

MONDAY MORNING NEWS

Monday Morning is a Council sponsored project that promotes grassroots advocacy for people with developmental disabilities and their colleagues.

The Council recently hired a new coordinator for the project, which has been going through a transition.

Barbara Lee comes to the Council from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation). She received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Psychology from Seton Hall University. She currently serves as Board Treasurer for the NJ Rehabilitation Association and as Member at Large for the Northeast Rehabilitation Association. She is also employed part time as a direct care provider for the New Jersey Association for the Deaf-Blind, Inc., which serves persons with hearing and visual impairments, as well as people with developmental disabilities.

"I am so excited to join the Council staff as the Monday Morning Coordinator, and to work with the people the Council serves," says Lee. "The Monday Morning Project plays an important role as part of the Council, and I hope to expand its advocacy efforts throughout the state."

Each county-based network advocates for issues affecting people with developmental and other disabilities, such as expanding opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in public policy discussions; promoting full access to public services; and advocating to ensure the needs of people with developmental disabilities are taken into account in local, state and federal public policy decisions.

For the past 13 years, the Monday Morning networks have helped make polling and business

places more accessible; given sensitivity training to poll workers and election officials; registered thousands of people with disabilities to vote; participated in rallies in the nation's capitol; and successfully advocated for the passage of state laws, such as the snow removal law and increased fines for abuse of accessible parking laws.

People & Families recently spoke with some of the network facilitators to discuss their past and recent accomplishments, and their hopes and plans for the future.

BURLINGTON COUNTY

Network Facilitator Kerry Walker reports that the Burlington County network has been doing accessibility studies around the county and they plan to continue those.

The network held a voting awareness day at an adult day care center earlier this year, and were hoping to do another voting awareness day at an occupational training center before the election. They planned to bring a voting machine, explain the voting process to the individuals who were present, and register people to vote at each event.

The network is working with Resources for Independent Living (RIL) for Burlington County on several local issues, holding their monthly meeting at the RIL offices. They are fundraising to be able to expand their projects for the network to subsidize more projects.

Walker said their network has been most successful with voting awareness and have registered many people to vote.

In addition, the network hosted an emergency preparedness training conducted by Council Youth Leadership Project Coordinator Frank Latham.

CAMDEN COUNTY

Barbara Coppens has stepped down as the facilitator of the Camden Network.

“I’ll still be involved but I just have too much going on right now,” she says. “Anyway, it’s time to give some new people a chance.”

The network, which meets the first Tuesday of each month, covers the county freeholder meetings to keep abreast of events and make the freeholders aware of their presence in the county. They have held voter registration days and public forums about voting. The network invites various guest speakers to their regular monthly meetings.

They attend the Camden Riversharks’ ADA Awareness Night each year.

“We get a table and put out all of our information about what we do,” says Coppens. “We also put out information about voter registration so we could register people to vote.”

Coppens feels the most important things the group has worked on have been legislation, person-first language and last year’s campaign to amend the State Constitution to remove offensive language from 150 years ago used to describe people with developmental disabilities and mental health concerns.

“We passed out flyers and put out signs on the lawns to get the negative wording about people with disabilities removed from the constitution. We won that one. We got people’s attention. We also have been going to testify on person-first language to the State House in Trenton. When I testified, I said that the ‘r’ word is not for people.”

The group also works to promote accessibility in the county.

“We go out and check buildings in Camden County to make sure places are accessible, like they’re supposed to be. We check the polling places too.”

For the future, Coppens hopes to encourage more people to contact their legislators about issues affecting people with disabilities.

“I also hope to have more Monday Morning retreats, since I bring a lot of feedback to the group from those.”

The network has a hotline for people who have problems when going out to vote at 1-800-922-7233.

**Barbara Lee: New
‘Monday Morning’
Coordinator**



CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Monica Rich is the Cumberland County facilitator. Along with networks member Nadine Bruno and Vicky Dickman, they developed a voter guide for people with developmental disabilities sponsored through the Council and used this past election cycle. The guide offered potential voters with a no-nonsense simple explanation of the voting process and what it means to exercise your most basic civic responsibility. The popular guide will be revised and reproduced for next year’s state elections.

