

# DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

# REPORT/21



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN SHIAU

# Hello!

## This is Our Annual Report for Year 2021



*PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN SHIAU*



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# WELCOME STATEMENT



*Dr. Tamar Heller*

The 2020-2021 year has been one of challenges and opportunities as the Department of Disability and Human Development (DHD) and its Institute on Disability and Human Development (IDHD) (Illinois' University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities) (UCEDD) has had to navigate the return to campus and the needed hybrid approaches in its training, clinical, and research endeavors.

Our academic offerings continue to expand as we have begun a Disability Legal Studies program in collaboration with the UIC Law School and are in the process of getting approval for the Co-Op Career Experience Certificate for Students with Intellectual Disabilities. We are unique in the country for having a full range of undergraduate and graduate degree programs in disability studies. Despite the pandemic these programs have continued to grow. Two of our large federally funded centers, the Great Lakes ADA Center and the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program were recompeted this year and were successfully refunded.

In addition, we have several federally funded initiatives that seek to provide better integration and collaboration across Illinois' state agencies to provide improved training and services to individuals with dual diagnosis of intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and behavioral and mental health conditions and for adults with I/DD who are aging and their families. These are just a few examples of the myriad programs aimed at better understanding and promotion of health, employment, community inclusion, and disability culture and the arts.

Our clinical services have seen the expansion of the Family Clinic's Cognition Behavior and Mindfulness Clinic (CBM) that serves children and adults with autism and other I/DDs and their families in behavioral and socio-emotional interventions. We are also key partners with a College of Medicine federally funded Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) initiative to provide care coordination and virtual behavioral health to prevent depression and anxiety in teens with I/DD. We want to thank all our staff, students, supporters and collaborators who have helped us in tackling the challenges of this past year as we struggle through the pandemic and as we continually seek new ways to break down barriers for people with disabilities.

*Tamar Heller*

Tamar Heller, Ph.D.  
Distinguished Professor, Department Head

## DHD IN NUMBERS YEAR 2021



# DISABILITY INCLUSION RESEARCH

## Reaching People with Disabilities Through Healthy Communities

People with disabilities experience disparities in chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes, in disproportionate numbers. Research suggests that healthy communities' initiatives that work to implement policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes can help reduce these disparities by improving access to healthy choices for community residents with disabilities. Our study evaluated 10 communities who used the Inclusive Healthy Communities Model that was designed to reach people with disabilities through inclusive PSE changes.



People using markers highlighting healthy communities on a map

We learned that communities made over 500 changes and most of them were environmental changes that improved access to public spaces such as parks, playgrounds, and community gardens. Integrating disability inclusion into healthy communities' efforts can facilitate improved access and opportunity for healthy living among people with disabilities. This pilot project has implications for public health workforce training, current practices, and PSE development with interdisciplinary teams and multi-sectoral coalitions.

Eisenberg, Y., Vanderbom, K. A., Harris, K., Herman, C., Hefelfinger, J., & Rauworth, A. (2021). *Evaluation of the Reaching People with Disabilities through Healthy Communities Project*. *Disability and health journal*, 14(3), 101061.

## Learning Strategies from Business Disability Inclusion Champions



Photo of diverse individuals coming together to form the disability sign

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) is growing in importance as a necessary and value-added business strategy. However, disability has often been excluded from other D&I efforts and is less recognized as an aspect of diversity, especially when compared to other facets of identity. The study "Building, Sustaining and Growing: Disability Inclusion in Business" (Gould, Mullin, Parker Harris, & Jones, 2021) analyzed strategies used by large organizations recognized for their disability inclusion efforts. The researchers interviewed 15 disability inclusion champions from 12 large organizations and asked about fundamental organizational approaches to build, sustain and grow disability inclusion.

Findings highlighted the importance of including and framing disability inclusion as is done for other diversity categories. To build disability inclusion, the interviewees talked about obtaining initial top-level support, joining a community of practice, and developing self-identification campaigns. Sustaining inclusion efforts included enhancing accommodation and return to work processes, hosting training and awareness events, and connecting disability inclusion activities within business objectives. Finally, growing disability inclusion entailed such practices as naming future goals, increasing disability representation in the organization, participating in internal audits, and using information to identify areas for growth.

Gould, R., Mullin, C., Parker Harris, S. and Jones, R. (2021), "Building, sustaining and growing: disability inclusion in business", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-06-2020-0156>.

# DISABILITY IN THE COMMUNITY & FAMILY

## Mapping Disability Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic brought rapid change to the world. The daily life that marked many disability experiences became shared by a larger culture as we cycled in and out of lockdowns and movement restrictions. These changes created new ways of relating to others, to the world, and to disability, especially for people with disabilities themselves. Mapping Disability Experiences is a joint project from three DHD faculty members (Dr. Yochai Eisenberg, Dr. Delphine Labbé, and Dr. Alyson Patsavas) that explores how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted (or not) disabled people's use and understanding of space. The project invited map submissions, envisioned in the broadest possible sense, capturing how people used space. The array of maps we received included hand-drawn maps, poems, pictures, and digital renderings. They focused on environments ranging from a single room to backyard spaces to whole neighborhoods. Some "word-maps" turned their lens on the world at large, capturing political shifts and community responses. Others turned inward, exploring the fears, anxieties, and isolation that the pandemic brought to so many. The Mapping Disability Experiences website offers a gallery of the submissions collected between the Spring and Fall of 2020. We have loosely organized these submissions under the categories Home/Circles, Outward/Community, Inward/Reflection, Isolation/Stagnation. Collectively, these maps capture the many ways that the interactions with our environments tell the story of COVID-19 and its unfolding impact on disabled people's lives.



