



# ICED NEWS

State Interagency Committee On Employees With Disabilities

Volume 11, Number 1

July 2011

## SEVENTH ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

On Wednesday, May 18, 2011, ICED with support from the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, hosted a Legislative Reception and awards ceremony at the Inn at 835 in Springfield. About 150 people attended the evening event, including state legislators, agency directors, community groups, and people with disabilities.

This annual event not only recognizes the accomplishments of several legislature but also brings together agency heads, legislators, state employees and disability community leaders from throughout the state to discuss issues in a relaxed social setting. Our collective goal is to share a common theme and to promote fair legislation on our behalf.

During the evening, the ICED co-chairs and legislators made remarks relative to the importance of issues facing people with disabilities around the state. Some of the key issues included the importance of recruiting more employees with disabilities in state government and providing a workplace free of discrimination.

ICED materials, including the annual report, a Frequently Asked Question card, and information about the Internship Program, were distributed at the event.



Pictured above: Rob Kirbury, Senator Mattie Hunter, Representative LaShawn Ford, Michelle Saddler, Rocco Claps

### Legislature of the Year Award

Senator Mattie Hunter was recognized for her continuing efforts to improve disability rights and to promote disability related initiatives.

During her acceptance speech, Senator Hunter called on everyone to use their skills and talents to get involved in organizations like ICED and assist in building a better community for all.

Also recognized for their contributions were Representative LaShawn Ford and Senator Heather Steans.



Pictured left: Marva Campbell-Pruitt, Renee Mays, Michael Knepler, Michelle Saddler, Robert Griffith, Fred Stewart II, Bill Bogdan, Margaret Harkness, Rob Kilbury, Carlos Charneco, Sen. Mattie Hunter, Jason Brewer, Sue Masten, Debbie Johnson-Small, Joseph Ashcraft, Teresita Gonzalez, Susan Allen, Rocco Claps, Andrew Barris, Rep. LaShawn Ford

## **ICED AWARDS CEREMONY**

On May 11, ICED hosted its annual awards event to recognize a state employee, state agencies, non-profit groups and businesses for their support of employees with disabilities, and for promoting a greater awareness of disability issues. Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon presented the awards and commended the agencies and organizations for helping individuals with disabilities.

“The employers and employees we are honoring today promote the inclusion of all individuals, with all ranges of abilities, and help to break down social stigmas and barriers,” said Lt. Governor Simon. “They model integration and support for the disabled, a standard we should all strive to meet.”

ICED recognized the efforts and accomplishments of the following individuals and organizations during the ceremony held at the Department of Agriculture in Springfield:

### **Business/Not-For-Profit of the Year Award**

Rush University Medical Center, Chicago received the “Non-Profit/Business of the Year Award” for implementing a strong accessibility program within the workplace. Rush created the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Task Force in 1990 and won several awards for its practices to assist disabled staff. Rush also received 45 ADA accomplishments in improved access and services, outreach and education; has counseled other hospitals on how to create an ADA Task Force, participates in job fairs to hire candidates referred by DHS, participates in Disability Mentoring Day, and hosts seminars designed to break down barriers on how people can be accommodated in nursing and medical professionals, including the first seminar of its kind on a national level. Manpower and Comcast received Non-Profit/Business of the Year certificates as well.



Back: Rocco J. Claps, Lt. Governor Sheila Simon, Paula Brown, Joanne Schupbach, Carlos Olvera. Front: Dr. Eugene Thonar, Beverly Huckman, Karen Batty, Dr. Lois Halstead.

### **State Agency of the Year Award**

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) received the “State Agency of the Year Award” for having the highest percentage of employees with disabilities, with 377 individuals with disabilities out of a total of 2,056 employees.

The Department promoted seven of 26 employees with disabilities, hired three student workers with disabilities, developed extensive accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities, trained 232 individuals in disability-related subjects, and posted accommodation procedures on its intranet and included this information in new employee orientation.



IDES acting director Terry Larkin, Lt. Governor Sheila Simon, Carlos Charneco and DHR director Rocco J. Claps

### **State Employee of the Year**

Timothy Miskell, a DHS employee from the Madden Mental Health Center, received the “State Employee of the Year” Award for his dedication to promoting disability awareness to his co-workers and patients and lives the adage “actions speak louder than words.” Without prompting, Miskell helps each patient reach his or her goals, gathers and shares patient education materials and eagerly works beyond his job description. Tommy Saunders, another IDHS employee, received an Employee of the Year Certificate as did Brandie Belford from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission.



Lt. Governor Sheila Simon, Timothy Miskell and DHR director Rocco J. Claps

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

For the 54 million Americans with disabilities, and millions of others around the world, surviving a disaster can be the beginning of a greater struggle. Whether an individual with a disability requires electricity to power a respirator, life-sustaining medication, mobility assistance, or post disaster recovery services, relief organizations and rescue personnel increasingly must be prepared to address the needs of that individual in the hours and days following a disaster.

Unfortunately, efforts to accommodate disabled Americans all too often ignore disaster preparedness and response. As a result, too few disaster response officials are trained to deal effectively with people with disabilities, and too few disabled Americans have the knowledge that could help them save their own lives.

Listed below are ten important steps to get help you prepare.