Also for the future, Rich wants to do more work in the area of accessibility.

“I’d like to see different buildings in our county more accessible. It’s unfair to people in wheelchairs that they can’t go certain places. I will bring this up at the next meeting. I’ll suggest we write letters and make phone calls.”

ESSEX COUNTY

Diane Robinson, Essex County facilitator, is one of 11 regular members for that group.

Their network has done accessible parking checks in the county—visiting parking lots, taking notes and contacting appropriate people.

They also do voter registration each election, setting up a table outside the Shop Rite in Montclair.

“We have clipboards and wear Monday Morning T-shirts. Some say, “Vote! Your Life Depends on it.” We sign people up to vote and send the registration forms to Trenton. We have signed up a good number of people, mostly people with disabilities.”

The network regularly holds to recruit new members. The Montclair Library hosts both the open houses and their regular meetings, where they often have guest speakers. The group advertises by word of mouth and through DIAL Incorporated's monthly flyer.

Working on accessibility is a key activity. They are currently working with an Irvington restaurant to advise them on changes they could make to open their business up to more people with disabilities.

The network tracks polling sites, flags those that are not accessible and has helped individual voters to vote.

"We had to push a man up a ramp and help him get back down, because the ramp was not ADA compliant. I'm grateful that we are in place to see what is going on."

The network convinced Whole Foods Market in Montclair to clear their walkway and keep things in order in the store. The Luna Theater in Montclair asked the network to assess whether their theater was accessible.

In the future, Robinson hopes the group will look into how to have the laws already in place better enforced.

Finally, the network is preparing for a big challenge. "The Newark Public Library is inaccessible. They won't budge. We have to go in through the shipping section in the back. I was involved in an arts festival there and my friends in wheelchairs had to get in through a temporary ramp that the festival people brought. We plan to make a stink about this."

ESSEX COUNTY ADVOCATORS

The Advocators work alongside Diane Robinson's group, but do their voter registration in Newark, Hillside and Irvington. They set their tables up near a restaurant to maximize how many people would see them and register to vote. The group, facilitated by Frances Grant, has about 30 to 35 members who attend the monthly meetings. They advocated at City Hall in Irvington, because the building was inaccessible to people in wheelchairs. A church asked the group to assess the accessibility of their building.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Jackie Jackson, formerly the Somerset County facilitator, has relocated to Middlesex County and is serving as co-facilitator with Anita Clavering. Jackson's plan as facilitator for South Plainfield would be to increase the Monday Morning Network membership there and work with the township mayor, chief of police and the community. The network plans to initiate an accessibility tour in South Plainfield and surrounding towns. Jackson plans to continue to advocate, educate and heighten awareness in the community.

MONMOUTH COUNTY

Stanley Soden said the group members have been ill frequently this past year, which cut into their level of activities. The network wants to continue its work on accessibility and voting.

"We are always looking for new members who want to help us make change," he said.

MORRIS COUNTY

Sonya Burroughs has been with Monday Morning for six years. In that time, reaching out to people and trying to make places more accessible has been the most important part of her work.

"I love letting people know that people with disabilities are human beings who should be accepted in society."

The Morris County Network is a small group of dedicated volunteers who hope to advertise and find more members. After the current election, they will continue to focus on voting and hold a voter registration day. "I'd like to have it outside the mall," said Burroughs.

They group also wants to increase its focus on emergency preparedness.

"We hope to have some guest speakers at meetings on this topic. I'd like to get our Congressman, Rodney Frelinghuysen, to come to one of our meetings and hear our concerns."

The group will also do spot checks to determine if any Morris County towns need to make any areas accessible.

OCEAN COUNTY

Facilitator Colleen O'Dell-Multer cited the network's work in getting Huddy Park in Toms River made accessible to people with disabilities. They also toured every high school in Toms River and Brick evaluating the physical plants and making recommendations that resulted in changes made to parking spaces, curb cuts, entrances and rest rooms.

The network continues with its ongoing voter registration at Toms River's Founders' Day, the Statewide Ice Cream Festival, the Ocean County Fair and various community events.