By Anonymous

Tell us about your map: "My wife has been working from home, so this map represents the few escapes that I have. I live in Iowa City. I'm disabled by Bipolar Disorder I and am on SSDI. My relationship with neighbors has greatly improved. We do favors for each other and we're the only ones each other see". Image Description: Image of a drawing laying on a yellow cloth. The drawing features a circle colored black with pink in the middle on top of two legs, blue with red shoes. On top of the circle is a blue line drawn almost in the shape of a bird and red line below it. Small green coloring is on either side. A grey line comes up and attaches to a thought bubble, colored orange and red. On the right side a cross hatched green square. On the left side looks like grass coming from brown dirt. The background features hues of blue and purple.

See: <http://mappingdisability.digital.uic.edu/>

## New Book Published on the History of Disability, Adoption, and the Family

Based on extensive archival and published primary sources, *Familial Fitness: Disability, Adoption, and Family in Modern America* (by Dr. Sandra Sufian) is the first book to illustrate the historical dynamics of disability, adoption, and family. It analyzes how adoption professionals and prospective adoptive parents weighed the implications of disability and difference for building and sustaining families during the twentieth century. Dr. Sufian explores how disability operates as a fundamental category in the making of the American family, tracing major shifts in policy, practice, and attitudes about the adoptability of disabled children over the course of the twentieth century. The book reveals that concerns about, and actions related to, disability invariably shape the contours of familial belonging, fitness, and worth, and reflect deep feelings of reticence and love.

*Familial Fitness* explores how notions and practices of adoption have—and haven't—accommodated disability, and how the language of risk enters into that complicated relationship. The book demonstrates that the field of adoption gradually moved from widely excluding children with disabilities in the early twentieth century to partially including them at its close. In tracing this history, the book highlights the impact of fluctuations in the demographics of adoption, the role of custodial institutions, financial constraints, institutionalization and deinstitutionalization, disability stigma and rights, welfare policies, and in foster and adoption care. A compelling historical account of these complex dynamics, *Familial Fitness* invites its readers to rethink what constitutes the American family itself.

Sufian S. (2021) *Familial Fitness: Disability, Family and Adoption in Modern America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 330pp.

# DHD CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

## Funding for a New Career-Focused Certificate Program for Students with ID



*Dr. Kate Caldwell (left) stands with Co-Op team members Jordyn Jensen, Dimitri Nesbitt and Litany Esquerro*

DHD received a five year federal grant (led by Dr. Tamar Heller and Dr. Kate Caldwell) from the U.S. Department of Education to build a model post-secondary program for students with intellectual disabilities late in 2020. A team of DHD faculty and staff have spent the past year building this program called the UIC certificate in Co-Operative Career Experience, also known as the Co-Op program.

The Co-Op program is designed to be a 2-year, fully inclusive program at UIC. Co-Op students will take academic courses alongside other UIC students and do paid internships to prepare for a career in the community. This semester, two self-advocates – Bridget Brown and Zahava Auerbach– worked through different elements of the Co-Op program with staff. They provided feedback to help improve the program plans for future students. We are in the process of seeking official approval for the program and hope to open up applications for students to join the program in the Fall 2022 semester.

For more information contact us at: [dhdCoOp@uic.edu](mailto:dhdCoOp@uic.edu)

## Launching of Joint DHD and UIC Law Disability Legal Studies Certificate Program

Our department is breaking ground with many firsts this year, including the launch of the Disability Legal Studies (DLS) certificate program; a joint program between DHD and UIC Law. This partnership is made possible by our expertise in disability studies, our leading research and scholarship in disability policy and law, and UIC becoming home to Chicago's only public law school. This 12-credit campus certificate program is the first in Chicago, and one of the only in the country, to offer a specialized concentration in Disability Legal Studies to current graduate students and post-baccalaureate students.

The law is an area where we often see deficiency models of disability influence decisions that impact peoples' lives every day. Seated at the intersection of sociological studies and disability studies, Disability Legal Studies takes a critical perspective that recognizes disability as a social and cultural phenomena, and calls for this perspective to be included in legal analysis.

For more information contact us at: [DLStudies@uic.edu](mailto:DLStudies@uic.edu)



Department of Disability and Human Development



School of Law

### Graduate Certificate Programs

Assistive Technologies Certificate:  
[Go.uic.edu/Dhdatcp](http://Go.uic.edu/Dhdatcp)



Disability Ethics Certificate:  
[Go.uic.edu/Dhddecp](http://Go.uic.edu/Dhddecp)



# ALUMNI PASS THE TORCH

## International Graduate Alumni Highlights



*Dr. Ming-De Chen and Dr. Yen-Ching Chang sitting with their two sons*

Dr. Ming-De Chen and Dr. Yen-Ching Chang are from Taiwan and both graduated from the UIC Disability Studies doctoral program in 2011. Dr. Chen is an associate professor and head of the Department of Occupational Therapy, Kaohsiung Medical University, Taiwan. He credits his doctoral program and the excellent mentorship from his advisor, Dr. James Rimmer with providing him the inspiration, knowledge and skills to understand and develop health promotion programs for people with disabilities. In Taiwan he has implemented several research grants on physical activity for people with severe mental illness. While at UIC Dr. Chen learned about effective pedagogy. He enjoys teaching students and has received the Distinguished Teaching Award at Kaohsiung Medical University.

