wanted to join a club or take part in an activity on campus, it was up to me to know what I needed and to ask for it. Fortunately, my years of attending sports camp for the visually impaired gave me a wealth of ideas for simple accommodations. For example, you don't need a beeping ball to play a casual game of soccer. Putting the soccer ball in a plastic grocery bag and tying the bag shut will do just fine. The bag will make a ton of noise rolling over the grass.

At Kenyon I took part in a wide variety of extra curricular activities, including a charity fundraising game of Humans versus Zombies. Two teams armed with Nerf guns defended opposite sides of the gym. To get ammunition, team members had to make a mad dash for the Nerf darts spread out in the middle of the gym. There were tables positioned where you could take cover, but if a dart hit you, you were dead. Before the game started I asked to be oriented to learn the location of the tables and the team boundaries. I honestly expected to die fairly quickly, but it turned out the other team felt badly about shooting the blind girl. I was able to run out and grab a ton of ammunition for my team. During one round, I was the last person on my team still standing with my "dead" teammates yelling out clock face firing directions to me. Unfortunately, after that round the other team wised up and I was no longer immortal.

In the spring of my senior year, I was a tribute in the Kenyon Hunger Games, a campus wide event to raise money for the Ohio Food Bank. The game involved fighting other tributes with Nerf swords. Since I have some residual vision, I requested that all the tributes wear brightly colored bandannas so I wouldn't be hitting random people over the head with my sword. Before the game began, I again made sure to orient myself to the entire arena, not just the walking paths but the lawns, shrubbery, and trees.

While I was at Kenyon, I started a creative writing club. As the club's organizer, I incorporated the accommodations I needed into the setup of the meetings. Each member submitted stories in a shared folder on the Dropbox site. While we still printed out the stories for club members, I was able to access all the files electronically.

Arranging accommodations for music was my biggest challenge. I played the clarinet in the Kenyon College Symphonic Wind Ensemble and sang in the Community Choir. I needed the music in Braille, and needed my clarinet music ahead of time so I could memorize it. (I would have needed an extra pair of hands to read the music and play my instrument.) Since wind ensemble and choir were actually considered classes, Kenyon's Student Accessibility and Support Services office took care of getting the music in Braille, but it tended to take more time than getting Braille for my other schoolwork.

I'm good at learning music by ear, but it is not a substitute for being able to reference the music in front of me. On one memorable occasion, I got the music the day of the concert. Our director let me bow out of playing that piece, as there was no way I would learn the music in time. Participating in the wind ensemble taught me to be flexible about these things and to have fun, which after all is the whole point.

If you are a student who has a disability, don't let that stop you from taking part in life outside the classroom. The key things to remember about participating in extracurricular activities are: know what accommodations you will need and ask for them, be creative, be flexible, don't be afraid to use your disability as an advantage (we have so many disadvantages, I say it's only fair), and have fun!



Jameyanne Fuller is a graduate of Kenyon College. She will be attending Harvard Law School in the fall.

photo credit – Stefania Severini



UNH DISABILITY SERVICES – SERVING ALL STUDENTS

Michael Shuttic, Director, UNH Disability Services for Students

A new director, committed staff, and renewed efforts have UNH's Disability Services for Students (DSS) office energized and focused on serving students – all students.

DSS's mission is to ensure that all students are able to fully participate in the UNH experience; our office provides assistance to facilitate personal independence and support academic progress. By working to improve access and provide accommodations for students with disabilities, we have found that we are creating a campus environment where students with and without disabilities feel welcomed, included, and supported.

"Accommodations" for students with disabilities provide benefits to other UNH students who face obstacles to learning. For example, captioned videos provided for Deaf students may also be helpful for non-native English speakers or students who are visual rather than auditory learners. Applying universal design principles¹ to instruction and to the learning environment increases the level of engagement and participation for all students. The use of universal design means improved accessibility for everyone and significantly less need for accommodations or alterations. While curb cuts, ramps, elevators, and automatic doors are critical for students with physical disabilities; they make life easier for everyone on campus. Similarly, alternative texts (e-books, audio tapes, downloaded information) provide convenience and improved access to materials for the whole student body.