"The Ocean County Network is responsible for sixteen hundred voter registrations. It has been a huge accomplishment to register so many people to vote. We also let the public know about the Division of Disability Services and the Council. Many citizens never knew that something like this existed."

For the future, O'Dell-Multer is hoping that the network can continue being interactive with the legislation in the state. "We hope to continue to help people with disabilities realize that they have abilities, that they count, and that they can make a difference in the community."

PASSAIC COUNTY

The Passaic County Monday Morning Network is working with the Girl Scouts, according to Facilitator Ellen Brockmann. The Scouts went to different polling places in Patterson to identify inaccessible polling places.

"This helped, since our Monday Morning members couldn't get into certain buildings."

Paratransit continues to be one of the network's main concerns. Two of the network's members serve on the New Jersey Transit Advisory Committee where they lobby for Paratransit funding from casino revenues. Four of their members also serve on the Passaic County Paratransit Committee. Both are voting members and assist the freeholder staff in preparing multiple reports and drafting proposals to get the casino money.

SOMERSET COUNTY

A focus of the Somerset County Monday Morning Network has been to assist with the enforcement of the ADA in making communities fully accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. As

the previous Monday Morning facilitator, Jackie Jackson initiated an accessibility tour in Franklin Township to challenge political leaders, clergy and business owners to experience everyday life challenges as a wheelchair user. The goal of the tour was to recognize the anniversary of the ADA.

SUSSEX COUNTY

The 15-member network has been busy writing letters about casino funding for Para transit.

"We are looking for an increase of 1 percent in casino revenue funding," says facilitator Jackie Engel. "They now get 7.5 percent and we want them to give 8.5 percent of casino revenues toward Para transit. We wrote to our representatives in the State Assembly and Senate. We combine our letter writing with other groups."

Engel feels that letter writing is the thing the network does that has the most impact.

"It's hard to get people who don't have transportation to come out on accessibility tours, so our letter writing campaigns have been the most effective thing."

The group has also successfully completed much in the area of voter registration. "We have registered 40 people at Capital Care, a behavioral health program in Stanhope. We bring applications and information. The counselors take the applications around and we get people registered."

The network has brought the Board of Elections to Capital Care to demonstrate how to use a voting machine. They recently had Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen speak at one of their meetings.

"He is going to follow up on many issues that we brought up, especially on transportation."

They plan to bring members of the State Legislature to speak to the group. And they plan to keep the focus on transportation.

"It is a major issue. We have no mass transit up here. If you don't drive in this county, you don't go."

The network continues to meet on the third Monday of the month. "I think we are the only Monday Morning group that actually meets on a Monday Morning!"

The following networks had no updates available: Atlantic-Jersey Shore, Bergen County, Hudson County, Paterson City, Union County, and Warren County. **P&F**

FAMILY SUPPORT

STATEWIDE REGIONAL FAMILY SUPPORT PLANNING COUNCILS

WANTED

NEW JERSEY'S REGIONAL FAMILY SUPPORT PLANNING COUNCILS ARE LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS!

Nine regional councils were established in New Jersey by the Family Support Act of 1993(see map). Their general purpose is to assure that people with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of, and have access to, the needed community services, individual supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all aspects of community life.

The councils work in partnership with the state's Division of Developmental Disabilities to advise on budget and policy decisions that affect people with developmental disabilities living at home with their families. Councils sponsor events where individuals and their families can learn about the services available in the area, as well as host public forums to solicit feedback from the community. In addition, councils regularly distribute literature with important information for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Family members of people with developmental disabilities or individuals with developmental disabilities can volunteer to serve on their regional planning council. Council members assist and advise the Division of Developmental Disabilities as to how resources can best meet the needs of families and individuals living in their region.

Councils meet regularly—usually once a month; each Council may have up to 11 members. Council members are volunteers but will be reimbursed for reasonable transportation, child care and other costs related to serving on the council.