Dr. Yen-Ching Chang is an assistant professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan. Dr. Chang learned about mental health recovery when studying in the Disability Studies program at UIC and decided to choose recovery as her dissertation topic. Dr. Chang appreciated the support she received from the DHD, especially from her advisor, Dr. Tamar Heller, who helped her cultivate research capabilities and establish connections to local mental health organizations to finish her dissertation successfully. Currently, she has two government research grants to promote recovery-oriented services in Taiwan to continue her research interest.

Dr. nili Broyer, an alumna of our Disability Studies doctoral program, is a passionate disabled scholar, researcher, instructor, advocate, and artist with 20 years of experience promoting critical thinking towards disability. Dr. Broyer now serves as the Academic Director of the Center for Disability Studies at Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, where she has recently been awarded a Postdoctoral Fellowship.



*Dr. nili Broyer*

This semester Dr. Broyer teaches a new course she developed on “Disability Culture” for graduate students at the university’s Program in Cultural Studies. She is also a dancer in the cast of Vertigo Power of Balance and is part of the integrated dance ensemble that is currently presenting Shape on Us.



*Dr. Manako Yabe  
Photo: Jenny Fontaine*

Dr. Manako Yabe is an international alumna of DHD’s Disability Studies doctoral program and a former trainee of the Illinois Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program. Dr. Yabe was selected as the 2019 Applied Health Sciences Commencement Student Speaker, and her contributions have pioneered a campus safety app and a Disability Studies curriculum at the College of Medicine at the University of Illinois Chicago. Dr. Yabe is the first deaf faculty member in the Division of Disability Sciences, and she is working as a member of the Faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Tsukuba. She has been awarded the Grant-in-Aid for Early Career Scientists.

Her research has focused on “Contributions of Deaf Faculty in Higher Education: A Mixed Methods Study” to improve support systems for deaf and hard-of-hearing faculty members, nationally and internationally. Dr. Yabe is excited to share her first book project, “Deaf Rhetoric: An Ecology of Health Communication,” which originated from her PhD dissertation research. The book is a guide to educate healthcare professionals, medical students, hospital administrators, and medical interpreters about the importance of patient-provider communication with deaf patients and healthcare providers with transcultural and translanguingual competence. The publisher plans to publish the book in summer 2022.

# ALUMNI PASS THE TORCH

## International Graduate Alumni Highlights

Dr. Natasha Spassiani graduated from DHD in 2015 with a Doctorate in Disability Studies. Since graduating, she has completed a post-doctoral research fellowship at both the University of Toronto, Department of Psychiatry and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, in the Adult Neurodevelopmental Services Research Unit. In October 2015, she became an assistant professor at Trinity College Dublin, where she led the development of one of the first transformative accredited curriculums for university students with intellectual disabilities entitled 'Arts, Science and Inclusive Applied Practice', which offers people with intellectual disabilities a high academic standard of learning. Currently, Dr. Spassiani is an assistant professor of intellectual disabilities at Edinburgh Napier University in the School of Health and Social Care, where she works closely with nursing students in educating them about disability studies. She is also a board member of a grassroots disability organisation in Edinburgh and works closely with community members with intellectual disabilities in her research.



Dr. Natasha Spassiani

Completing her PhD at DHD has been an invaluable experience that has facilitated Dr. Spassiani in becoming a critical thinker in sociocultural topics, particularly disability studies. Her knowledge gained at DHD has underpinned her teaching, research, and services in helping to portray an accurate representation of people with disabilities. The PhD program helped prepare Dr. Spassiani for a career in academia as she was given opportunities to participate in a variety of research activities. Additionally, the academic course work has given her a breadth of knowledge to teach a variety of different courses in her career that she continues to develop.

## Alumni Discuss their DHD Undergraduate Experience

Where do the undergraduate alumni land after graduation? How do they feel about the impact of the DHD major program on their lives? We surveyed (on-line) these graduates in order to learn about ways we can better equip the current and future undergraduate students through networking, mentorship and career exploration. Of the 8 respondents, five alumni are working full-time, two alumni are working full time and also full time students, and another one is a full time student in the College of Social Work at UIC. They work in various fields including special education, healthcare, child development, social service and a non-profit disability organization. The following are examples of comments noted by our alumni when asked about their undergraduate experience in Disability and Human Development.

