

**Report to the Developmental Disabilities Council
From
The Advocacy Center
October, 2009**

Facebook/Disaboom

- As of September 30, AC's Facebook page has 502 fans.
- On Disaboom, August 2009 posts were viewed 39* times on average.
- In August, we created 36 new posts on Facebook and Disaboom. Topics included Is Your Case Being Closed By Louisiana Rehabilitation Services?; Four years after Katrina, NOLA mental health system still in crisis; UPS Sued For Disability Discrimination; Wheelchair Recycler gives people mobility back; After objections, autism billboard coming down; and Changes in the NOW Waiver.
- Facebook fans are involved in great discussions about the Elderly and Disabled Waiver, insurance, the Kennedy family, wheelchair access on streets and roads in Dry Prong, and Early Steps.
- Using the DD Council funded stipend, over 30 people have received stipends to participate.

Voting

- In July 2009, the Secretary of State adopted new rules for polling place accessibility including detailed procedures requiring Parishes to notify voters if polling places are not accessible. Hopefully, these procedures will be onerous enough to persuade parish officials to choose polling places that are accessible.
- AC will staff a voter hotline for the October 17th and November 14th elections.
- AC is beginning to survey agencies that receive state funds to provide services to people with disabilities regarding compliance with the National Voter Registration Act. This Act requires
- "Creating An Accessible Political Campaign: Practical Tips to Include People with Disabilities and Win More Votes!" is near completion.
- In conjunction with the Secretary of State, AC continues to advocate with parishes throughout the state to make polling places more accessible. We have sent letters to all parishes with accessibility problems identified in November 2008. In response, the Lafayette parish recently met with the Secretary of State to discuss barriers to accessibility, potential solutions and availability of funds.

New Representative Payee Project

The Advocacy Center will be initiating a new program, the purpose of which is to investigate corporate representative payees. This program, funded by the Social Security Administration and to be rolled out in all fifty states and seven territories, aims to intervene when corporate entities, who have been named as the representative payee for the funds of beneficiaries of social security benefits, are mismanaging those funds. The Social Security Administration will be sending the Advocacy Center the names of the corporations it wishes to have investigated.

BIALA

In the last few months the Brain Injury Association of LA has hired an Executive Director and has just submitted an application to be an affiliate to the Brain Injury Association of America. BIALA, which was birthed by the Advocacy Center, with much community help, expects rapid growth over the next few months.