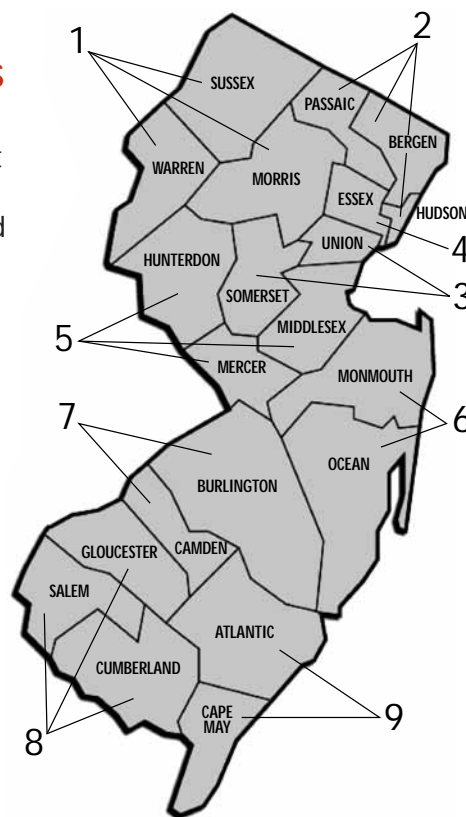
For more information call the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities at 609.292.3745 or visit our Web site at www.njcdd.org and follow the link to Family Support.

THE FAMILY SUPPORT ACT OF 1993

Establishes in the Division of Developmental Disabilities a system of Family Support designed to strengthen and promote families who provide care within the family home for a family member with a developmental disability.

The system of Family Support shall include, but not be limited to:

- after school care
- cash subsidies
- communication and interpreter services
- counseling services
- crisis intervention
- day care
- equipment and supplies
- estate and transition planning
- home and vehicle modification
- home health services
- homemaker assistance
- housing assistance
- medical and dental care not otherwise covered
- parent education and training
- personal assistance services
- recreation services
- respite care for families
- self advocacy training
- service coordination
- specialized diagnosis and evaluation
- specialized nutrition and clothing
- therapeutic or nursing services
- transportation
- vouchers



Visit the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities' web site at: www.njcdd.org ,
click on the link for Family Support, and the number corresponding to the
Regional Family Support Planning Council in your area.

1 SUSSEX, WARREN, MORRIS

RFSPC #1
PO Box 13
Pompton Plains, NJ 07444
Chair: Margaret Hefferle

Meets the third Tuesday of each month
at Morristown Memorial Hospital
100 Madison Ave.
Level B, Conference Rm. #2
Morristown, NJ 07962
7 p.m.–9 p.m.

2 BERGEN, HUDSON, PASSAIC

RFSPC#2
rfspc_region2_NJ@yahoo.com
Chair: Frank Fiore

Meets the third Monday of the month
Secaucus Public Library
P.O. Box 443
Jersey City, NJ 07302
6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

3 SOMERSET, UNION

RFSPC#3
PO Box 1444
Linden, NJ 07036-1444
e-mail: rfspc3@comcast.net
Co-chairs: Bonnie Brien, Kim Szermeta

Council meets the third Tuesday of each month
Children's Specialized Hospital
The Living Room
New Providence Road
Mountainside, NJ 07092
7 p.m.–9 p.m.

4 ESSEX

RFSPC#4
P.O. Box 56
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
e-mail: rfspc4@yahoo.com
Chair: Rebekah Novemsky

Council 4 meets the first Wednesday of each month
Bloomfield Law Enforcement Building
1 Municipal Plaza
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m.

5 HUNTERDON, MIDDLESEX, MERCER

RFSPC #5
PO Box 715
Old Bridge, NJ 08857
Chair: Nellie Shoham

Meets Second Saturday of each month
10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon

6 MONMOUTH, OCEAN

RFSPC #6
P.O. Box 76
Lakewood, NJ 08701
e-mail: rfspc_NJ6@yahoo.com
Chair: Mike Brill

Meets the second Thursday of each month
Lakewood Municipal Bldg.
3rd. Street, Rm. 18
Lakewood, NJ 08701
7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m.

