

update

making a difference in the lives of people



full futures for all page 7



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agrability project helps farmers with disabilities succeed in agriculture

The Institute on Human Development and Disability, and UGA's Cooperative Extension Service, have joined forces to offer *AgrAbility in Georgia* through a grant funded by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. AgrAbility in Georgia will help agricultural workers with disabilities continue working to produce the quality agricultural products that are so important to Georgia's economy.

Agricultural production is one of the nation's most hazardous occupations. Each year hundreds of thousands of people working in agriculture experience injuries that limit their ability to perform essential farm tasks. Tens of thousands more become disabled as a result of non-farm injuries, illnesses, other health conditions, and the aging process. Like their urban counterparts, approximately 20% of farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers have disabilities that interfere with their work.

For many of these individuals, the presence of a disability jeopardizes their rural and agricultural futures. Rural isolation, a tradition of self-reliance, and gaps in rural service delivery systems frequently prevent agricultural workers with disabilities from taking advantage of growing expertise in modifying farm operations, promoting farmstead accessibility, and using assistive technologies to safely accommodate disability in agricultural and rural settings. With access to these resources, the majority of agricultural workers with disabilities can continue to earn their livelihoods in agriculture and participate fully in rural community life.

Georgia AgrAbility staff can help agriculture workers design and customize assistance plans based on the type of farming operation or job tasks, taking into consideration the needs of the individual who has a permanent injury or disability and his or her family. The plan may include developing a business strategy for operational success, worksite modification, peer support, job restructuring, and equipment purchase or modification.



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disability is diversity

Zolinda Stoneman, Ph.D., IHDD Director



Humans are very skilled at sorting things into categories. Young children spend hours playing with shape boxes, inserting blocks of a certain color and shape into the right opening. Similarly, children notice differences among people and begin a lifelong process of sorting people into categories. We as adults teach children which differences are important, which are valued, and which are stigmatized. He is like me, she is not like me. Being like me is good. People who are like me are better people than those who are not like me. If I am able-bodied, people with disabilities are not like me. Attitudes about people with disabilities are learned early in life.

Universities across the country have developed curricula to teach students that diversity among people is to be valued rather than to be feared. At the University of Georgia, we are beginning a Disability is Diversity campaign. The goal of the campaign is to create a university community that welcomes students with disabilities and causes students to think about people with disabilities in a different way. Rather than viewing people with disabilities as not like me, the campaign highlights disability as being a natural part of our human condition, one of many variations among people that make our world a richer, more interesting place in which to live.

If the Disability is Diversity campaign is successful, students graduating from our university will take action in many small ways to create inclusive communities: Building a new house with a no-step entrance so friends who use wheelchairs can visit; hiring a job applicant with a disability; including a child with a disability in a child care center or regular education classroom. Through these actions, we communicate our belief that humanity is diverse, and diversity is to be celebrated. We are diverse, but we are all one.

update

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Zolinda Stoneman, Ph.D., Director

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disabilityisdiversity.com

No one who attended D-Day at the Capitol, Better All Together in Athens or the national SABE (Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered) Conference can doubt that "Disability is Diversity!" what a thrill to see people with every conceivable difference in type, extent, and mix of disability join together to listen, cheer, demand and work for the good of all. Let's admit that it is both a celebration and a declaration – we are here, we mean business and we deserve support.

The University of Georgia has heard the demands of people with disabilities. Greater access is a major product of the new campus plan. Attention to classroom accommodations and assistive technology is reflected in teacher training, dorm design and budget allocations. BUT...any service is worthless unless it can be found by the people who want it.

DisabilityisDiversity.com is a new website hosted by Institute on Human Development and Disability and designed to provide the best UGA entry point for anyone looking for help with a disability. UGA students were introduced to DisabilityisDiversity.com during the annual Dawg Days by IHDD and two valuable partners – UGA Office of Institutional Diversity and UGA Disability Resource Center. The potential is really exciting.

Over 20 different UGA programs work for acceptance of diversity and inclusion of people who are considered "different". Institute on Human Development and Disability wants to make people with disabilities an important part of this group. This partnership includes an incredible wealth of resources and strength of commitment. All work to reverse negative stereotypes. All share the goal of an inclusive society.

People with disabilities know the value of coming together. So much needs to be done and we can do so much more together. Our strength in numbers is about 54 million (2000 US Census). Unified with diversity groups, we can give an even louder voice to the message that a world that accepts, embraces and even celebrates differences is a better world.



great people & people first

Across the nation, self-advocates are the most potent force for change, and People First is Georgia's largest disability advocacy group. This May, People First of Georgia hosted the largest national conference of people with disabilities ever held in Georgia.

