

CPD's Consumer Advisory Council Receives AUCD Award | CPD

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Gordon Richins, CPD Consumer Liaison, with the COCA award

The Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University was honored for its Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) at the annual meeting of the Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD) in Washington, D.C. on Nov. 11, 2014. The award was given by AUCD's Council on Consumer Advocacy (COCA).

The CPD was nominated by its consumer liaison, Gordon Richins. Because Richins is also a member of the COCA nominating committee, he was not allowed to take part in the selection process.

"I didn't know we won until I got to Washington," Richins said. "It's pretty cool."

Every University Center on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) in the AUCD network has a Consumer Advisory Council, and one is chosen for the COCA award each year, Richins said.

"It's very competitive," he said.

The award was given based on the following criteria:

- strong commitment to support the full and active participation of self-advocates and family members on its consumer advisory council;
- leadership in the promotion and use of assistive technology;
- outstanding record in person- and family-centered principles; and
- utilizes culturally competent approaches and overall consumer accessibility in all aspects of their mission.

The CPD's Consumer Advisory Council is very active, said CPD director Bryce Fifield, citing the twice-yearly Community Investment Award selected and given by the CAC, which is made up of five self-advocates, five family members of individuals with a disability and five state agencies or organizations that provide services to people with disabilities. Twice yearly, family members and state agencies nominate organizations for the Community Investment Award, and the self-advocates review the nominations and vote on the recipient.

"All of these things wouldn't be happening without Gordon," Fifield said.



Gordon Richins accepting the COCA award at the AUCD annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

"It is an honor to receive this," Richins said. "We do have a strong CAC, and with Bryce's support it's grown. It's an honor for me, because my peers on the COCA nominating committee selected the CPD for this award. The only bad thing is I had to go up in front of all those people and that isn't my cup of tea."

The full text of the nomination is below:

Nomination of the Center for Persons with Disabilities (CPD),

Utah's UCEDD, for the 2014 COCA Award

The members of the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) of Utah State University's Center for Persons with Disabilities (CPD) nominate the CPD for the 2014 AUCD COCA Award. Since 1972, the CPD's goal has been to improve the lives of people with disabilities and their families through research, education, services and technical assistance.

- **The CPD has exhibited the strongest commitment to support the full and active participation of self-advocates and family members on its Consumer Advisory Council.**

COCA member Gordon Richins is the CPD's Consumer Liaison and provides technical assistance for the CAC, which is comprised of five self-advocates, five parent/family member advocates and five state agencies or organizations.

The CPD encourages the development of leadership skills by asking the CAC to nominate and choose the winner of the Community Investment Award. Twice a year, parent and/or agency representatives nominate an agency. Self-advocates review the nominations and select the winner of the \$500 award to recognize a Utah non-profit organization that makes outstanding contributions to the quality of life of individuals with disabilities and their families.

In addition, the CAC meets face-to-face twice a year and virtually throughout the year via telephone conference calls, Skype and videoconferencing services provided by USU at the CPD. The CPD supports CAC members by providing technical assistance as well as financial support. Members offer their individual expertise as they complete assignments and projects in support of the CPD, such as the ongoing review and evaluation of the CPD's five-year plan.

- **The CPD demonstrates leadership in the promotion and use of assistive technology to enhance the lives and participation of individuals with disabilities.**

The CPD's Utah Assistive Technology Program (UATP) provides assistive technology devices and training to people with disabilities to increase their independence and improve their quality of life. The AT Lab provides statewide one-on-one consulting and direct service to individuals and

families by evaluating an individual's needs and matching those needs with a mobility device that is specifically designed and adapted for the individual. The AT Lab is also a service-learning site for several university classes and offers hands-on experience to students in a variety of disciplines as they research, develop and test assistive technology devices for individuals statewide.

An ongoing research component between the CPD and USU's College of Engineering has resulted in projects such as an automated pill dispenser, a wheelchair lift that stores in a car's trunk and a motorized creeper that allows a mechanic with paraplegia full access to the underside of a car.

Citizens Re-utilizing Assistive Technology Equipment (CReATE) was established in 2007 and is housed at the CPD AT Lab and at the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) in Salt Lake City. CReATE accepts donations of used mobility equipment from throughout the state of Utah, refurbishes the equipment and makes it available at a low cost.

The Utah Assistive Technology Foundation (UATF) works with Zion's Bank and the Utah Micro-Enterprise Loan Fund to provide low-interest loans to purchase AT devices. The UATF also offers small grants of \$250 or less on a limited basis through non-federal funding. More than \$1 million has been loaned to consumers through this program.

- **The CPD has an outstanding record in providing and encouraging best or promising practices in person- and family-centered principles.**

Best practices in person- and family-centered principles of care depend upon the healthcare provider's understanding and treatment of the whole person, not simply his or her disability. The CPD promotes best practices with an interdisciplinary approach to training, research and direct services.

CPD trainees in the Utah Regional Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (URLEND) program for graduate and post-graduate students, and the Interdisciplinary Disability Awareness and Service Learning (IDASL) program, for upper-level undergraduate and graduate students, learn to view disability through the eyes of their peers, as well as through the lens of their own discipline.

Research at the CPD is a collaboration across disciplines including biomedical, behavioral, special education, speech-language pathology and others. At the CPD's Interdisciplinary Autism Spectrum Disorder Evaluation

Clinic, clients and their families undergo standard autism evaluations, but are also seen by a speech-language pathologist, a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, a clinical psychologist and a medical doctor over a period of several days. In a feedback session at the end of the evaluation, families receive an easy-to-understand report and a list of community resources. The Up to 3 early intervention program's staff includes speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, an autism specialist, a nurse and a social worker to ensure children and their families receive the services they need.

• The CPD utilizes culturally competent approaches and overall consumer accessibility in all aspects of their mission (including publications, activities, and projects).

The CPD shares information on research, technical assistance, programs and services with professionals, students and people with disabilities in Utah and around the world. In FY 2012, information dissemination efforts reached 2.1 million people through website visits, print materials, presentations and media mentions.

The CPD website is the main portal to access programs and staff listings, as well as the blog and social media platforms, and is completely accessible to screen readers, thanks to the CPD's WebAIM (Web Accessibility in Mind) project, an internationally recognized authority on web accessibility. The CPD blog offers a monthly contribution by Multicultural Coordinator, JC Vazquez, as well as monthly posts by CAC members. Vazquez provides multicultural awareness training as it relates to disability at the CPD and to other programs and agencies statewide.

Online and print publications include culturally diverse images. Many of the publications have been translated into Spanish, and a Spanish-language interpreter is available to answer questions as needed. Training materials have been translated into several different languages, including Arabic and Polish.