

THE HAPPENING COMMUNITY

Living SERVICES

OAKLAND COUNTY DIVISION

CITIZENS' ADVISORY
COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

August 2013

DESHAUN JONES – MAKING A DIFFERENCE

When you meet Deshaun Jones and see his handsome, warm, and friendly smile, you would never know the sadness this young man has experienced in his life.



Deshaun tragically lost his mother to a drug overdose when he was just four years old. At the age of seven, Deshaun and his twin

brother, Keshawn, entered the foster care system due to abuse and neglect and were placed in separate homes. They had no family members willing or able to care for them, so they both became permanent Oakland County court wards. They lived separately with multiple foster families and attended different special education schools until they were reunited again at the age of 17 when they were both placed in a residential facility in Detroit.

Community Living Services was contacted when Deshaun and his brother were aging out of the Oakland County court system in 2009. They interviewed and chose their Independent Support Coordinator, Chris Baldwin, and were supported in finding an apartment to share in Farmington Hills. They have lived there successfully for three years with supports through Self-Determination individualized budgets.

Deshaun is an extremely personable young man who is very serious about helping others by sharing his story and experiences. He enjoys playing basketball, reading, spending time with his brother, and hanging around positive people, BUT MOSTLY he enjoys helping youth who find themselves in the foster care system.

Deshaun has partnered with his former foster care agency, New Directions, to be a positive influence on the kids they work with and give them hope about their future. Deshaun reaches out to foster kids, school kids, and college students, sharing his life experiences and offering inspiration and motivation. He indicates

that his personal mission is to “motivate and empower boys and girls, through sharing my own personal experience of being in foster care, being bullied and abused, and losing my mother.” He hopes to help young people express themselves, not to be ashamed of what they’ve been through, and to have a better outlook and a more positive attitude about their future.

Deshaun has spoken in multiple venues, including most recently sharing his story in Social Work classes at Oakland University. He is working hard to build his public speaking career and broaden his experiences, but mostly he wants to inspire and motivate youth. Deshaun enjoys writing about his experiences and is currently working on a book about his life story. He has also developed a web page on Facebook, entitled “Speaking for the Voiceless.”

Deshaun was very pleased when he learned about CLS’ commitment to Self-Determination for all people, as the principles of Self-Determination lend themselves nicely to

the empowerment message Deshaun shares with others; “Self-Determination has helped me reach for my own goals in my own way. That is what every young person should do, whether they have a disability, or are in foster care, or not.”

If you are interested in having Deshaun speak with a group you are connected to, please call Chris Baldwin at 313-706-3266.

Keep reaching for your goals Deshaun, you ARE making a difference!



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“I will love the light for it shows me the way, yet I will endure the darkness because it shows me the stars.”

~ Og Mandino

SENATOR INTRODUCES ACT TO ASSIST WITH TRANSITION



New Jersey Senator Robert Menendez unveiled legislation on July 15, 2013 that would provide federal funding to research and evaluate services currently available

for young people with developmental disabilities “aging out” of existing education and support systems, develop a national strategic action plan, and provide training grants to put the plan into action.

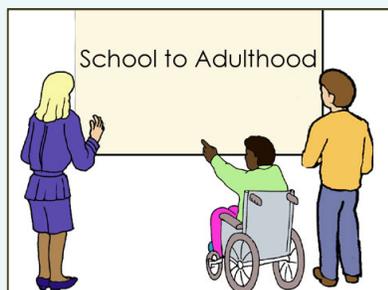
The new proposal in the U.S. Senate, The Assistance in Gaining Experience, Independence, and Navigation (AGE-IN) Act of 2013, will allocate dollars to develop a national plan to help individuals transition to adulthood.

The AGE-IN Act of 2013 will address the needs of aging-out youth in two phases. The first phase is designed to identify the most effective interventions and existing support service infrastructure in order to develop a comprehensive training plan. The second phase puts this plan to action by providing grants to existing entities to train a new generation of Transition Navigators. Transition Navigators will be trained to provide interdisciplinary and comprehensive services to address the needs of transitioning youths, including providing services aimed at accessing continuing education (including vocational training) and competitive employment, but also in obtaining life’s other necessities such as health care, housing, transportation, and community integration.

The Senator indicated, “We need a national response to ensure that resources are available to enable these young adults to lead the productive, fulfilling lives they deserve.”

To read the Assistance in Gaining Experience, Independence, and Navigation (AGE-IN) Act of 2013 in its entirety and track its progress go to:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s1259/text>



WHITE HOUSE PICKS NEW DISABILITY LIAISON

The White House recently selected a new adviser that will be focusing specifically on disability issues. Claudia Gordon was named the White House’s new Public Engagement Advisor for the Disability Community in the Office of Public Engagement. Gordon will serve as a liaison between the Obama administration and the disability community.