The SABE (Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered) Conference really "put People First of Georgia on the map. It opened doors for people in the nation with all types of disabilities. It will open the eyes of the politicians to the power of people with disabilities," said Bernard Baker, President of People First of Georgia.

Another valuable legacy could be an increase in People First chapters. Only about thirty Georgia chapters exist and many more are needed. *Advisor Support for People First Members* in Georgia offers over sixty pages of research findings on People First members, chapters and their supporters. With a focus on avoiding overprotection, segregation and exclusion, supporters are analyzed by personality and family impact.

Want to recruit supporters that *truly* empower self-advocates? Here are the questions to ask and criteria to use to select the best volunteers. Most importantly, the best strategies for developing strong, effective self-advocates are defined and explained.

Booklets are \$3 with free mailing for single copies. Reduced rates for group and bulk orders.

what child is most likely not to have child care?... the child with disabilities

What happens when school lets out? Almost 85% of children with disabilities reported that they spend most of the time at home with parents (84%), siblings, other relatives or alone. Only 11% of children with disabilities are enrolled in child care.

Why can't children with disabilities find care?

- Few areas outside of major metro areas offer adequate care choices that are inclusive, accessible and subsidized or affordable.
- Most after school care programs end after middle school.
- The older the child the harder it is to find a child care program.
- Medical needs are the major reason providers are hesitant to enroll children with disabilities.
- Behavioral problems are the major reason older children with disabilities are barred from after school programs.

Lack of child care has large personal and economic costs for families of children with disabilities.

IHDD research findings are summarized in a brochure designed to help parents, providers and administrators better understand the care issues and needs of children and youth with disabilities. Free for single copies and minimal costs for groups.

new tools for advocates

In 2004, Georgia's General Assembly passed state Resolution 633. This resolution states that the Governor should appoint a group of disability leaders to oversee the development of a state plan for community placement of all children with disabilities living in institutions and nursing homes. The potential of House Resolution 633 is a Georgia in which no child can grow up living in an institution or nursing home.

Children's Freedom Initiative worked hard for the passage of House Resolution 633. Founding members are Georgia Advocacy Office, Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD), People First of Georgia and the Statewide Independent Living Council. Self-advocates, citizens, professionals and state leaders throughout Georgia asked for tools and IHDD responded with two publications that tell the stories of institutionalized children with disabilities through interviews and research.

From Loving Arms: Georgia's Children Living in Nursing Homes and State Hospitals is as close as you can get to talking with the parents of children with disabilities who have been unnecessarily institutionalized. These seven stories reveal the bureaucratic, medical and behavioral problems that lead to institutionalization. Perfect for educating advocates, families and leaders to the reasons why taking children with disabilities from their families is so wrong and why systems need to focus on supporting families so they can care for their children at home and in the community.

Parent Journeys: From Fear to Fulfillment is the culmination of eight years of research on the lives of 37 children with severe and multiple disabilities released in the first closing of a Georgia institution in 1996. Research findings are mirrored by the testimony of parents and caregivers. Side by side both speak clearly to parents of children in institutions and advocates.

Both publications are free for advocates and others working to return children with disabilities being raised in institutions to community homes. If you want to join the Children's Freedom Initiative, just call IHDD at 706-542-3457. IHDD offers research, education, and people with disabilities who are able to speak on the negative impacts of institutionalization.



AgrAbility in Georgia

—continued from front



To enroll or to get more information about AgrAbility in Georgia, AgrAbility at IHDD at 706-542-0304 or info@agrability.com

Log on to www.agrabilityinga.com

AgrAbility staff meets with each qualifying individual to assist them to identify their goals and objectives to get back to work on the farm or to make their current farm tasks less arduous.

“When we go visit someone at their farm or ranch, we try to take in the whole picture. A person may need a business plan for stability and growth, assistive technology to make their job easier or training to prevent secondary injury. Once we have worked with the individual to identify their needs, the AgrAbility staff works to bring the necessary resources together,” said Rebecca Brightwell, who serves as Project Manager of AgrAbility as well as Associate Director of IHDD.

AgrAbility will reach out to the farming community through the over 300 Cooperative extension agents in Georgia. In conjunction with the local Extension agents, AgrAbility staff will be offering a series of Lunch and Learn community events around the State of Georgia. The series will introduce the community to the services of AgrAbility and demonstrate the types of assistive technology available.