Typically, DSS provides support to students who are pursuing a postsecondary or advanced degree from UNH. These students must be "otherwise qualified" and meet the "essential elements" of the course/degree. We are committed to maintaining the integrity of UNH's educational standards, while at the

same time identifying a variety of options that allow students to fulfill course and degree requirements. In addition, we look at how to effectively evaluate the student's performance and/or knowledge of required material. Examples of accommodations that address these issues include: access to assistive technology, substitution of a foreign language requirement, allowed absences (when attendance is not an "essential element"), and alternative testing to demonstrate competence.

DSS also supports individuals who in the past never would have considered college an option. These are students with intellectual disabilities who are pursuing a Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP); this is a non-degree, certificate, or degree program offered by a college or career school approved by the U.S. Department of Education. CTPs are designed to help individuals with intellectual disabilities who want to continue academic, career, and independent living instruction to prepare for gainful employment. CTPs give these students the opportunity to have a rich college experience – they live on campus, take college courses, participate in campus activities and organizations – while learning the skills necessary for future independence.

To learn more about UNH DSS visit our website at - <https://www.unh.edu/disabilityservices>

For more information about CTPs visit the Think College website - <http://www.thinkcollege.net/topics/becoming-a-comprehensive-transition-program>

¹ Universal design is the design of products or environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.



IN HOME NURSING SHORTAGE - AN UPDATE

By Déodonné P. Bhattarai, JD/MPH, Volunteer Lawyer, Disability Rights Center - NH

On February 6, 2016, in response to the tireless efforts of family advocates, New Hampshire's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) created a pilot program to assist six families with hiring and retaining qualified nurses for their children with medically complex needs. The program included a 25% Medicaid reimbursement rate increase as well as a special 52% rate increase for nurses caring for individuals who require a higher level of medical support. In addition, a 40% increase was implemented for weekend and night shifts. On April 1, 2016, these rate increases went into general effect, applying to all Medicaid reimbursed in-home nurses. Trumping previous contracted rates, these Medicaid rate increases now apply to nurses serving all populations, not just pediatric nurses.

We first met Heather Donnell and her five-year-old son Lucas in the Winter 2016 issue of the RAP Sheet. At that time, Lucas had just been flown to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston due to a medical emergency – a situation that could have been avoided if only he had been receiving the in-home nursing services for which he had been approved. Since then, Lucas' health has remained fairly stable. However, despite being approved for 80 hours of in-home nursing care a week and being included in the pilot program, Lucas' family is still searching for a qualified nurse to fill weekend and night shifts. Lucas has now been without in-home nursing since July 2015.

Thankfully, since the rate increases have gone into effect some families have found nursing relief indicating that hope may be on the horizon. Audrey Gerkin helped to lead the charge for the rate increase and her fourteen year-old daughter, Lexi, has received increased nursing care because of it. Prior to the rate increase, Lexi's 60 hours of approved in-home nursing coverage was inconsistent, resulting in multiple coverage gaps. Due to the overwhelming nature of her medical needs and lack of consistent, qualified nursing, Lexi's family had seriously considered placing their daughter in a long-term care facility.

However, in February, Lexi became part of the pilot program and her family was finally able to find qualified in-home nursing care. Although Lexi's family is still looking for consistent nursing coverage during the weekend, the rate increases have helped to ensure that Lexi is able to remain in her community, living happily at home with her loving family.

In addition to working with DHHS on increasing the Medicaid reimbursement rates, Lucas' and Lexi's moms, with the support of many other families, brought the issue to the halls of the State House. They worked with legislators to introduce Senate Bill 439 (SB 439) that would create a commission to study the systemic issues and causes of the shortage of in-home nurses and other skilled health care workers, and propose strategies for long-term solutions. Fueled by compelling testimony and strategic advocacy, SB 439 made its way through the Senate and House and has been signed into law by Governor Hassan.