*Learning certain policies from a DHD course was helpful because in the class with Professor Caldwell, we applied what we learned in the "text books" to real life situations.*  
Samantha Santiago, DHD'20

*I feel like in general it has helped me understand a lot about myself and how I relate to others. I've been coming back to the idea of justifying ones existence in spaces and one of the comforting beliefs of disability studies is that people have inherent value. So that is nice to have with me.*  
Miriam Mercado, DHD'20

*Taking disability studies opened my eyes within the disability community. I am able to be the voice for my students especially when they are not able to communicate very well.*  
Natalie Baltazar, DHD'18

## Want to learn more about our academic programs?



### DHD Office of Student Affairs

Email: [dh dosa@uic.edu](mailto:dh dosa@uic.edu)

Phone: 312-996-1508

### Graduate Studies in DHD:

PhD in Disability Studies: [go.uic.edu/DHDPHD](http://go.uic.edu/DHDPHD)

### Undergraduate Studies in DHD:

Major: [go.uic.edu/DHDBachelor](http://go.uic.edu/DHDBachelor)

Minor: [go.uic.edu/DHDMInor](http://go.uic.edu/DHDMInor)

# DHD AWARDED GRANTS

Amid these unprecedented times, 2020-2021 has been a productive year for DHD. DHD received 16 grants from the federal government, including the Great Lakes ADA Center and the Illinois Leadership Education Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND), 8 grants from the state and 8 from other funding sources.

## ***Federal Grants***

The Great Lakes ADA Center, funded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the National Institute on Disability Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) (PI: Robin Jones)

The Americans with Disabilities Act National Network Knowledge Translation Center, funded by ACL, NIDILRR as a collaboration with the University of Washington (Co-PI: Sarah Parker Harris)

The UIC Certificate in Co-Operative Career Experience, funded by US Department of Education (PI: Tamar Heller, Co-PI: Kate Caldwell)

Advanced Training in Translational and Community Engaged Scholarship to improve community living and participation for people with disabilities, funded by ACL, NIDILRR (PI: Tamar Heller)

COVID19 UCEDD Access to COVID19 Vaccine, funded by ACL, the Administration on Disabilities (AOD) (PI: Tamar Heller)

Supporting people with developmental disabilities and their siblings through mindfulness, funded by the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (PI: Katie Arnold)

Evaluation of Opioid-Impacted Family Support Program Grant. Subcontract through Malcolm X College, funded by the U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration (subcontract PI: Tamar Heller, Co-PI: Kelly Hsieh)

Healthy Brain Initiative, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention- National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (PI: Beth Marks, Co-PI: Jasmina Sisirak)

Partnering to Transform Health Outcomes with Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and Developmental Disabilities (PATH-PWIDD) funded by ACL from Rush hospital subcontract (subcontract PI: Beth Marks)

We Walk 4 Health: A mHealth intervention to promote physical activity in adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, funded by ACL's NIDILRR (PI: Kelly Hsieh, Co-PI: Yochai Eisenberg)

Comprehensive Needs Assessment of Older Adults Residing in Suburban Cook County Illinois, funded by Title III-C: Special program for the Aging Title III, Part C, Nutrition Services CFDA#03.045, contract from AgeOptions (PI: Kelly Hsieh, Co-PI: Tamar Heller)

National Significance for Bridging the Aging and Disabilities, funded by ACL, subcontract from the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (subcontract PI: Tamar Heller, Co-PI: Katie Arnold)

Illinois National Training Initiative to Support People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities with Co-occurring Mental or Behavioral Disabilities, funded by ACL's AOD (PI: Tamar Heller, Co-PI: Judith Cook)

Virtual Future Planning (V-FIN) for Adults with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities and Aging Families, funded by ACL's NIDILRR (PI: Tamar Heller, Co-PI: Katie Arnold)

Americans with Disabilities Act National Network Knowledge Translation Center, funded by ACL's NIDILRR, subcontract from the University of Washington (subcontract PI: Sarah Parker)

# DHD AWARDED GRANTS

Crowd+AI Tools to Map, Analyze, and Visualize Sidewalk Accessibility for Inclusive Cities funded by National Science Foundation, subcontract from the University of Washington (PI: Yochai Eisenberg, Co-PIs: Delphine Labbe, Joy Hammel)

## State Grants

Assistive Technology Services to Colbert Consent Decree Members, funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) (PI: Glenn Hedman)

ATU to Clients of Illinois Department of Human Services-Home Services Program, funded by IDHS-Division of Rehabilitation Services (PI: Glenn Hedman)

Assistive Technology Services to Williams Consent Decree Members, funded by IDHS-Division of Mental Health (PI: Glenn Hedman)

Partnership Between the Immigrant and Refugee Community-Led Capacity Development Network and the Office of Welcoming Centers, funded by State of IL: Office of the Welcoming Centers for Refugees and Immigrants (PI: Rooshey Hasnain)

Illinois Council of Developmental Disabilities (ICDD) State Plan Development, funded by ICDD (PI: Tamar Heller)

UIC-The Autism Program. The Hope Institute for Children and Families, funded through subcontract from IDHS, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) (PI: Tamar Heller)

Person Centered Planning Process, funded by IDHS's DDD (PI: Caitlin Crabb, Co-PI: Tamar Heller)

Analysis of Movement from Illinois Developmental Centers, funded by IDHS's DDD (PI: Kelly Hsieh, Co-PI: Tamar Heller)

## Other Funding Sources

Best Buddies Friendship Program Evaluation, funded by Best Buddies Illinois (PI: Caitlin Crabb)

"Code of the Freaks: A Critical Examination of Disability Representation in Film." Awards for Creative Activity in the Fine, Performing, and Applied Arts. UIC (PI: Carrie Sandahl, Co-PI: Alyson Patsavas)