“A fundamental premise to a sustainable community is the support of all its citizens. This program provides support and resources that help farmers with disabilities remain a contributing member of their community,” said Dr. Glen Rains, who serves as Project Director of AgrAbility as well Associate Professor at UGA’s Department of Biological and Agriculture Engineering.

As part of Dr. Rains’ work, he is researching new technologies that will benefit agriculture workers in the future. One such technology on the horizon is a tractor that can be operated by remote control or autonomously.

Autonomous tractors that are currently being tested at UGA’s Tifton Campus.



meet the byrd's of

whippoorwill organic farms



The hospitable hosts of Whippoorwill Organic Farms, Andy and Hilda Byrd.



Andy tries out the Ventrac 300. This unique piece of equipment allows users to stay in their own wheel chair by easily rolling into the operating platform. Various attachments are available that enable the farmer to do tasks around the farm.



At the entrance to Whippoorwill Organic Farms, a bright colorful sign welcomes customers and guests. Blooming daffodils and fruit trees come into view as the drive winds toward the farm.

Soon there are sounds of crowing roosters that seem to personally greet each new visitor.

The drive eventually leads to the Rabbit Shack, the lively headquarters for the farm. On the porch is a board announcing the fresh produce of the day, along with a selection of potted plants and unique knick-knacks. Inside the Rabbit Shack are a table to gather around, a big country sink, and a hearty wood-burning stove. By the sink, there are dozens of freshly gathered eggs. The character of this comfortable and welcoming room is an extension of the owners of Whippoorwill Farm, Andy and Hilda Byrd.

Visitors will be warmly greeted by Andy (who deftly navigates his 4x4 wheelchair up and down the many peaks and valleys on the farm), his wife Hilda, and their dog Sadie. The Byrds are wonderful hosts and it doesn't take long to feel at home at Whippoorwill Organic Farm. Visitors will definitely be in no hurry to leave once they arrive here.

Located in Walnut Grove/Covington, Georgia, the 74 acre certified organic farm offers a diverse array of things to see and do. There are fruits, vegetables, fresh eggs, and organic feed and fertilizers for sale. There are also an assortment of animals including rabbits, sheep, chickens, and horses. They also offer tours of the farm and host several large events each year.

The Byrds heard about the AgrAbility program from their UGA County Extension Agent, William Carlan. They thought the program would be able to assist Andy Byrd, who sustained a spinal cord injury during a diving accident.

“We hope [AgrAbility] will enable us to find some type of apparatus for Andy to be able to do some of the labor on the farm himself,” said Hilda Byrd.

IHDD's AgrAbility staff met with the Byrds to identify their needs. A plan was jointly developed that will look at assistive technology to make Andy's job easier and to help assist with the plans to expand the farm.

One of the resources that the AgrAbility staff identified to help the Byrds is the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at The University of Georgia. They provide business consulting and continuing education opportunities to Georgia's entrepreneurs. They assist with information such as how to start a business, write a business plan, apply for a loan or seek out other financial resources, market products and services, and plan for the succession of the business.

“I think [SBDC] brought us to where we can focus on certain things, kind of bringing the whole circle down into a little bit smaller circle to where you can start prioritizing,” said Andy Byrd.

“We will also work with students at the University of Georgia to assist with the Byrd's plans. Students bring a wealth of valuable resources to the community. For instance, a marketing student can develop a competitive plan that promotes the farm and drives revenue; an agriculture student can assist with farm layout and design and so on. Almost every community has a college, university or technical school. Students are a valuable and often untapped resource,” said Rebecca Brightwell.

“I think [the AgrAbility staff] is really excited about what we're planning on doing. I think that if you're excited about it, you're going to do it. The good Lord brings us the right people right when we think we are ready for things to happen. I think ya'll are the ones that are going to push us up to the top of the hill and give us that extra boost and really bring us together,” said Andy Byrd.



Some of the many sights visitors will enjoy while visiting Whippoorwill Organic Farms.

To learn more about Whippoorwill Organic Farms, contact Andy and Hilda Byrd at 678-625-3272. For more information on the web, log on to www.whippoorwillhollowfarm.com

vitov valdes-munoz

B.A., Liberal Arts, The Richard Stockton College – Pomona, NJ 1999

B.A., Political Science, The Richard Stockton College – Pomona, NJ 2004

“Selfish... I truly enjoy helping people!!” confesses Vitov of his service as a volunteer member of AmeriCorp’s Georgia Personal Assistance Service Corps. Vitov logs 40-hours a week providing daily assistance to Justin and Gary from Shepherd Center.