In complement to SB 439, Governor Hassan recently established the Governor's Commission on Health Care and Community Support Workforce. The Governor's Commission will project the short- and long-term need for health care and direct care workers in New Hampshire and make recommendations regarding workforce recruitment, retention, training, and other related issues. The Commission also will examine specific barriers to workforce improvement including those related to education and credentialing and make recommendations for improving caregiver wages, state reimbursement rates, and regulatory structures.

The struggle facing families who lack the necessary in-home care supports is widespread and can have devastating consequences. The Medicaid reimbursement rate increase, SB 439, and the Governor's Commission all recognize the need for systemic change – but change takes time. As we wait for the Commissions to do their work, the Disability Rights Center is looking to track implementation of the Medicaid reimbursement rate. If you or someone you know has been affected by it, good or bad, please send your story to Julia Freeman-Woolpert at juliaf@drcnh.org.



Lucas with his sister Teighan

Photographer – Heather Donnell



RENEW: ENGAGING TRANSITION AGE YOUTH IN PLANNING FOR THEIR FUTURE

By Kathy Francoeur, M.Ed., Project Director, UNH-Institute on Disability

Chris lacked motivation, was often tardy, frequently slept in class, and had stopped doing any homework. By the end of his junior year he was off track to graduate. At beginning of his senior year he was seriously considering dropping out of school. He said, "I stopped caring about everything that had to do with my future."

Challenging family circumstances interfered with Michael's ability to concentrate on school. He was isolated from peers and adults, skipped classes, and when he was in school he acted out. Michael didn't see the relevance of education, "I didn't have time to think for myself. I just could think about surviving."

According to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, emotional and behavioral problems are among the most prevalent chronic health conditions for children. Students with emotional behavioral disorders (EBD) have more course failures, lower grade point averages, and fewer credits than their peers. They are four times more likely to be suspended or expelled compared with students who have other disabilities. More than half of students identified with EBD drop out of high school, putting them at risk of chronic unemployment and poverty, criminal activity, poor health, substance abuse, and increased mental health problems.

Through participation in RENEW's person-centered wraparound planning process, Michael and Chris were able to get back on track. Their behavior improved, they became engaged in school, signed up for more challenging courses, and the first time envisioned a future that included post-secondary education.

Rehabilitation, Empowerment, Natural Supports, Education and Work (RENEW) is a structured school-to-career transition planning and individualized wraparound process to help youth with emotional and behavioral challenges achieve

successful academic and social outcomes. This process, developed by the Institute on Disability (IOD) at the University of New Hampshire, includes interagency collaboration, youth and family participation, school to career planning, and emphasizes building self-determination skills. RENEW is showing promising results; it has substantially increased the rates of high school completion, employment, and post-secondary education for youth with emotional/behavioral challenges and disabilities.

RENEW strategies include: mentoring, person-centered planning, resource development based on the youth's stated goals and needs, flexible or alternative educational programs, sustainable community connections, and formation of individualized teams to support youth in meeting their goals. RENEW facilitators, engage youth in Future's Planning by graphically mapping out the youth's interests, strengths, preferences, dreams, challenges, and goals on large flip chart paper. Describing Future's Planning, one youth said, "It put into a visual everything that I wanted to see; what was important to me and the tools I had to achieve it."

By fostering youth engagement, promoting skill development, and making community connections, RENEW has helped at risk youth make successful transitions from high school to adulthood. The planning team, the RENEW facilitator, and the young person meet regularly to problem-solve, adjust the plan as needed, and identify next steps towards achieving the youth's goals. Talking about RENEW one youth said, "You figure out your goals, then ask what you need, and reach out to people that can actually help you accomplish that." Youth report that the RENEW planning process has helped them take control of their own future, whether it's applying for college, joining the military, or finding a job.

