NC Network of Centers for Independent Living

Quarterly Report for April 25, 2015

Here are highlights of some of the activities completed by the Part C Centers for Independent Living and the ARRA Part C Center since January 2014 using Federal Part C funding and other source of private/public funding.

Summary:

1. Numerous ADA Trainings:
   * **2010 ADA Service Animal Standards training – Asheville area**
   * **ADA & Disability Compliance training for Paratransit providers –Raleigh Area**
   * **Basic ADA Training delivered in 4 counties – Charlotte area**
2. **Youth Empowerment and Leadership:**

* **Self -Advocacy classes being delivered in 12 high schools over a 5 county area – Raleigh and Wilmington service areas**
* **“Different but Alike” disability awareness and sensitivity Training to 2nd graders in the Winston-Salem service area.**
* **Planning continues for the Youth Leadership Summit to be held in July on the NC State Campus.**
* **Healthy Education, Advocacy, and Relationship Training (HEART) classes were held weekly in the month of February for young adults with disabilities– Raleigh area**

1. **System Wide Advocacy**

* **Advocacy & education provided to two lawyers to ensure effective communication (sign language interpreters) to individuals who are Deaf.**
* **Provided recommendations to the New Hanover County Comprehensive Plan for fairness and equity in housing for people with disabilities.**
* **Collaboration with Charlotte area TV station to increase awareness of accessibility issues created by improper snow removal process**

1. **Individual Advocacy**

* **Resolved 3 IEP issues – Asheville Area**
* **Represented one individual in EEOC hearing against a company for violating his ADA Title 1 rights and won -Charlotte area**
* **Represented two individuals in their Food Stamp Appeal Hearing – both won. Charlotte & Wilmington area**
* **Represented one individual in reconsideration for accommodation hearing with the Charlotte Housing Authority and won – Charlotte area**
* **Represented one individual in disability appeals hearing and won – Wilmington area**
* **Represented one child and parent in an appeal with the school for refusing to allow a service animal and won – Charlotte area**

1. **Other:**

* **Charlotte hired a new ADA Coordinator**
* **Wilmington hired a new Disability Advocacy Specialist for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**
* **Asheville, Sylva and Raleigh are participating in a Community Health Inclusion Index Project**
* **Joy A. Shabazz Center for Disability Rights participated and recently completed a one year research study to disclose housing discrimination against persons with disabilities in rental markets. They surveyed a total of 50 rental sites and the findings will be published sometime next year.**
* **Wilmington recently received a grant in partnership with the 10 year Plan to End Homelessness to coordinate and deliver IL Services to individuals who are homeless and are to sick, injured or disabled to stay in a shelter.**

Disability Partners – Asheville and Sylva

Disability Partners—Sylva

* Provided an Emergency Management workshop for 175 people, including First Responders and people with disabilities, as a collaboration with the Senior Center.

Disability Partners—Asheville—

* Provided a workshop on the 2010 ADA Standards for Service animals for businesses in the community.
* A Youth Intern has made presentations in the schools and is recruiting for a monthly Youth Group at the Center.
* Along with Alliance in Raleigh, participated in the Community Health Inclusion Index project in collaboration with the NC Office on Disability & Health and the University of Chicago.
* Disability Partners stays in collaboration with SHIPP which the SHIPP program has used our conference room for appts during the Medicare enrollment. Staff has assisted in resolving IEP's for 3 families. Staff at DP is on the Asheville Mayor's Committee and assisted with the committee in presenting a community forum about accessibility in Asheville.

**Alliance of Disability Advocates - Raleigh**

* Provided Teaching Advocacy through Independent Living (TAIL) classes in 8 high schools in 4 counties.
* Provided Healthy Education, Advocacy, and Relationship Training (HEART) classes weekly in the month of February.
* Provided ADA and Disability Competence training to paratransit drivers, supervisors and general manager of the MV Transportation system in Raleigh.

**Disability Rights & Resources-Charlotte**

* hired a new ADA Advocacy and Community Education Coordinator.
* provided ADA training to ADA Coordinators in each of the four counties and assisted two small municipalities in appointing and training ADA Coordinators.
* We have advocated with and convinced two lawyers and three doctors to provide sign language interpreters
* trained staff of one nursing home about Money Follows the Person
* reviewed plans for accessibility for two high school football stadiums.
* We partnered with the local ABC TV affiliate to do a story about snow removal and how to prevent it from blocking accessible parking spaces.