Bodies of Work Strategic Planning Process, Ford Foundation (PI: Carrie Sandahl)

Virtual Coach: HealthMatters Google Classroom to Support Frontline Staff to Protect People with IDD During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic, funded by UIC-Center for Clinical and Translational Science (PI: Beth Marks, Co-PI: Jasmina Sisirak)

Humanities without Walls Seed Grant, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (Co-PIs: Akemi Nishida, Ronak K. Kapadia, and Patrisia Macías-Rojas)

Nexus of Economic Justice and Disability, funded the Ford Foundation's U.S. Disability Rights Fund (PI: Kate Caldwell)

Golisano Institute for Developmental Disability Nursing (GIDDN)-UIC Implementation Science Core, funded by GIDDN (PI: Jasmina Sisirak, Co-PI: Beth Marks)

Behavioral Health Stratified Treatment (BEST) to Optimize Transition to Adulthood for Youth with IDD, DHD faculty Kristin Berg who is one of the PIs on a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) grant awarded to the UIC Pediatrics College of Medicine (PI: Benjamin Van Voorhees) in partnership with DHD.

# CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING

## TAP, IDHD, and LEND Webinars

IDHD faculty are providing training and capacity building activities to promote the health of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and to address issues of trauma and of criminal justice responses for people with I/DD. This includes series of webinars that are archived with many providing CEUs and direct training to community based agencies, such as to the criminal justice system.

## Helping Law Enforcement Respond to People with Disabilities



*Susan Kahan standing in front of a screen and presenting the training in front of police officers*

The Family Clinic is providing a series of training programs for first responders and other members of law enforcement and the criminal justice system on interactions with individuals with autism and other I/DD. Susan Kahan, Clinical Professional Counselor, is an instructor for the Cook County Sheriff's Office of Education and Training Bureau for Crisis Intervention Team training. In response to a request from the Mayor's Office on Disability, Susan provided training for a pilot program offering an alternative response to mental health crisis calls for the Chicago Police Department (CPD). She provided training for all CPD newly appointed detectives on interacting with and interviewing individuals with I/DD.

## National Healthy Brain Initiative for People with I/DD

The Healthy Brain Initiative (HBI) for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (led by Dr. Beth Marks and Dr. Jasmina Sisirak) is a project through the HealthMatters™ Program, in partnership with the National Task Group on Intellectual Disabilities and Dementia Practices (NTG) and the ENGAGE-IL Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP). HBI is one of three Component B projects with the CDC's National Healthy Brain Initiative (CDC-RFA-DP20-2003). Guided by the Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map Series, the HBI project aims to develop and implement public health strategies to improve the quality of life, decrease disparities for people with I/DD experiencing Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, and raise awareness of cognitive impairment for people with I/DD.

## Partnering to Transform Health Outcomes with Persons with I/DD (PATH-PWIDD)

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has awarded a \$1.75 million cooperative agreement to Rush University in partnership with DHD (led by Dr. Beth Marks and Dr. Jasmina Sisirak), St. John Fisher College, Villanova University, and the University of Minnesota. It will fill the gaps in health professions training programs by embedding disability-related content on the health care of individuals with I/DD into interprofessional health education curriculum.

The PATH-PWIDD community academic interprofessional education partnership learning activities are designed for an interprofessional team inclusive of healthcare students and allies. This project has established a national consortium of advocates with I/DD, family members, caregivers, healthcare education and practice leaders, community organizations, and financial experts to impact education, practice, policy, and regulation and achieve improved sustainable health outcomes among persons with I/DD. The goal of the project is to improve the training, education, and practice of pre-licensed and healthcare professional students (health sciences, medical, and nursing professionals) as part of strengthening the healthcare workforce.

# REACHING UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

## Providing COVID-19 Resources to Disabled People of Color

The Chicagoland Disabled People of Color Coalition (Chicagoland DPOCC) continues to create campaigns that are guiding the community through the after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of Chicagoland DPOCC have created digital resources, including social stories and forums on topics such as vaccination, coping with the 2020 elections, transition to adulthood, re-opening of Illinois, COVID-19 resources for people in marginalized communities, and more. The database can be accessed at: <https://tinyurl.com/ReOpening-Vaccine-Database>

In addition, Chicagoland DPOCC hosted its first accessible Juneteenth celebration at Loyola Park in June where attendees celebrated the intersection of Blackness and disability identity. Donations can be made to DPOCC. Your contribution will help cover costs of maintaining Chicagoland DPOCC (including event accommodations and honoraria for guest speakers) and provide scholarship opportunities for undergraduate students of color with a disability in the UIC Disability Studies academic program.

To donate please give online at <https://ahs.uic.edu/alumni/give-to-ahs/where-to-give>.



## Immigrant and Refugee-Led Capacity Development Network of Illinois (IRLCDN) Project

Since January 2021, the Immigrant and Refugee-Led Capacity Development Network of Illinois (IRLCDN) project funded by State of IL: Office of the Welcoming Centers for Refugees and Immigrants (PI: Dr. Rooshey Hasnain) has worked to enhance the service capacity of community-based organizations (CBO) that operate Illinois Welcoming Centers (IWCs). Utilizing a community-driven approach, the IRLCDN explored ways to improve service delivery by 17 CBO IWCs; helped them become disability-aware; and found drivers to agency-level success. These drivers include: (1) fostering multisector collaborations/partnerships (2) sharing knowledge and strategies across the IWC network and (3) finding and diversifying funding opportunities. Deliverables included strategic planning blueprints and recommendation reports as well as interactive tools and video interviews. Ultimately, this project will result in service-delivery and efficacy improvements throughout the IWC network.