To learn more - http://iod.unh.edu/Projects/renew/renew_main/renew_about.aspx

nTIDE Lunch & Learn Webinar Series

On the first Friday of every month, corresponding with the Bureau of Labor Statistics jobs report, the Employment Policy and Measurement Rehabilitation and Research Training Center will be offering a live broadcast via Zoom Webinar to share the results of the latest nTIDE findings. In addition, we will provide news and updates from the field of Disability Employment, as well as host an invited panelist who will discuss current disability related findings and events.

Dates: August 5, September 2, and October 7, 2016
Time: 12:00 p.m. EST
Location: www.researchondisability.org/ntide

Camp CreATe

Assistive Technology in New Hampshire (ATinNH) presents Camp CreATe, a week long, hands-on experience exploring Assistive Technology for home, school, work, and play. Whether you join us for a single day or all five, it is sure to be an amazingly creative week!

Date: August 1-5, 2016
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Presenters: Therese Willkomm, Ph.D, ATP and Stacy Driscoll, M.Ed, ATP
Location: Granite State College, 25 Hall Street, Concord, NH
Cost: Monday, Tuesday, & Friday: \$99 per day
 Wednesday & Thursday: \$85 per day

2016 Conference on School Culture, Climate, & Positive Behavior Support

Schools and communities continue to face obstacles in addressing behavior and creating a climate that supports academic achievement. Establishing a safe school environment using a multi-tiered system of support leads to improved outcomes for all students.

With the theme, **Transforming Practices, Strengthening Partnerships, Developing Leaders**, this year's conference will include presentations by national leaders, NH educators, youth, and community partners. There will be opportunities for teams to work together and instruction on strategies for school improvement. This event represents an intersection between schools, students, teachers, administrators, behavioral health, youth/family organizations, and community systems at the pre-school, elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.

Date: August 11-12, 2016
Time: 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Keynotes: Kent McIntosh, Ph.D. & Hank Bohanon, Ph.D.
Location: SERESC Event & Conference Center, 29 Commerce Drive, Bedford, NH
Cost: Professionals: \$399
 Groups of 3+, Family Members, or Full-Time Students: \$349 each
 A limited number of free spaces are available for youth ages 14–21. Please call Cat Jones at 603.228.2084 to register.

RENEW Facilitator Training Institute

This three-day institute will provide in-depth training for individuals who will facilitate the Rehabilitation for Empowerment, Natural supports, Education, and Work (RENEW) process with youth with emotional and behavioral challenges. This is also an excellent training for individuals who want to learn more about the RENEW model and implementation requirements.

Date: August 16 -18, 2016
Presenters: Heidi Cloutier, MSW and Kathy Francoeur, M.Ed.
Time: 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Location: Room 330/332, Memorial Union Building (MUB), University of New Hampshire Durham, NH
Cost: \$399

3rd Annual NH Leadership and ABLE NH Charity Golf Classic

Join the NH Leadership Series and ABLE NH at the 3rd Annual Charity Golf Classic. Graduates of the NH leadership Series and members of ABLE NH are working to provide training and create supports to ensure full lives in the community for ALL!

Date: September 23, 2016
Time: Registration at 12:30 p.m. - Start at 1:30 p.m.
Location: Windham Country Club, 1 Country Club Rd, Windham, NH
Cost: \$150 for golf, lunch, and raffle tickets plus one free mulligan!

NH Transition Community of Practice Summit X: Building on a Decade of Success

Save the Date! The New Hampshire Transition Community of Practice announces its 10th Annual Transition Summit, the only statewide conference for training, collaboration, networking, and information focused on post-secondary outcomes for students.

Date: November 16, 2016
Presenter: Keith Jones, Founder, President, & CEO, SoulTouchin' Experiences
Time: 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Location: Grappone Conference Center, 70 Constitution Ave. Concord NH
Cost: TBD

3 EASY WAYS TO REGISTER!

- 1  online
www.iod.unh.edu
- 2  call to register or to request a registration form
603.228.2084
- 3  mail a completed registration form
INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY
56 OLD SUNCOOK ROAD, SUITE 2
CONCORD, NH 03301

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education cannot discriminate against you on the basis of your disability for financial aid, healthcare, career counseling, or other nonacademic programs that are funded by the school, such as athletics or social organizations.

