

# Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council

*Making a Difference in the Lives of People with Developmental Disabilities*

**Advocacy**

**Capacity Building**

**Systems Change**

## A Few of Our Initiatives

Issue: According to the U.S. Department of Labor, less than 23% of people with disabilities are in the labor force as compared to 72% of people without disabilities.

- The Council is funding **training and technical assistance to employment service providers** to enable them to serve people with severe disabilities in integrated, competitive employment.
- The Council is funding a project through an organization called Best Buddies that will secure businesses, organizations, and professionals to host students and adults with developmental disabilities at work sites across the state. This project will **increase public awareness and demonstrate the abilities of people with developmental disabilities through meaningful involvement in work related activities.**

Issue: Louisiana's Developmental Disabilities System is disproportionately invested in high cost, out-dated institutional services, leaving more than 9,000 people on a waiting list for cost effective, community-based services.

- The Council **advocates for reform of the DD System** so it can better meet the needs of all Louisiana's citizens with developmental disabilities. We provide information and support to individuals with disabilities and their families through a grassroots advocacy network, LaCAN. Due to the Council's efforts **more than 3,500 individuals received home and community based waiver services in the past two years.** Unfortunately, the institutional system is still standing strong and more than 9,000 people continue to go without needed services, so our advocacy efforts to realign resources must continue.

Issue: Between 2001 and 2006, 71,922 Louisiana students dropped out of High School. Roughly 40-45% of those students had disabilities.

- In 2008 the Council's education grassroots advocacy network, LaTEACH (La. Together Educating All Children), **successfully advocated for BESE's approval of a Standard High School Diploma for students with disabilities** who pass the La. Alternate Assessment (LAA2) and required Carnegie units. The LAA2 is an alternative to the state's graduate exit exam (GEE). It provides accommodations for a student's disabilities but measures the same content as the GEE.

Issue: Separate is not Equal – Most children with disabilities and their families do not need or want separate recreational programs for their children.

- The Council is funding **training and technical assistance to city and parish recreation departments** so they are able to include children with disabilities in inclusive sports leagues. These have been so successful that the cities/parishes have appropriated local funds to continue the programs once Council funding ends.