Project Website: <https://irlcdn.ahs.uic.edu/>



# PROJECTS FOCUSED ON DD PRACTICES

## Understanding and Improving Personal Planning for People with DD

The Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Developmental Disabilities (IDHS-DDD) contracted with the Department of Disability and Human Development (PI: Dr. Caitlin Crabb, Co-PI: Dr. Tamar Heller) to evaluate and make recommendations to improve their person-centered planning process for adults with developmental disabilities (DD). Person-centered planning is federally mandated for people receiving Medicaid waiver services.

In 2017, IDHS-DDD rolled out a new person-centered planning process in which case managers called Independent Service Coordinators (ISCs) write a Personal Plan detailing desired outcomes, strengths, risks, and support needs of a DD waiver recipient while service providers write implementation strategies to detail how they will support that person to achieve their outcomes and in everyday life. The evaluation has included speaking with various stakeholders including people with disabilities, family members, DDD staff, ISCs, providers, and advocacy organizations. Additionally, an online survey was widely distributed to understand barriers, facilitators, areas of confusion, and training needs related to person-centered planning in Illinois.



### Image description:

This diagram pictures three concentric circles. The innermost circle, in a white background, contains three dark blue circles, connected by light blue arrows, to form a triangle. Clockwise, the circles read “Discovery”, “Personal Plan”, and “Implementation Strategies”. In the middle of the triangle is a figure of a person. The next concentric circle, in light blue, reads “Outcome Progress Monitoring”. The outermost circle, in dark blue, reads “Reviews”.

## Using 3-D Story and Game Technology to Improve Perspective Taking

DHD adjunct faculty Dr. Maureen Dunne and graduate student Helen Rottier received funding from The Autism Program of Illinois (TAP) to pilot a novel technology-based perspective-taking intervention for autistic children ages 8-10 years. Perspective-taking, or understanding what others are thinking and feeling, can be challenging for children on the autism spectrum.

The intervention uses a 3-D story and game world via a smartphone app combined with a perspective-taking curriculum. Children are prompted to think about characters’ actions, intentions, and feelings. Initial findings indicate that the technology-based story world is an engaging and enjoyable platform to introduce children to perspective-taking and that participants demonstrated increased attentiveness, flexibility, and openness.



For example, one parent noted that her child was “happier, more open to understanding what others may feel and tries to see how he would feel if that happened to him.” Dr. Dunne and Ms. Rottier are excited to see where this research leads next as they look for ways to adapt, test and expand the program to more children.

### Image description:

A group of children sitting and playing games on smartphones.

# ADA CENTERS FUNDED

## The Great Lakes ADA Refunded

The Great Lakes ADA Center celebrated its 30th Anniversary in 2021 and was refunded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) (PI: Robin Jones) for the period of 2021-2026 to serve as the regional ADA Center for the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. We are excited about our new and enhanced programs. Highlights of the renewed center include:

- “Ask an ADA Professional” open Q & A sessions focused on common ADA issues
- Arts-n-Rec Webinar Series to share best practices for inclusion of persons with disabilities for the arts/culture and recreation community
- ADA Coordinator Training Certification Program (ACTCP) foundational courses offered “virtual” at no cost
- ADA Train the Trainer program that will recruit and train a core group of individuals as trainers on core ADA issues across the region
- “Tool kits” to promote education and understanding of key aspects of the ADA

In addition, the Center’s research agenda (directed by Dr. Robert Gould) will continue to examine barriers to employment and best practices for disability inclusion as well as best practices for local government compliance with self-evaluation and transition planning.



## Increasing the Awareness and Use of ADA Research

The ADA-Knowledge Translation Center (ADA-KT) supports the ADA National Network (ADANN) to help people with disabilities, professionals, employers, businesses, and others to understand their rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It does this by increasing the efficiency and impact of the ADANN’s activities; increasing awareness and use of ADA research findings to inform behavior, practices, or policies; and evaluating ADA stakeholders’ need for and receipt of ADANN Services.

From 2011-2021 the UIC ADA-KT team (Dr. Sarah Parker Harris, Dr. Rob Gould, and Robin Jones) led the research efforts of the ADA-KT at the University of Washington (UW) with Dr. Kurt Johnson and Dr. Mark Harniss (UW PIs). In the next new five-year grant cycle (2021-2026), the ADA-KT will operate as a collaborative center across UW and UIC under the joint leadership of Dr. Mark Harniss (UW) and Dr. Sarah Parker Harris (UIC).

The ADA-KT team adds Co-I Dr. Delphine Labbe, a new post-doctoral fellow, a Spanish Language Coordinator, and a graduate research assistant to support new initiatives which include:

- 1) developing a KT tool;
- 2) increasing use of ADA research;
- 3) understanding the ADA related information needs of Spanish speaking communities; and
- 4) increasing use of ADANN services, information, and support to historically underrepresented groups.