Since October, Vitov has assisted Justin in living with a significant spinal cord injury. Vitov doesn’t “do the work.” Vitov makes it possible for Justin to do the work of normal life activities such as cooking, running errands and his favorite hobby growing aeroponic plants. Vitov passionately supported Justin in his decision to enter Chattahoochee Technical College, and now accompanies him to class. Because of Personal Assistance, Justin has been able to remain an independent and active member of the community.

Justin says it best, “Vit makes it possible for my life to function. He’s really totally invaluable to me. Without him, I would be stuck at home everyday. With his help, I am able to be completely involved in the community, and I am able to go to college. Vit is the most caring, sensitive guy that I know. Just a really great person all around.”

Gary, a published author living with a brain injury from a stroke, has very different needs of Vitov. Weekly trips to the gym keep him fit and in touch with friends. Most important may be the intellectual challenges of attending a Scrabble club and the discussion and debate that is inevitable with Vitov’s outspoken and passionate personality. Vitov is a real “lifesaver” for Gary’s wife. Jan says, “Vitov is a wonderful addition to our household. He is smart, patient, kind, and wonderfully empathetic. His thoughtfulness shows up in his respectful attitude and in the way he offers exactly the right mix of understanding and encouragement.”

Before working with Georgia PAS, Vitov served as a VISTA worker with AmeriCorps in New Jersey. Vitov’s dyslexia has never interfered with his commitment to serve.

future leader profiles

katie bailey

B.A. Political Science, University of North Carolina – Asheville 2003; Masters of Social Work, University of Georgia 2006

A major weapon in the Children’s Freedom Initiative will be Katie’s booklet, *From Loving Arms* (see page 3). Through interviews with families, she exposed the reasons why Georgia’s children are growing up in institutions. “I saw how children in institutions were bored, isolated, and secluded from people their own age and loved ones,” she recalled. “Understandably, overworked staff working with a lot of residents have lower expectations than families who want much more for their children with disabilities.” Her passion to help children with disabilities live in the community in loving homes is the focus of her career goals. Her IHDD experience has also included tracking *Babies Can’t Wait* data, conference planning with the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities and filing complaints and appeals with Georgia Advocacy Office.



hamida jinnah

Masters in Human Development – University of Mumbai, India; Doctoral Candidate in Child & Family Development – University of Georgia

Coming from the largest city in the world, Hamida has learned some problems are universal. With Dr. Stoneman and Dr. Chris Todd, she researched care alternatives for children with disabilities from birth through high school. “Families share the same goals, but now I also understand the side of child care providers,” says Hamida. Almost 85% of parents of children with disabilities report that most hours are spent at home alone or with family. “The answer to solving these problems is inclusion.” (See page 3 for more findings.)



coming attractions

full futures for all

is both the name and the goal of a collaboration joining IHDD and Centre for Research and Development of Community Health (RHD) in Hanoi, Vietnam. The collaboration was created to develop a service-learning exchange focused on supporting Vietnam's full inclusion goals for its public schools and employment programs. Vietnam is on the threshold of deciding how to serve the needs of children and adults with disabilities through systems that have traditionally only served those who either adjusted or did not require accommodation. RHD with a commitment to full inclusion in the United States found IHDD through the internet. Building on the curriculum and service learning goals of Dr. Jenny Manders, she and Gwen O'Looney wrote a proposal and IHDD was awarded a seed grant of through The University of Georgia International Development Education Awards.



The first visit will introduce the early intervention strategies and inclusive approach of *Take a Look at Me™*, a *Strength-Based Portfolio*. A Vietnamese translation will be used to train the faculty of teaching colleges. In addition, IHDD has received additional funding from College of Family & Consumer Sciences for flyers on brain development in babies through the Better Brains for Babies program at Cooperative Extension. A luncheon with dignitaries leading the Ministry of Health, Community-Based Rehabilitation programs, medical and scientific researchers and educators will introduce IHDD principles and programs, and explore future partnerships. Interviews and focus groups with the parents of children with disabilities will gather baseline information on current perceptions and acceptance of disabilities. Last, but most important, "Full Futures for All" will establish international service-learning opportunities for students, both from the United States and Vietnam, in collaboration with UGA College of Family and Consumer Sciences, School of Social Work, and School of Public Health.

inclusion & transition messages

What is the essence of success for people with disabilities? **Inclusion** – the full participation needed to achieve our maximum capacity for work, enjoyment, and contribution. **Transition** – the support and opportunity needed to create as independent and typical a lifestyle as possible.

Transitions are the focus of IHDD's *Life of Choices* series. Now, the series features the success possible when a child with cerebral palsy grows up in a supportive and inclusive world. *A Life of Choices: Betsy's Story* tells with unflinching honesty of the partnership that must exist between a child with disabilities and family members.