Claudia Gordon comes to the White House from the Department of Labor where she was a Special Assistant to the Director of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs. Claudia worked on ensuring that contractors doing business with the Federal government were held accountable for their employment practices. Gordon has also worked for the National Association of the Deaf Law and Advocacy Center, was Vice President of the National Black Deaf

Advocates Association, and was senior policy advisor for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.



Gordon was born in Jamaica and has been deaf since childhood. At the age of eight, her family moved to the U.S. She attended New York’s Lexington School for the Deaf where she learned sign language. The discrimination Gordon experienced as a deaf child in Jamaica compelled her to become a lawyer. She was the first deaf African American woman to become an attorney as well as the first deaf student to graduate from the American University (AU) Washington College of Law, in Washington, D.C., in 2000.

To learn more about Claudia Gordon, check out NDC and AAPD’s press releases at: <http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/07162013> and <http://www.aapd.com/resources/press-room/aapd-applauds-appointment-of.html>

“ABLE” ACCOUNTS HELP PEOPLE SAVE - *By Renee Uitto*



Renee Uitto, CLS/OC
Citizens' Advisory
Committee Chairperson

The Achieving a Better of Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2013 allows for the establishment of “ABLE accounts.” The ABLE Act would amend Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Service Code of 1986 to create tax-free savings accounts for individuals with disabilities. The bill aims to ease financial strains faced by individuals with disabilities by making tax-free savings accounts available to cover qualified expenses such as education, housing, transportation, employment support, health and wellness, and personal care services.

ABLE accounts encourage and assist people and families to save funds which would go toward health care, independence, and the quality of life of a person with a disability. The provision also protects against abuse and a Medicaid pay-back provision should the beneficiary pass away.

Momentum has been strong for the bill ever since it was introduced on February 13, 2013. The ABLE Act can assist people with disabilities achieve independence and success. So far, two representatives from Michigan have supported the bill- Rep. Dan Benishek and Rep. Tim Walberg. To track this Act, go to <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s313#overview>

SMITHSONIAN OPENS DISABILITY HISTORY EXHIBIT

In June, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History launched a new exhibit titled “Everybody: An Artifact History of Disability in America.” This exhibit explores themes and events related to the history of people with disabilities in the U.S. and offers a new perspective on American history.

You do not need to take a trip to Washington D.C.; the exhibit is the museum’s first to be presented exclusively online. The Smithsonian indicates that this is a “first-of-its-kind image compilation that provides access to objects and stories related to the history of disability that have been collected at the museum for more than 50 years.” The website is designed to be accessible to all users, including those using specialized software for vision or hearing impairments.

The website explores such themes as identity and stereotypes, the importance of laws and legislation, home and daily life, technology, institutions and schools, eugenics, and work. Featured objects include prosthetics, adapted kitchen utensils, activists’ buttons and T-shirts, Section 504 (a federal law guaranteeing rights to persons with disabilities) protest artifacts, medical devices, text telephones for the deaf, Braille writers, wheelchairs, design plans for improving accessibility in public spaces and about 300 snapshots, tintypes and cabinet cards. Each image has descriptive detail.

To view this very interesting exhibit, the website is available at: <http://everybody.si.edu/>.

The National Museum of American History previously highlighted people with disabilities with an exhibition at the Washington, D.C. museum titled “Disability Rights Movement,” which was on display in 2000 and 2001. You can check out this exhibit by going to: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/disabilityrights/welcome.html>.

Everybody: An Artifact History of Disability in America
People with disabilities have been present throughout American history. Sometimes difference mattered, at other times it didn't.

visit everybody.si.edu

Smithsonian National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

NATHAN CUMMINGS FOUNDATION

KEEPING YOUR COOL ON HOT SUMMERS DAYS

In July, the Oakland County Health Division Department of Health & Human Services issued a News Release offering tips to help you stay cool and prevent heat-related illness.

The extreme heat of the summer can cause illness and even death. Approximately 675 people die each year in the U.S. due to the extreme heat. Learn how to protect yourself and keep your cool.

Try to limit your vigorous outdoor activity during hot and humid weather. When participating in outdoor activities, make sure you find air conditioned or shaded places for rest, stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, wear sunscreen and loose fitting, light-weight clothing, and be aware to seek medical help if you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of heat stroke or other heat related illness, such as a throbbing headache, red hot skin without sweating, confusion, nausea, tiredness, weakness, fast breathing, or cramps.

If you are in need of a cooling center, contact your city, village, or township office for a location. You can also go to www.oakgov.com/health and search cooling centers for a list of centers in communities around Oakland County. Here you will also find more information about heat-related illness and summer heat safety. You can also call toll free 1-800-848-5533.