## Follow the Great Lakes ADA Center:



[www.adagreatlakes.org](http://www.adagreatlakes.org)



[@adagreatlakes](https://twitter.com/adagreatlakes)



[@adagreatlakes](https://www.facebook.com/adagreatlakes)



[greatlakesada](https://www.instagram.com/greatlakesada)

# ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY UNIT

## AT Certificate Program Continues to Grow

The Assistive Technology Certificate Program (ATCP) continues to grow, and to be rated highly by graduates despite the challenges to effective teaching posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The ATCP is a 13-credit hour, UIC-approved campus certificate which provides students the opportunity to learn about a wide array of assistive technology (AT) features and delve deeply into a specific area of AT practice.

The certificate is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). It is one of only three accredited AT training programs and the only accredited AT program in Illinois. Applications to earn the certificate are accepted twice annually by May 1 and November 1. Working professionals can also take individual courses for continuing education by registering through UIC's Extended Campus.



*A blind person using a phone*



*A person attending online class*



*Assistive device*

Most ATCP coursework was online before the emergence of COVID-19. When the pandemic hit during March 2020 and the university required all courses to be remote, faculty teaching in-person coursework re-created the lab-based, hands-on experiences in a safe manner. Strategies included creation of videos to cover key concepts that would normally be handled in lab sessions, and the sending of some AT devices directly to students to enable hands-on experiences. DHD faculty Kathy Hooyenga spearheaded this effort, along with Dr. Stephanie Bay, Dr. Patricia Politano, and Brenda Sposato Bonfiglio. The alternate learning experiences continued through academic year 2021.

A particular challenge was running the required Field Experience course (DHD 590), where students demonstrate their knowledge of quality AT service delivery processes. Instructors Fani Lee and Rebecca Miller guided students through each semester of the course using video observation of direct service provision, along with CAAHEP-approved alternate modes of AT service delivery such as observation of other professionals, investigation of AT resources within a given geographic area, and case studies.

In a survey of 2020-2021 graduates for the ATCP's Annual Report, 100% of respondents indicated they were highly satisfied or satisfied with the program. Additionally, 90% were employed and providing AT services.

Learn more about the UIC AT Certificate Program at:

<https://ahs.uic.edu/disability-human-development/admissions-and-programs/assistive-technology-certificate/>

**Follow the Assistive Technology Unit:**



<https://ahs.uic.edu/assistive-technology-unit>



@UICATU

# LEND PROGRAM

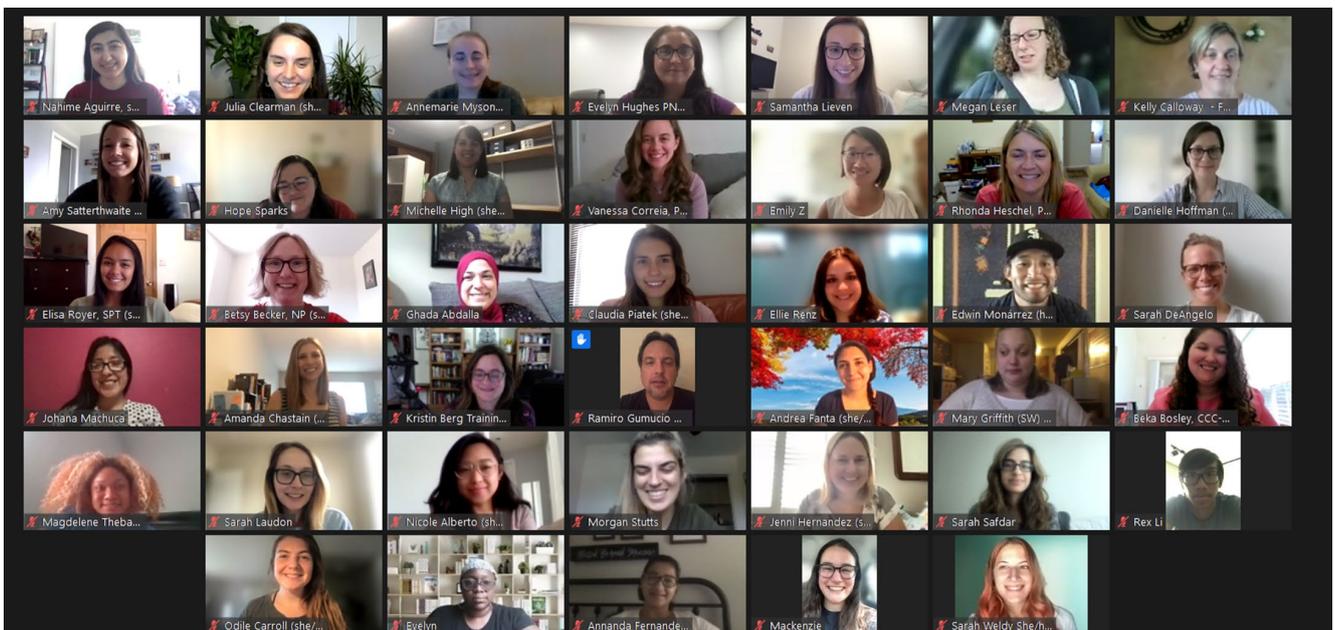
## Illinois LEND Program Awarded for Another Five Years

The Illinois Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (IL LEND) program is refunded for another 5-year cycle. Despite the limitations and challenges of COVID-19, IL LEND has been able to adapt its program to the remote learning platform while remaining measurably impactful to its students, partners, and community. With trainees from across the state, this 1-year interdisciplinary training program prepares future leaders who will serve children with neurodevelopmental and related disabilities and their families.