We provided individual advocacy as follows:

* Represented one individual in his EEOC hearing against a company for violating his ADA Title I rights. He won.
* Represented one individual in her Food Stamp appeal hearing at DSS. She won.
* Represented one individual in her reconsideration for accommodation hearing with the Charlotte Housing Authority. She won.
* Represented one individual in her rent appeal hearing with the Charlotte Housing Authority. She won.
* Represented one child (by accompanying his mother) in an appeal with the school for refusing to allow a service animal. He won.
* We did not represent anyone in hearings during these three months that lost their appeals.

**The Adaptables Inc— Winston-Salem**

To all you partners in disability world regardless of who does or doesn’t sign your check—The Adaptables would like to state for the record that every time we take part in the life or someone who decides to make a choice to be more independent or to promote the independence of others—it’s a highlight for us –Because that’s IL Baby!

A couple of years ago we decided that “it was never too young to educate people about disability rights and the lives of citizens with disabilities,” so we designed this four hour (1 hour per week) series of lessons to provide to 2nd graders called “Different but Alike.” This program features some basics about disabilities—disability etiquette, hands-on access surveying and a lot of interaction with people who experience disabilities. The students engage in seeing how accessible their classrooms and schools are. They ask people with disabilities all types of questions about daily living and almost every aspect of life. We have found interestingly enough that 2nd graders rarely ask questions about what people with disabilities can’t do, they instead ask “how does he/she do this or that?”

Students who don’t get their questions answered on the spot or have other questions are given the opportunity to write them down and put them in a special mailbox for “Uncle Jim” to answer. Taking a stab at these questions is quite frankly one of the most enjoyable parts of my job. But before we give an example from the most recent mail—you should all know that this program has already been in four of our six counties and has been provided to approximately 900 future bankers, lawyers, teachers etc…

Now for the Uncle Jim –

Most recently Uncle Jim was asked “how do people with disabilities get them in the first place?” Here was the response (many responses to questions are read to the class).

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*Greetings—*

*Now I get some pretty smart questions in my mailbox and yours is one of the smartest!*

*How do people get disabilities in the first place? You have seen how people do really ordinary and cool things even if they have a disability—yep, but how does get their disability? Well—a lot of people are born with a disability—I was born with eyes that don’t work the same way most people’s eyes work—they work worse—but my memory which I have used a lot works better—so… no sense in getting all mad about it now. Some people get hurt in car accidents---ouch—be sure to wear your seat belts and stay sitting down even if there are a lot of cool things to see outside. Some people get sick of might get hurt in a war. If I put together the full list of ways people get disabilities this letter would be long enough to stretch all the way to the lunch room or maybe even farther—but I would stop at the lunch room because I am kind of hungry today.*

*You know when I think about this question I think about it a little differently. I think people have a lot of different parts to them. They have their hair color. They have how smart they are. They have how fast they run. You know a disability is just one more part for some people don’t you think?*

*Anyway… this was a super question and I am very glad you asked it!*

*Keep learning!*

*Uncle Jim*

disAbility Resource Center - Wilmington

* Represented one individual at his Social Security Disability hearing and won
* Received a grant to coordinate and provide IL Services to individuals who are to sick, injured or disabled to stay in homeless shelters while they recuperate. Our homeless shelters are currently not fully accessible to individuals with physical disabilities
* Self advocacy training in 4 high school in NHC
* Participated in monthly Transition Advisory Council Meetings in New Hanover School District
* Participated in the monthly Cape Fear Disability Commission meetings
* Provided recommendations to the New Hanover County Comprehensive Plan for fairness and equity in housing for people with disabilities

Joy A. Shabazz Center for Disability Rights

* Participated in a research study to disclose housing discrimination against persons with disabilities in rental markets. We received approximately $100,000 to conduct this research utilizing persons who are wheelchair users as well as non-wheelchair users to inquire about and apply for housing in targeted rental sites. The testers would record their experiences and provide any additional documentation. We hired a full time Program Coordinator who worked along with the Deputy Director and Assistant Director to fulfill the requirements of this project. We surveyed approximately 50 rental sites of which 37 sites were successfully chronicled. The project was a one year commitment from March 2013-March 2014. The national results of this study should be made public sometime within the next year or so.