7 BURLINGTON, CAMDEN

RFSPC #7
P.O. Box 641
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054
(800) 216-1199, OPTION #1
e-mail: rfspc7@comcast.net
Chair: Debra Flagg

Meets the fourth Tuesday of each month
Mt. Laurel Library
100 Walt Whitman Ave.
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054
7:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. (September through June)

8 CUMBERLAND, SALEM, GLOUCESTER

RFSPC #8
P.O. Box 5721
Deptford, NJ 08096
Phone: (856) 863-6658
Chair: Nan Ivins
Vice-Chair: John Rubis

Council 8 meetings are held one
evening a month from 7:30 pm.–9:00 p.m.
Call John Rubis at (856) 863-6658 to confirm
meeting date and time.

9 ATLANTIC, CAPE MAY

RFSPC #9
P.O. Box 84
Suite 101
Somers Point, NJ 08244
Chair: Mary Ann Philippi
e-mail: MaryPhilippi119@comcast.net

Meets the third Thursday of the month
Arc of Atlantic County
6550 Dellilah Rd.
Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234
6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Assemblywoman Marcia Karrow (left) and Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula explain how legislative hearings work.



Partners in Policymaking

One of the many highlights of the training sessions of the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities Partners in Policymaking Program is the mock legislative hearing. Coming near the end of the eight sessions—which are held one weekend a month from April through November—these hearings provide participants with valuable experiences in how to prepare and give testimony before legislative bodies. Each year members of the New Jersey Legislature, their aides and other professionals are invited to serve as committee members. Partners participants choose an issue, prepare testimony and then present to the volunteer panel during the October session.



Scott Crass (left), representing Assemblywoman Linda Greenstein, and Jill Moyer, representing Assemblyman Wayne DeAngelo

MOCK HEARINGS

For more information about the

Partners in Policymaking

contact:

Dennie Todd

at 609 084-4516 or

dennie.todd@njcdd.org



Rebecca Timko (left) and Stephanie Rosati-Pratico present testimony to legislators at the State House Annex.

Schools For the 21st Century

by Jonathan Jaffe



Playgrounds can offer options for those unable to participate in activities that require strength, balance and coordination.



Take a look at any older community in New Jersey and you will see a constant thread: Brick school buildings, designed with antiquated architectural standards, were built pre-war with little accommodation for students with developmental disabilities.

Over the years, through the evolution of building codes, the invention of new products and the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, these schools have been steadily upgraded for the 21st century student.

Some school districts have done a great job to make these buildings truly accessible and welcoming to students with disabilities. Others have not.

The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities (NJCDD) sponsored a study in October 2007 to determine best practices in modernizing old school buildings for full accessibility, as well as to highlight innovative design in new school construction.

As part of the NJCDD grant, a team of architects from the Center for Architecture and Building Science Research at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark began studying schools last year and recently completed its first round of reviews. Research centered in Millville, Neptune and Jersey City, focusing on six schools—both old and new—at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Project director Richard Olsen, of the Health and Aging Environments Division at the Center for Architecture and Building Science Research, noted that parents interviewed in older studies expressed concern about how the public schools accommodate people with disabilities.

“In a prior study, parents continually commented on how poor school design made inclusion of their children in neighborhood schools difficult or impossible,” he said.

The NJIT researchers focused on architectural designs that foster social interaction and cooperation, as well as learning environments that emphasize similarities between students rather than their differences.

“We looked at older schools and newer schools to see who was incorporating design that was better for inclusion,” explained B. Lynn Hutchings, a researcher at the center. “We learned

a lot this year, and we will be turning our findings into a manual, presentation and website that school districts can use.”

In total, 5,000 manuals will be distributed to state education agencies and organizations, school districts, school architects and planners, advocacy groups, organizations serving people with disabilities, parents and students. Those interested in a copy of the manual should email faulks@njit.edu.

As part of the study, researchers coordinated interviews with 10 administrators, 68 teachers, 19 school specialists, 18 parents, 52 students and seven aides. Researchers visited the schools during a typical day to observe how children use the buildings and interact with those with disabilities.