NEED HELP: SMOKEFREE.GOV



Smokefree.gov was created by the Tobacco Control Research Branch of the National Cancer Institute. The website is intended to help folks quit smoking. Resources on the website support immediate and long term needs as you try to become and remain a nonsmoker. On the website, you will find help with a step-by-step quit smoking guide, information about a wide range of topics related to quitting, an interactive US map highlighting smoking information in your state, LifeHelp-National Cancer Institute's instant messaging services, publications to download, print, or order, plus National Cancer Institute's telephone quitline, 1-877-44U-QUIT. Go to www.smokefree.gov.

Also, check out Smokefreewomen.gov. This website provides information and resources especially related to the needs of women who wish to quit smoking, including topics on pregnancy and motherhood, weight management, stress, and other articles and information to help women be healthy nonsmokers. Plus, you will find quit smoking tools, such as fun quizzes, mobile apps, helpful tips, a craving journal, and more free resources. Go to www.smokefreewoman.gov

Teens can check out Smokefreeteen.gov. This website is designed to help teens make their life decisions and take control over their health. The site help teens understand that the decisions they make, especially the decision to quit smoking, which can affect their whole life. Here, teens will find resources and information especially helpful for them. This site is also designed and run by people at the National Cancer Institute. Check them out <http://teen.smokefree.gov/>.

NATIONAL PARKS FREE LIFETIME PASS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES



Did you know that free lifetime access passes are available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents of any age that have been medically determined to have a permanent disability? This pass provides access to more than 2,000 recreation sites managed by five Federal agencies (Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, and the National Park Service). Also, at many sites the Access Pass provides the pass owner a discount on expanded amenity fees (such as camping, swimming, boat launching, and guided tours). For more information about how to get your pass, requirements, general questions, and links to the five Federal agencies, follow the link <http://store.usgs.gov/pass/access.html>.



As the debates continue regarding the expansion of Medicaid, the Reform Medicaid Now Coalition began a website as a tool for citizens to connect with their state senators.

The Healthy Michigan plan will provide coverage to working Michiganders who are in or near poverty (133 percent of the Federal Poverty Limit). As a result, those individuals will be able to see a primary physician rather than unnecessarily turning to an emergency room for high-cost care. According to the MACMHB (Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards), a large portion of the individuals who receive Community Mental Health non-Medicaid services would qualify for this Medicaid expansion. It is important to let your legislators know if you support Medicaid expansion, as this is a very important decision for our state.

On the “Healthy Michigan Now” website you can learn facts about Healthy Michigan and get the latest news about Medicaid expansion. Go to www.healthymichigannow.com.

Happy Birthday ADA!

On July 26, 2013, the Americans with Disabilities Act turned 23 years old. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law by President George H. W.



Bush on July 26, 1990. The ADA provides civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities and guarantees equal opportunity in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. To learn more about the history of the ADA, visit the Archive ADA website, <http://www.law.georgetown.edu/archiveada/>.



SHERRI RUSHMAN, YOU ARE A HERO



Congratulations go out to Sherri Rushman for being the July recipient of the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority’s “Hero” Award. Many people connected with Community Living Services have had the honor of getting to know Sherri through her work at the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority (OCCMHA) as an Education Specialist since 2003. Her responsibilities include doing presentations at conferences and training sessions on topics such as Wellness Recovery Action Planning, Advanced Directives, Person-Centered Planning, Crisis Planning, Self-Determination, Defeating Loneliness, and Self Advocacy. But Sherri is

MOST known for the trainings she does, and the inspiration she provides, on the topic of “*Hope*.” When Sherri speaks, she talks about hope being as essential to life as the air we breathe. Without hope there are no dreams. Without dreams, there are no happy prospects that our life will change. Sherri talks about Hope Givers, Hope Receivers, and Hope Stealers.

Sherri shares her passion and story of Hope, Recovery, and Self-Determination at several conferences annually and in the OCCMHA newsletter in hopes of inspiring others who may not attend conferences, trainings, and other stakeholder events. She also teaches Speech Craft public speaking classes at OCCMHA to help people receiving services to “tell their story,” improve their public speaking skills, and become Hope Givers themselves. Sherri inspires many, many people via everything she does.



Congratulations Sherri, you are a Hero who has given many people hope!

UPCOMING EVENT

Whose Life Is It Anyway?! 2013

SELF DETERMINATION CONFERENCE

AUGUST 19, 2013
SOMERSET INN, TROY

SPACE IS LIMITED! BE SURE TO REGISTER EARLY.



This exciting and informative conference will take place on Monday, August 19, 2013 at the Somerset Inn in Troy. The conference begins at 8:30am with registration and a continental breakfast and wraps up at 2:30pm.

This year's Keynote Presentation is: "Creating a Culture of Gentleness and Self-Determination" presented by Deirdre Mercer. Deirdre Mercer has worked to support people with varying abilities for the last 20 years in a variety of roles, including Caregiver, Support Coordinator, Utilization Manager, and Trainer. In this session, she will explain similarities between leading a self-determined life and living in a culture of gentleness.