While you do not have to tell the school that you have a disability, you will need to disclose your disability if you are going to request accommodations. Most colleges and universities have a disability services office that will guide you through the process of requesting accommodations and work with you to put in place the accommodations you need. Admissions staff should be able to put you in contact with disability services. While the process may vary from school to school, you typically will need documentation of your disability from a medical professional that includes your diagnosis, an explanation of how your disability affects your major life activities and how it will affect your academic performance, and what accommodations are appropriate.

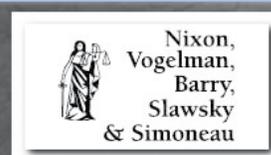
If you had an IEP or 504 plan in high school, this may provide useful information about accommodations that have worked for you in the past. However, an IEP or 504 plan may not be sufficient documentation of your disability, although a school may choose not to request additional documentation if your disability is clearly demonstrated. In some cases, you may wish to have a new evaluation performed either to document your disability or to decide what accommodations are best for you. Unless your college or university requests an evaluation, it is not required to pay for it. However, if you are eligible for services through your state's vocational rehabilitation agency, you may qualify for an evaluation at no cost to you.

Obtaining accommodations is an interactive process between you and your school's disabilities services office. The office should explain the process for requesting accommodations, including the documentation you will need to provide, and work with you in determining appropriate accommodations and seeing these are put in place. You may request accommodations at any time during your schooling. If you have benefited from accommodations in high school, it is a good idea to connect with the disability services office as soon after your

college acceptance as possible. If an accommodation is not working, discuss it with the disability services office as soon as you are aware there's a problem. If you wait, it may be too late to fix things before the semester ends. Throughout your time at school, it is important to work closely with the disabilities services office to ensure that you receive the accommodations you need to achieve your goals and to have a positive college experience.

If you have questions about your right to reasonable accommodations, call the Disability Rights Center at 1-800-834-1721 or visit us online at www.drcnh.org.

For more information about *The Differences Between High School and College for Students with Disabilities* visit the Center on Technology and Disability website - <http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2016-04-20/differences-between-high-school-and-college-students-disabilities-hand-out>.



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Considered by many to be the state's preeminent personal injury and medical malpractice law firm, Nixon, Vogelman, Barry, Slawsky & Simoneau P.A. also has a diverse practice which includes employment discrimination, Social Security disability claims, and civil rights, particularly protecting the rights of persons who are deaf or have disabilities.

Offices are located at 77 Central Street,
Manchester, NH 03101.

For more information, see <http://www.davenixonlaw.com>.

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In order to:

- **Reach more readers**
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The RAP Sheet, is now sent electronically via email. To subscribe to the email edition of the RAP Sheet, please visit:
<http://www.drcnh.org/rapsheet.html>

RAP Sheet

NH COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER - NH

64 North Main Street, Suite 2, 3rd Floor, Concord, NH 03301-4913
Voice and TDD: (603) 228-0432 ◆ 1-800-834-1721 ◆ FAX: (603) 225-2077
TDD access also through NH Relay Service: 1-800-735-2964 (Voice and TDD)
E-mail: advocacy@drcnh.org ◆ Website: www.drcnh.org
“Protection and Advocacy System for New Hampshire”

The Disabilities Rights Center is dedicated to eliminating barriers to the full and equal enjoyment of civil and other legal rights for people with disabilities.

INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY/UCED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

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The Institute on Disability advances policies and systems changes, promising practices, education and research that strengthen communities and ensure full access, equal opportunities, and participation for all persons.

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Phone: (603) 271-3236 ◆ TTY/TDD: 1-800-735-2964 ◆ Website: www.nhddc.org

Dignity, full rights of citizenship, equal opportunity, and full participation for all New Hampshire citizens with developmental disabilities.

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