Hutchings said smart design can go a long way toward making the learning experience easier and more rewarding for all students. For example, she noted:

- Schools with shorter hallways discourage running in the hallways. This is of benefit to children with orthopedic impairments, who prefer their classmates navigate hallways at slower speeds. Shorter hallways also minimize the stigma of children who may need to walk slower from class to class.
- Creating transition lighting between the outdoors and indoors is important for children with visual impairments. The stark transition from dimly-lit areas to strongly-lit areas can be uncomfortable for those with disabilities.
- Building an awning in front of entranceways is an important design feature, as children with disabilities may not be able to easily run out to a car in a downpour.
- Elevators should be located next to stairwells. That way, a child in a wheelchair does not have to be separated for too long from the rest of the class when they are using the stairs.

Nora Zielinski, a special education supervisor in the Millville Public Schools, said the NJIT researchers visited the schools in her district four times as part of the study.

“They spent time interviewing teachers and getting their input on what sorts of architectural and structural changes make it easier to service students with disabilities,” Zielinski said. “They



Automatic opening doors allow students using mobility devices to enter and exit without help as well as satisfying security concerns.



Porticos moderate light levels and protect from inclement weather.

spoke with our child study team, building administrators and students at the high school level. We were very pleased to be included and asked for our opinion.”

Zielinski, who joined the 6,700-student district in 1988, said schools buildings in Millville have a drastic difference in age, from an elementary school built in 1924 to an elementary school constructed within the past 20 years. She said there has been great care taken to provide wheelchair access in all schools, and is eager to hear what other suggestions the architects have to enhance learning for all students in the Millville schools.

Hutchings said appropriate architecture allows students of all levels of ability to access all areas of the building. Innovative design also makes it possible for children with disabilities to follow the same route and be with their peers throughout the school day.

The architects offered many other design suggestions, such as:

- Schools should not have separate entrances for students with disabilities, and should continually look for ways to keep the entire class together.
- Doors should be light enough for children with low muscle tone to use them.
- Accessibility modifications should be part of the design, rather than stand out. The architects point to one school that has shiny blue paint and two yellow poles on a wheelchair ramp, a blaring indication of where children with disabilities are directed.
- Build recessed water fountains and classroom doors, ensuring the width of the hallways are consistent.
- Use distinctive walls, as well as large signs and numbers, to make it easier for students to navigate the school.
- Sinks should have space underneath to better accommodate children in wheelchairs; sink handles should be along the side, rather than in the back.
- Large cafeterias with hard surfaces make for a chaotic lunch period that can be intimidating to students with disabilities; Smaller cafeterias are suggested.

In October, the researchers launched a second round of studies—this time focusing on six special schools that have been designed to accommodate students with disabilities.

“We’re looking to see what we can learn from schools that have been designed or retrofitted specifically for students with disabilities,” Hutchings said. “We’re especially interested in what these designs can teach us that can be applied to typical neighborhood schools so that they provide an inclusive environment for all students.”

The researchers, teamed with academics from New Jersey City University in Jersey City, are conducting a 12-month study of:

- The A. Harry Moore School, a 77-year-old facility in Jersey City that provides academic, therapeutic, pre-vocational and social programs for 190 students ages 3 to 21. The students are classified Preschool Disabled, Learning and Language Disabled, and Multiply Disabled.
- The Regional Day School, part of the Jersey City Public School system. The school, which opened in 1983, serves students from Jersey

City schools and 13 municipalities. The vast majority of its 125 students have autism spectrum disorders.

- Horizon School in Livingston, serving students ages 3 to 11 with multiple disabilities. The school is in an older building that has been modernized and retrofitted. It includes a newly constructed 2,500-square-foot accessible outdoor playground and an indoor therapy pool.
- Horizon High School, built in 2005, a 32,000-square-foot facility serving students ages 12 to 21. This facility, also in Livingston, includes a model apartment and a technological literacy center.
- The Schroth School in Wanamassa, geared to students with cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities, is a 14-year-old facility with many special features, such as window treatments that improve the environment for students with low vision and computers with adaptive peripherals.
- The Lehman School in Lakewood, designed to accommodate students with significant physical and/or intellectual involvement. **P&F**



The ramp in this combination gymnasium/auditorium works for all the students, regardless of their disability status. Sturdy railings line both sides of the ramp.