



SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The University of South Dakota
CENTER FOR DISABILITIES

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The Outreach

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A University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service

Annual Trainee Poster Presentation & Center for Disabilities Awards

The Center for Disabilities held its annual trainee poster presentation the end of April with the Center's annual awards given. This year's event featured posters depicting the LEND trainees and Dietetic Interns research project for the year. After people visiting the posters, the group gathered to view the award presentation. Three awards were given again this year: Distinguished Service Award, Collaboration Award and the Patrick L. Redinius Spirit Award.

2010 Distinguished Service Award: Joanne Van Osdel

Joanne is currently the Special Services Director at the West Central School District in Hartford, SD. She has earned three degrees from The University of South Dakota - a Bachelor's degree in English Education, a Master's degree in Special Education and concluding with a Doctoral degree in Curriculum & Instruction/ Early Childhood Special Education.

Joanne began her career in as a teacher assistant at South Central Head Start. She later went on to work as a high school English teacher at Marty Indian School, a Special Education/ECSE/K-2 teacher at the Gayville-Volin School District, and an Early Childhood Special Education teacher at the Southeast Area Cooperative. Joanne worked at the Center for Disabilities from 1993-

2004 as the Director of Academic Training. During this time, she also taught as an Adjunct Faculty Member at Sinte Gleska University. In 2004, she returned to The University of South Dakota as an Assistant Professor in both the Educational Administration Division and the Curriculum & Instruction Division in the School of Education. She continued there until the move to her current position in 2009.

The Center for Disabilities is pleased to present this award to Joanne Van Osdel in honor of her many years of working with people with disabilities and the difference she has made in their lives.

2010 Collaboration Award: Sanford Boekelheide Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

The new Boekelheide Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Sanford Children's provides a setting in which the latest technology is available to care for tiny lives in a family friendly environment. From family suites that provide privacy, to Giraffe Beds that significantly reduce the need to transfer infants, the new Boekelheide NICU is an exciting addition to the region.

The NICU includes some of the following advantages:

- Family-centered care
- Forty-five single family suites with capacity for fifty-eight patients
- Twin and triplet rooms
- Indirect lighting and silent alarms help to create an environment conducive to growth and development
- Family Welcome Area
- Neonatologist on-site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week



Dedicated to *Life* Without Limits

The NICU receives over 1,000 babies each year. The philosophy at Sanford Children's Hospital is - "it is all about the kids."

Because of the mission, guiding principles and goals of the Sanford Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and its collaboration with the Center for Disabilities in the area of training students, the Center for Disabilities is proud to present them with the Collaboration Award for 2010.

**2010 Patrick L. Redinius Spirit Award:
Jeremiah Mekelberg**

Jeremiah is currently the School Psychologist/ Behavior Counselor at the Logan View Public Schools in Hooper, Nebraska. In this position, Jeremiah functions as a behavior counselor to provide K-6 character and social skills lessons. He serves as the Response to Intervention (RTI) coach for the district and participates as a member of the school district autism team.

Jeremiah's education began with a B.S. from Black



Hills State University with a major in Psychology and minors in Spanish and Early Childhood Education. He received an Ed.S. from The University of South Dakota in School Psychology in 2008.

Jeremiah's career began as a Children's Worker with the Department of Social Services where he participated as a member of the Child Protection Services continuum. Jeremiah later went on to work as a Residential Counselor at Lutheran Social Services before beginning his current position. Jeremiah was a member of the LEND Traineeship program from 2006-2007.

Because of Jeremiah's passion and commitment to disability issues, the Center for Disabilities is pleased to present the 2010 Patrick L. Redinius Spirit Award to Jeremiah J. Mekelberg.

Act Early Summit Update

The Center for Disabilities Autism Spectrum Disorders Program provides training; consultation, including on-site assistance; evidence-based diagnostic evaluations; and information dissemination to families, agencies, and those entities working in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Trainings for professionals, parents, and family members are offered throughout the year. Consultation may consist of on-site observation and interviews with professionals and parents, as well as specific feedback "in the moment" for classroom teachers working with a student with an ASD. Clinical diagnostics includes evaluations from an interdisciplinary evaluation team who are specifically trained in ASD. Information dissemination includes the distribution of handbooks that provide strategies and techniques in working with a person with ASD as well as a wide variety of materials available in the Wegner Health Science Information Center.

Recently, the Center for Disabilities led the state in a Region 8 Act Early Summit in order to bring together key participants from across the state to finalize a State Plan and logic model which is integral to the success of people with ASD and their families. Participants from South Dakota state agencies, colleges and universities, parents of children who have been diagnosed with an

ASD, physicians, and agencies working with children who have been diagnosed with ASD and their families, will continue to meet to ensure activities will continue.

Follow-up activities include:

- Identifying a screening tool for pediatricians;
- Identifying a cadre of 5-10 parents of children with ASD who are interested in providing training and support for other parents;
- Compiling a resource guide specific to ASDs;
- Providing an autism summer training in 2 sites across the state; and
- Working with a dedicated group of stakeholders devoted to improving the systems of care for South Dakotans with ASDs.

Because of the unique nature of the Center for Disabilities Autism Spectrum Disorders Program within the state of South Dakota, families have access to highly-qualified, experienced clinicians who utilize the latest evidence-based techniques for diagnostic evaluations. For more information about the Center for Disabilities Autism Spectrum Disorders Program, please call 605-357-1439 or 800-658-3080(V/TTY) or visit our website at www.usd.edu/cd.

Center for Disabilities Staff Updates



Deb Bahnson
Secretary to the Director



Lindsay Brough
Autism Specialist



Arla Feikert
Training Secretary



Sheri Gunderson
Director of Development



Shanna Moke
Deaf-Blind Family Specialist



Michelle Speckels
Birth to 3 Coordinator

Family Scholarship Funds Available

The Center for Disabilities now has Family Scholarship Funds available for families meeting the eligibility criteria. These funds are made available through an award from the Larson Family Foundation and can be used to cover the costs of diagnostic evaluations and in-home consultations for Autism or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders through the Center for Disabilities.

Scholarships will be awarded as funds are available.

For more information about applying for these funds, contact the Center for Disabilities at 1-800-658-3080 or 605-357-1439. Completed applications for Family Scholarship Funds will be reviewed by South Dakota Parent Connection to determine eligibility.

*Risk more than others think is safe. Care more than others think is wise.
Dream more than others think is practical. Expect more than others think is possible.*

Claude Thomas Bissell



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This newsletter is available in alternate format upon request by contacting the Center for Disabilities.