Annie’s Inclusive Classroom

“Annie” is an elementary school student in New Hampshire. One day during gym, she and her classmates played freeze tag. Kids were “frozen” and others crawled under their legs to “unfreeze” them. At some point the person who was “it” tagged Annie and she froze in the air. Another student ran over to her, opened up her arms, and Annie and her wheelchair rolled back into the game.

Over the past year, schools in her town have been going through a transformation with the assistance of the National Center on Inclusive Education (NCIE). They are working to fully include students with disabilities in their classrooms, and have started with elementary schools.

Later, it was time for Annie’s turn to be it. Annie wasn’t able to tag other students with her hands, so without missing a beat, her teacher ran into the supply closet, and came out holding a pool noodle for Annie to hold and use to tag her classmates. She took control of it, and the game went on.

Through professional development trainings and in classroom support, these schools have committed to change their culture, and have been doing some of the best inclusion work that the NCIE team has seen. Led by classroom teachers who are asking “how can we make this work” instead of “can this work,” the schools have become places where on any given day you can examples of students of all abilities fully engaged in learning.

The NCIE works in New Hampshire, nationally, and internationally providing teachers and school districts with professional development and one-on-one support to include all children in their neighborhood school and typical classrooms.

FY 2014: A Year of Leadership, Scholarship, & Service

July

150 individuals attend the National Center on Inclusive Education’s Summer Institute in Manchester, NH.

The Center on Aging and Community Living receives a contract from the NH Department of Health and Human Services to provide project management support for the Balancing Incentive Program which works to rebalance Medicaid funds spent between community and facility-based long term care.

August

Dr. Therese Willkomm leads 106 individuals in a four day, interactive and hands-on iPad Bootcamp.

Dr. Charles Drum presents Disability and Health Definitions, Determinants and Disparities at the National Institute on Health’s two-week intensive course Introduction to the Principles and Practice of Health Disparities Research.

September

The award winning documentary Who Cares About Kelsey? airs nationally on Public Television.

October

The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (StatRRTC) receives $4.3 million federal grant to improve national disability data.

Kimberly Phillips presents Disability As A Health Disparity Minority Group: Comparisons From The 2011 Behavioral Risk Surveillance System at the Southwest Conference on Disability.

November

Dan Habib gives TEDx Talk titled Disabling Segregation.

New Hampshire awards the RENEW program a $1.1 Million contract to provide the program to 450 youth in Community Mental Health Centers across the state.

December

IOD releases the print and online versions of the 2013 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium in Washington DC.

Dr. Therese Willkomm travels with Occupational Therapy Graduate students to India to promote the continued development and use of low-budget assistive technology for people with disabilities.

January

The National Center for Inclusive Education launches a seven-part webinar series exploring current topics in inclusive education.

February

Dr. Joanne Malloy gives the keynote Creating Hope and Community: The Critical Role of the Social Worker in a Multi-Tiered System of Support at the American Council for School Social Work Conference.

March

The IOD hosts the online mini-course Employment Consulting & Workplace Support Training which teaches employment specialists, job coaches, and others to assist employees with disabilities to succeed in community jobs.

Susan Fox, co-director, and Jennifer Babalais, project director at the Center on Aging and Community Living, presented Kinship Matters: Findings Related to Kinship and Caregiver Outcomes at the 2014 Aging in America Conference.

April

IOD Bookstore reaches the $1 million in revenue and 10,000 orders milestones since launching in 2007.

Thirty-one participants of the New Hampshire Leadership Series graduate and are congratulated by Governor Maggie Hassan, a 1991 graduate of the program.

May


June

The NIDRR funded National Trends in Disability Employment Program (nTIDE) is recognized by the Public Relations Society of America.

Ashley is a 40-year-old woman living in Arkansas. She’s won medals competing with Special Olympics, and hopes to get her associate’s degree, and be able to move out of her mother’s house and live independently one day.

What makes this story remarkable is that a year ago, Ashley didn’t have the energy to get out of bed most days and ended up hospitalized. Diagnosed as being in a schizophrenic catatonic state – the last in a series of diagnoses (some of which came with effective treatments) – Ashley and her mother were giving up hope.

Then they were referred to ArkSTART, where staff went through a detailed investigation of her medical history, spoke with a variety of service providers, as well as with Ashley and her mother. They recommended that Ashley go through some genetic testing, and the results came in that she had Phelan-McDermid Syndrome – a rare chromosomal deletion.

As a result, healthcare providers were able to reduce the number of medications Ashley took, and make sure that none of her medications, including over the counter medications, interacted negatively with many of the symptoms of Phelan-McDermid Syndrome. These changes in medications along with service providers who are able to provide more targeted interventions has meant that Ashley can focus on getting into the community, be more active, and work towards independence. Her story, along with others is featured in a short film Keeping Families Together.

The Arkansas Systemic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Resources, and Treatment (START) project, known as ArkSTART, is part of a national network working with the IOD’s Center for START Services - which aims to improve the lives of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and behavioral health needs and their families through services and supports that emphasize local, person-centered, positive, multidisciplinary, cost-effective, and evidence-informed practices.