

YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE: January 2007 Report

(Marco Rodriguez, NCD Council Member and Liaison; Gerrie Hawkins, Ph.D., DFO; and Betsy Valnes, Independent Contractor)

YAC Procedural Activity: Among the committee's accomplishments were

- The selection of an additional YAC mentor and leaders' assistance with new member processes
- Workgroup telephone and electronic communication resulted in progress on next product for YAC recommendation to NCD as public education tool and functional amendments to the by-laws
- Based on invitation, participation in an ongoing plus two new interagency collaboration opportunities
- Workgroup and full committee actions that included -- Reassessment of FY2007 work plans and goals after review of DFO's generic model for YAC and CDAC; Policy workgroup progress toward completion of draft document setting forth youth perspectives on benefits planning with relevant recommendations to NCD; mentor and YAC executives close communication with independent contractor;
- Developing an open letter to NCD Council Members, through the YAC Liaison, including opportunity to share disability leadership and other areas of expertise during informal dialogue (procedural calls) with the YAC; and
- Preparation for public meetings

Interagency Collaboration Activity:

(a) **9th International Congress:** The Office on Disability, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) sponsored the December 4 -6, 2006 *9th International Congress on Community Services for Children, Youth and Families with Special Health Care Needs* in Washington, D.C. NCD's Council Liaison, the DFO and advisory committee contractor participated in the Conference Youth Day program and several general sessions. The DFO also attended the first meeting of the developing countries caucus, which has bearing for the work of CDAC and YAC. Betsy Valnes organized and facilitated the Youth Day program. Panelists and co-leaders for small and large group sessions were youth leaders. Four topical discussion areas were health care, employment, education, and law/policy with an end goal of determining recommendations from the youth to the general body of the 9th congress. Common themes that participants identified and reported to the full congress included: (1) stress the importance of inviting and listening to the voices and perspectives of youth with disabilities in planning and implementing policy, program, and procedures and (2) raise awareness among the general population, youth and their families about issues, human rights, and concerns that affect the lives of youth with disabilities.

(b) **Smithsonian IDEA Event:** YAC representatives and NCD staff were invited to participate in the planning and design phases for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) celebration event at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum. NCD's Council Liaison to YAC anticipates providing support during the event with at least three former YAC Chairs and Vice Chairs residing and working in the DC metropolitan area on Wednesday, March 14, 2007. YAC youth have assisted through dialogue and suggestions on the employment/transitions/leadership activity module. Smithsonian staff and consultants wrote recently to the DFO and NCD: "We hope this event will provide a golden opportunity to build relationships toward future collaborations and appreciate your leadership in helping to make this a successful multifaceted event for local students with disabilities." The Self-Determination document for youth by youth that was created for an earlier YAC interagency initiative (ODEP/DOL-led Federal Partners in Transition Project) will be disseminated along with other appropriate

NCD materials for and about youth matters. The next planning session is scheduled for Friday, January 18, 2007.

(c) **Youth Development and Leadership 3 to 5 Year Initiative**: The DFO was invited to participate in designing a longer-term interagency effort. Also invited are professional staffers from HHS, DOL, ED, Transportation, other federal agencies, non-profits, advocates, researchers, other entities. The DFO shared meeting material with our YAC Council Liaison.

Public Meeting - The next YAC public meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2007 at 3:00 PM Eastern time. Feel free to let Stacey Brown know your interest in participation before the day of the meeting. You are welcome to attend.