Betsy pushes the boundaries, defies limitations and challenges barriers in a quiet determination to seek the same joys, responsibilities, and roles as her peers without wheelchairs or disabilities. Betsy's mother tells of working hard every day to relent control and see what challenges must be overcome for the next transition.



Currently, Betsy and her mother are available to speak with parent support, educational and faith-based groups. Pre-release copies of the DVD are available for a limited time at \$15 plus shipping.



Help change the world of disability!

If you believe in a world that includes everyone, a society that lets all work to their full capacity, a language that focuses on people not disabilities, and a system that won't let children with disabilities grow up in institutions and nursing homes, you believe in the work of Institute on Human Development and Disability. FRIENDS OF IHDD is the way to donate your support. Play a part in educating future leaders, finding answers through research and changing laws and policies. Help assure people with disabilities have a full and rewarding life.

FRIENDS OF IHDD is easy to join. Just fill out the form and mail to: IHDD; River's Crossing; Athens, GA 30602-4806. Or go to www.ihdd.uga.edu and click on "Give to IHDD." Make checks payable to **University of Georgia Foundation**.

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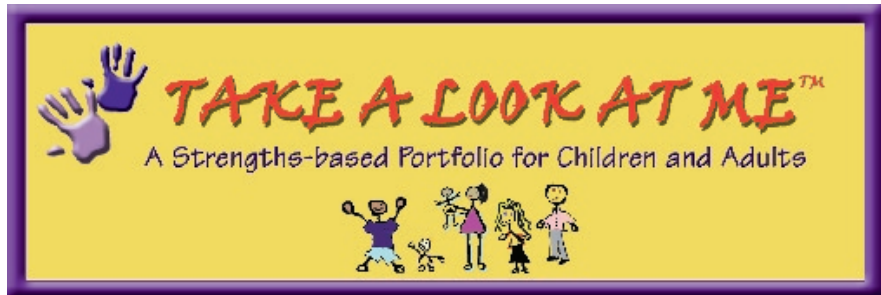
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“As far as providers – I think it’s just a shortcut. It helps them to immediately learn all these things that would otherwise take them a year of coming into your home once a week to learn. This way they can appreciate her from the beginning.”

— Debbie S. (Parent)

Take a Look at Me™ Portfolio is available in both Early Childhood and School-Age/Adult versions. Copies are \$6.00 each at www.takealookatmeportfolio.com or by calling (706) 542-3960. Discounts are available for large orders.



When Mary Rugg first developed her caregiver interview in the mid-1980s she could not have imagined the tool that would grow from the stack of papers asking families about their child’s favorite toys, foods, and games. Years later Rugg, in collaboration with Zolinda Stoneman, combined the caregiver interview with experience and research to create *Take a Look at Me™ Portfolio*. Rugg and Stoneman shared a belief that the portfolio process could open a door into a new way of looking at a person.

Often people view anyone with a disability from the perspective of “What’s wrong with him or her?” rather than “What are his/her strengths and interests?” With *Take a Look at Me™ Portfolio* the question becomes “What can this person do and how can we build on that?” Using the tool, parents and professionals focus on the person and develop a relationship that is based on individual interests, hopes, and dreams.

Since the Portfolio’s inception, Rugg has presented her colorful “traveling road show” from France to Portland, Oregon to Denver, Colorado. She uses this tool to engage families, care providers, early interventionists, school teachers, and others in a dialogue that identifies and builds on the strengths and interests of the individual. The portfolio process accomplishes many goals, such as fostering relationships between families and professionals, establishing respect and communication, and identifying learning opportunities.

Nationally, the portfolio is becoming a valued part of early intervention efforts or one school district in Western Michigan’s Early On Program, at The PEAK Parent Center in Denver, Colorado, and for Athens, Georgia’s Early Head Start Program. This spring’s introduction to Vietnam’s effort for inclusive classrooms is described on page 7. A school age portfolio is being integrated into a self-determination curriculum for high school students. It has also been used in fifth grade classrooms. Another version designed to introduce adults with disabilities to potential employers is currently being refined by IHDD’s Jobs for All.

Translations are available in six different languages: Spanish, French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean and Vietnamese. “By fostering community and sharing unique traditions and values,” Rugg believes, “the portfolio can build cross-cultural understanding in the classroom.”

Working so people with disabilities can reach their full capacity for work, achievement and contribution; build relationships through living ordinary lives; be supported by strong families; and become equal citizens living a full life free of fear, exclusion and abuse.

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