This conference is free, but space is limited, so register early. For a registration form and more information about the workshop sessions, visit the OCCMHA website at www.occmha.org, or call OCCMHA at 248-858-1210.

PERSON CENTERED PLANNING & SELF-DETERMINATION - How They Fit Together



This training will take place on September 11th, 10:00am-11:30am at the CLS/OC office, 642 E. Nine Mile Road. You will hear how people are making great things happen in their lives by self-directing their supports and

services through a very individualized Person-Centered Planning process aimed at helping people achieve Real Life Quality Outcomes. The implementation of Self-Determination, individual budgets, "Community-First" planning, and options for creative income generation will be explored. If you would like to attend this upbeat training session, please register by calling Diana Kaszyca at 248-547-2668.

"MOVING FORWARD" PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST/PEER MENTOR TRAINING

The "Moving Forward" training is a 17-hour training for individuals receiving services who have an interest in potentially working as a Peer Support Specialist/Peer Mentor in Oakland County. This is open to people with developmental disabilities or mental illness. The training topics include: Role of a Peer Support Specialist, Using Your Story as a Tool, Listening and Communication, Gentle Teaching, and others. This training is one day a week for five weeks. You must attend each of the five training days. All trainings will be held at MORC, 1270 Doris Road in Auburn Hills.



◆ **Fall Session** - September 13, 20, 27 and October 4, 11, 9:00am-12:30pm

For more information or to sign up for the training, contact Sherri Rushman at 248-975-9531.

MISIB 2013 CONFERENCE will take place on



October 25th and 26th at the Crowne Plaza, 27000 Karevich Drive in Novi. At this conference, you can connect with other siblings, hear from local experts on the latest in sibling services and supports, and learn about resources. You can also share stories, network, and gain

insight on sibling experiences.

For more information, visit the MISIBS website www.misibs.org.

THE NEXT CAC MEETING

Monday, October 28th

2:00-4:00pm at
the CLS/OC office
642 E. Nine Mile Road
in Ferndale



Everyone is Welcome!

If you have any questions about joining the Citizens' Advisory Committee, feel free to call Lori Lindstrom at 248-547-2668.

THINGS TO DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Oak Park Summer Splash & Oak Park Art Fair

The Summer Splash will take place on Saturday, August 3, 10am - 6pm, at the Oak Park Community Pool, 14300 Oak Park Blvd. Cool down at the Summer Splash event with a full day of fun activities at the Oak Park community pool, including swimming, music, games, an art fair, a classic car show, and more.



Plus, check out the Oak Park Art (OPA!) Fair that same day from 10am to 5pm inside the Community Center next to the pool complex. At this family friendly event, you can check out glass artists, fiber artists, photographers, ceramic artists, painters, jewelers, sculptors, and mixed media artists selling their work at this indoor (and air-conditioned) event. There is no cost to attend; however, there are costs to participate in the various activities. All of the information can be found at www.oakparksummersplash.com.



The Buy Michigan Now Festival will take place August 2nd through the 4th in Downtown Northville. The Buy Michigan Now Festival is a family friendly event that includes and showcases a wide variety of Michigan businesses, products, entertainers, and educational opportunities; live bands, acoustic performances, engaging magicians, local authors, mascot appearances, and product demonstrations...there's something for everyone during this festival. Admission and parking are free. For more information, go to www.buymichigannowfest.com.



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Oakland County International Airport Exhibit & Airshow

will take place on August 25, 2013, from 10am until 4pm. At this interesting event you can view aircraft, take a ride, and watch an airshow. There will also be a Health and Safety Fair, NASA guy Bill Crell doing experiments and demonstrations, activities for kids, food vendors, and more. The Airshow begins at 2pm. The airshow/open house is FREE; however, there is a parking fee. For more information including a schedule of events, go to <http://www.ociaopenhouse.org/index.html>.



Woodward Dream Cruise 2013

will take place on August 17th from 9am to 9pm through eight Oakland County communities:



Berkley, Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township, Ferndale, Huntington Woods, Pleasant Ridge, Pontiac, and Royal Oak. Enjoy a day filled with classic cars and great entertainment. This is the world's largest one-day celebration of car culture. There will be more than 40,000 muscle cars, street rods, custom, collector and special interest vehicles, plus a variety of entertainment and vendors in each community. For more information on this event, visit www.woodwarddreamcruise.com.



www.woodwarddreamcruise.com.

CLS' Evening With Friends

September 19, 2013

The Citizens Advisory Committee is once again offering two \$50 scholarships for individuals to attend the Evening With Friends event. These two scholarships will be given on a first-come-first-serve basis. For more information, please contact Diana Kaszyca at 248-547-2668.



COMMUNITY
Living SERVICES

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