In FY 2021, 29 trainees from 14 different disciplines, including Special Education, Psychology, Family, and Self-Advocacy, completed the IL LEND fellowship. Leadership education is one of the core goals of the IL LEND program. Trainees reflect on their leadership goals through weekly didactic sessions including a session where trainees complete and learn about the StrengthsFinder assessment and discuss and review its results; and a leadership panel of diverse leaders in research, healthcare, government, and community participate in a discussion about their challenges and successes in their unique paths and provide strategies and tips for our future workforce.

IL LEND provides many opportunities for trainees to practice their leadership and advocacy, through creating and presenting a policy brief to legislatures, working on a research/leadership project, and developing a quality improvement plan. IL LEND alumni continue to advocate for the populations they serve as they progress in their respective fields, and we encourage trainees to stay involved and active in leadership development.

This year, former pediatrics trainee, Anjali Rao, was selected to serve on the Association of University Centers on Disabilities Autism Special Interest Group (SIG) as the Academic/Clinical Vice Chair where she will work collaboratively on SIG activities throughout the year.



A screenshot of a Zoom meeting featuring LEND trainees

Follow the LEND program:



# SUPPORT DHD!

We appreciate your donations to our DHD funds!

**Anne Hopkins Scholarship Fund - 2021 award recipients, Fani Lee and Ellyn McNamara**

For DHD graduate students interested in any of the following research topics: disability and sex, relationships and dating, social model of disability, social entrepreneurship.

**Carlos Drazen Memorial Research Award - 2021 award recipient, Mariana Garcia Torres**

To support educational opportunities for DHD graduate students interested in the intersection of race and disability.

**Edward Page-El Fund MD Student Award Fund - 2021 award recipient, Randa Abdelrahim**

To support educational opportunities for DHD graduate students interested in social or medical aspects of neurological disabilities.

**UIC Charlotte A. Tate College of Applied Health Sciences Student Fund - 2021 award recipient, Jacqueline Kish**

For a DHD graduate student who demonstrates a multidisciplinary approach across health, society, and disability.

**UIC Albrecht Global Lecture on Disability Endowed Fund**

To feature an internationally renowned disabilities scholar at a lectureship.

**UIC Assistive Technology Unit (ATU) Fund**

For unrestricted support of the ATU, including but not limited to equipment purchase and modification, community distribution, and educational efforts.

**UIC Bodies of Work Support Fund**

For the Bodies of Work Project, which is a network of artists and organizations whose art showcases and celebrates the disability experience, housed in DHD.

**UIC DHD/OT Black and Latinx Student Scholarship Fund**

For support of DHD and Occupational Therapy students. Preference is given to students who contribute to the diversity of each unit, with further preference given to students that aim to serve or do research with Black and Latinx communities or that are involved in or interested in student organizations at UIC that promote Black and Latinx interests in society.

**UIC Disability and Human Development Annual Fund for Excellence**

For unrestricted use in the Department of Disability and Human Development.

**UIC Disabled People of Color Coalition (DPOCC) Fund**

For unrestricted support of the collaborative work between DHD and the Chicagoland DPOCC including a DHD student scholarship fund, accessibility accommodations, travel costs, seminar support.

**UIC Neal H. Gottlieb Memorial Scholarship Fund - 2021 award recipient, Beija Teolis**

For junior or senior undergraduate students enrolled in the BS in DHD program who have a physical disability.

To support DHD go to:

<https://ahs.uic.edu/alumni/give-to-ahs>



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Tara Ahern	Jessica Buettner	Lisa Cesal
Sarah Demissie	Marty Fox	Michael Grice
Abla Gharib	Nora Handler	Stevie Hopkins
Laurie Jerue	Brittany King	Elbert Lott
Dorella Rivera	Leanne Roth	Cathy Saunders
Vincent Smith	Jada Mercedes Thompson	Monica Thorns

**Consumer Advisory Committee Organizational Representatives:**

**Francisco Alvarado**, Division of Rehabilitation Services

**Rachel Arfa**, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

**Kathy Carmody (Chair)**, Institute on Public Policy for Persons with Disabilities

**Ryan Croke**, Illinois Department of Human Services

**Amy Deegan**, Illinois Board of Education, Special Education Department

**Donald Dew**, Habilitative Systems, Inc.

**Thane Dykstra**, Trinity Services, Inc.

**Amie Lulinski**, The Arc of Illinois

**Thomas Jerkovitz**, UIC – Specialized Care for Children

**Kimberly Mercer-Schleider**, Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

**Leanne Mull**, The Council of Quality and Leadership

**Zena Naiditch/Nicol Beaumont**, Equip for Equality

**Teresa Parks**, Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission

**Clint Paul**, The Hope Institute for Children and Families

**Jessica Sipovic**, Chicago Public Schools Office of Diverse Learner Supports & Services

**Allison Stark**, Division of Developmental Disabilities

**Laura Wilhelm**, Disability:IN Chicagoland

**Follow the UIC Department of Disability and Human Development :**

[www.idhd.ahs.uic.edu](http://www.idhd.ahs.uic.edu)



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