



**Bobby Jindal**  
Governor

## Director's Report to the DD Council

September 29, 2010

The past few months at GODA have continued to be full of action. Our office has fielded over 135 inquiries over the past three months. We received a number of questions regarding workforce initiatives and concerns; however, most constituent calls revolve around concerns regarding services and issues with applying for and/or receiving benefits.

In order to assist with inquiries about grants and funding, our office recently required the Meda-soft Grant Research program. The software is designed to serve as a search engine to explore grants available to organizations, groups or even individuals. With this tool, we will be better equipped to direct those who may seek funding resources through our office. We have successfully beta-tested three cases and are officially open for inquiries.

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, the final draft of The State Plan for Independent Living was submitted to RSA for approval. SILC has done a great job of coming together over a two day workshop to revise and modify the SPIL which was recently approved by RSA and will take effect on October 1<sup>st</sup>. In total \$5,889,183 of Federal Part B and C funds will be allocated to independent living.



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For the first time in three years, in efforts to promote collaboration and communication, the Statewide Independent Living Council and Louisiana Rehabilitation Council held a joint meeting on September 9<sup>th</sup>. It was a great chance for members of both councils to share their projects and ideas on issues that both entities face. The two councils work hand in hand for the disability community and worked on initiatives to collaborate within independent living and vocational rehabilitation.

GODA has been actively participating with master level Sociology classes at Louisiana State University. We have guest lectured on disability awareness and disability communication to classes compiled of students who hope to one day be social workers and licensed therapist.

The Louisiana Medicaid Infrastructure Grant is still a work in progress. The \$5 million dollar grant would afford the state an opportunity to increase employment opportunities for citizens with disabilities and implement structural programs for the hiring of persons with disabilities. The LaMig application is due to be submitted by the deadline in mid December of this year. Jamar Ennis, Program Coordinator of GODA, continues to be actively involved with the organization. Jamar chairs the council's "Disability Data" subcommittee.



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On September 29th, the quarterly GACDA meeting was held at the state museum. Guest speaker Gina Rossi, Office of Aging & Adult services, offered a presentation on the Louisiana Lifespan Respite Coalition, its missions and goals. GACDA members were challenged with the opportunity to become more actively involved in fulfilling the council's goals and objectives. GACDA worked for several hours to create ten initiatives for the upcoming year. Some of the initiatives are: ADA resource guide, Disability Election resource guide, and Emergency Preparedness kit to name a few.

GODA is happy to have accepted the challenge of coordinating the 2010 Inclusive Schools Art Contest, previously put on by the DD Council. GODA has reached out to nearly 300 art teachers throughout the state in efforts to engage as many participants as possible. The final deadline for submissions is November 4<sup>th</sup> with the winning participant's artwork being displayed at the GOLD Awards

the month following. We are working with the Secretary of State office to possibly have the ceremony award event at the State Archive Building, and to have to works displayed at museums across the state.



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The Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disability Awards is progressively growing bigger and better each year. The Awards Ceremony will once again take place at the Louisiana Old State Capitol on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Last year was met with over 70 nominations in 12 categories. Increasing our outreach, our goal is to obtain at least 80 nominations this year. In addition to the regular program, this year we are fortunate to add the Nora Hall Access Ability Memorial Scholarship Award. The scholarship will be awarded to a woman with disabilities who is recognized for her leadership abilities and achievements as a disability advocate with intentions of enrolling in an institution of higher education. Nomination packets for the GOLD Awards have already been distributed statewide with completed submissions due on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. We highly encourage and welcome the DD Council to consider any individuals they may wish to nominate.