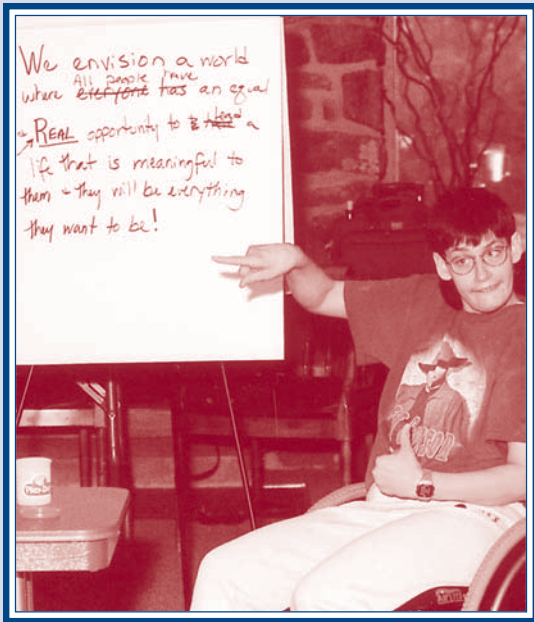




5800 W. 10th, Suite 805, Little Rock, AR 72204
Telephone: 501-661-2589
Voice/TDD 800-462-0599, ext. 661-2589
Web Site: www.ddcouncil.org

Do You Know...

**about the Arkansas Governor's
Developmental Disabilities Council
and the programs and activities
it funds in support of individuals
with disabilities and their families?**



Do you know...

what the Arkansas Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) is and what it does? Governor-appointed, the Council consists of individuals with developmental disabilities, family members, directors of state agencies that serve people with disabilities and representatives from nonprofit and private organizations concerned with providing supports and services for people with disabilities.

The Council's primary objective is to improve the independence and productivity of people with developmental disabilities and to ensure their integration and inclusion into the community. It is the Council's belief that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families are the primary decision-makers on all matters affecting their lives and that this philosophy works best when individuals are given viable choices of where they live, work, play, learn, worship and participate in daily life experiences.

Do you know...

what a developmental disability is? According to the federal law (PL 106-402) the term "developmental disability" means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments; is manifested before the age of 22; is likely to continue indefinitely; results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity:

- ◆ Self-care;
- ◆ Receptive and expressive language;
- ◆ Learning;
- ◆ Mobility;
- ◆ Self-direction;
- ◆ Capacity for independent living;
- ◆ Economic self-sufficiency, and

reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

Do you know...

how many Arkansas citizens are persons with a development disability? According to the U.S. Census Bureau, over 570,000 Arkansans have a disability. Of that number, an estimated 54,000 are individuals with developmental disabilities. It is the Council's job to increase awareness and understanding about issues faced by people with developmental disabilities and to work with other state and federal government agencies and not-for-profit organizations to increase educational, employment and social opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.

Quality Assurance

Do you know that more than 30 percent of Americans with disabilities report they're not involved in their communities. It doesn't have to be that way. Given an opportunity, persons with developmental disabilities and their families are active and concerned citizens. They care about the future. They want a voice in opening their horizons. They want to participate in the process. And when they get the opportunity, they do. They attend the Arkansas People First annual conference and its monthly regional chapter meetings across the state. They come to the training and advocacy workshops conducted at the annual State Conference. They express their opinions and voice their concerns. They go to school, hold a job, pay taxes and participate whenever and wherever possible in the political system. They are, in every respect, like all other citizens. And, like everyone else, they want and expect to be equal partners in the American dream.



Employment

Do you know that only 32 percent of Americans with disabilities aged 18 to 64 are working? That's a national shame. Why? Because employment for a person with a disability makes a difference. Jobs foster independence, integration and inclusion in every aspect of community life.



Workplace inclusion is a key element and is possible only through a significant effort to affect systemic change. That's why DDC has increased its efforts to create integrated work opportunities, educate employers about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and provide the training and support needed to help people with disabilities succeed in the workplace.

Jackson County Learning Center – "The Paper Drop" (a paper recycling center) and "Old Treasures" (a thrift shop) employs 16 people with developmental disabilities on a part-time basis. Located in Newport, the store and recycling center also employs several people without disabilities, including a volunteer staff at the thrift shop.

Elizabeth Richardson Center – Funded to increase longevity in the work place for people with disabilities, this "model mentoring" project's primary focus is to develop long-term organizational changes that lead to increased job opportunities for people with disabilities while, at the same time, meeting the needs of the employment community. Project activities include working with individuals, employers, workplace mentors, local high schools and the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services

Rainbow of Challenges, Inc. – A unique partnership between a community provider and a state-operated Human Development Center, this "Job Empowerment" program employs people with and without disabilities to manufacture and market crafts, gift baskets, bath oils, scented soaps and lotions. Located at Rainbow Junction in Caddo Valley, the specialty shop serves as an outlet for items purchased from production settings involving people with disabilities throughout the state.

Community Services

Do you know the unfortunate fact is that Arkansans with disabilities are more than twice as likely as those without disabilities to either postpone or do without needed health care because they can't afford or get to it. This was among the Council's major concerns when it decided to fund the Partners for Inclusive Communities' Disability Services Professional training program. An ongoing project, the program is focused on recruitment, training, certification and retention of DSPs. A uniform curriculum for DSP training has been developed and is being used to support community-based agencies in providing quality training to DSPs in emergency situations (such as staff turn over) until "live" training is available. Other areas of focus include voluntary certification, career ladder opportunities, criminal background checks and wage/benefits issues.



Education

Do you know that 22 percent of Americans with disabilities fail to complete high school? That's compared to 9 percent of those without disabilities. That's changing in Arkansas. Thanks to a dedicated group of college-level educators and junior and senior high school teachers, inclusive education is becoming a reality for Arkansas children with disabilities. It's just a matter of "educating the educators" about how inclusive education works and how it benefits students with disabilities and their classmates alike. Participating in the DDC-funded Dean's Symposium, these "educators of educators" are working hard to make certain that inclusive education and community inclusion become an integral part of the regular and special education curricula. What they know, what they're trying to impart, is that the inclusion of students with disabilities can and will change the very fabric of our schools and communities.



Cross-Cutting

Do you know DDC is a major source for information about and awareness of the many issues facing people with disabilities? In concert with an active network of government agencies and not-for-profit organizations, the Council plays a leading role in improving services and supports for and perceptions of people with developmental disabilities. The Council also provides access to information on a wide range of programs for people with developmental disabilities. Brochures, a well-visited website and e-newsletters provide written and electronic links to numerous state and federal agencies and not-for-profit organizations. Every other year DDC conducts a series of meetings with state legislators during which the Council makes a topic-specific presentation relative to the needs of people with disabilities, and explains its duties and responsibilities within the disabilities community.