1. Know what kinds of disasters could happen in your area and consider what your environment might look like after one occurs. Certain resources or utilities may not be available and conditions could hamper your independence.
2. Complete a personal assessment. Decide what you will be able to do for yourself and what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster.
3. Create a personal support network of family, friends, relatives, neighbors, roommates and co-workers who could assist you at a moment's notice. Discuss your special needs with them, including evacuation plans and medical information lists.
4. Make an emergency information list so others will know whom to call if they find you unconscious, unable to speak or if they need to help you evacuate quickly.
5. Compile a medical information list that contains the names and numbers of your doctors, your medications, dosage instructions, and any existing conditions. Make note of your adaptive equipment, allergies, and any communication difficulties you may have.
6. Keep at least a seven-day supply of medications on hand. Ask your doctor or pharmacist what you should do if you cannot immediately get more.

7. Install at least one smoke alarm on each level of your home and test them once a month. Know the location of main utility cutoff valves and learn how and when to disconnect them during an emergency. Identify evacuation routes and safe places to go during a disaster.

8. Complete a summary checklist to make sure that your personal disaster plan is comprehensive. Be sure to include your medical needs, evacuation routes, care plans for your service animals, an alternative place to stay, etc.

9. Keep a disaster supply kit in your home, car, workplace or anywhere you may spend your time. Include such items as food, water, a first aid kit, adaptive equipment, batteries, and supplies for your pets or service animals.

10. Make your home or office safer by checking hallways, stairwells, doorways, windows and other areas for hazards that may keep you from safely leaving a building during an emergency. Secure or remove furniture and objects that may block your path.

## REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION ISSUES & TECHNIQUES FOR STATE EMPLOYEES

As part of ICED's series of training classes/conferences related to disability awareness and career advancement issues, Robin Jones, of the Great Lakes ADA and Accessible IT Center, led a discussion on reasonable accommodation issues and techniques for state employees to prepare themselves for promotions.



Other speakers included Jaci DeBrun, Department of Central Management Services, Tom Ridley, Illinois Assistive Technology Program and Joe Chiappetta, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce/Disabilityworks.

Along with reasonable accommodation under the ADA and the ADAAA, the speakers discussed the alternative employment program, assistive technology, degenerative disabilities and reasonable accommodation – including, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, chronic back pain and macular degeneration.

There were 3 ways to participate in this seminar; teleconference, webinar or at one of 20 video sites.

Conference materials can be found on the ICED website.

## PROFIT BY INVESTING IN WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) announced the official theme for October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month: "Profit by Investing in Workers with Disabilities." The theme honors the contributions of workers with disabilities and serves to inform the public that they represent a highly skilled talent pool that can help employers compete in today's global economy.

"Return on investment means hiring the right talent," said Kathy Martinez, assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy. "Workers with disabilities represent all skill sets and are ready to get the job done. This year's theme focuses on improving employment opportunities that lead to good jobs and a secure economic future for people with disabilities and the nation as a whole."

Members of the public with questions related to the 2011 theme should contact Carol Dunlap at 202-693-7902.

ODEP's mission is to provide national leadership by developing and influencing disability-related policies and practices to increase and enhance the employment of people with disabilities.

## ART LIBERATES PEOPLE WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES

*An innovative program for people at Matheny Medical and Education Center.*

Geometric shapes dance within a field of varied textures as vivid slashes of color carom across the canvas. More amazing than this intricate, energized painting is the artist who created it — for he can neither speak nor move his limbs.



The Arts Access Program at the Matheny Medical and Educational Center in Peapack, enables the unfolding of miracles. Highly trained artist-facilitators and sophisticated methods restore hands and voices to severely disabled clients, by which they reclaim the creative potency of their minds and hearts, with magnificent results. A sampling of some of the results can be viewed at the University of Medicine and Dentistry in Newark.

### Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities

**Rocco J. Claps**, Co-Chairman, Director, Department of Human Rights  
**Michelle R.B. Saddler**, Co-Chairman, Secretary, Department of Human Services  
**Malcolm Weems**, Director, Department Central Management Services  
**Daniel W. Grant**, Director, Department of Veterans Affairs  
**Chris Kolker**, Chairman, Civil Service Commission  
**Deborah Johnson-Small**, Employee Member, Department of Human Services  
**Michael Knepler**, Employee Member, Department of Agriculture  
**Elaine Lazell**, Employee Member, Department of Healthcare and Family Services  
**Karl Moulton**, Employee Member, Department of Employment Security  
**Susan Allen**, Department of Human Rights  
**Joseph Ashcraft**, Department of Central Management Services  
**Andrew Barris**, Civil Service Commission  
**William Bogdan**, Secretary of State's Office  
**Jason Brewer**, Department of Natural Resources  
**Carlos Charneco**, Department of Employment Security  
**Dan Dickerson**, Department of Human Services  
**Teresita Gonzalez**, Department of Human Services  
**Margaret Harkness**, Council on Developmental Disabilities  
**Brandy Hayes**, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission  
**Terry King**, Division Of Specialized Care for Children  
**Mary Keen**, Department of Veterans Affairs  
**Sue Masten**, Department of Human Services  
**Fred V. Stewart II**, Department of Central Management Services

#### ICED

c/o: Department of Human Rights  
222 S. College, Room 101A  
Springfield, IL 62704

(217) 785-5119 (Voice)  
(217) 785-5125 (TTY)  
(217) 785-5106 (Fax)

**E-Mail:** [susan.allen@illinois.gov](mailto:susan.allen@illinois.gov)

**Website:** <http://www.state.il.us/iced>

Note: This newsletter is available in alternative formats upon request.