

January 11, 2012

## **DD Council Deputy Director Wins Governor's Office Distinguished Merit Award**

The Council is proud to announce that its very own Deputy Director, Shawn Fleming, was presented with the 2011 Distinguished Merit Award at the Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities (GOLD) Awards ceremony sponsored by the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs (GODA) December 13<sup>th</sup> at Louisiana's old State Capitol. Shawn has devoted his entire career to improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities, yet was humbled by the honor. Shawn dedicated his award to his mother for her example of caring service to others over the years.

Prior to Shawn's four-and-a-half years with the Council, he had many years of dedicated service with the Louisiana Department of Education, leading programs for children with autism and deaf-blindness and Positive Behavioral Supports; LSU's Positive Behavioral Support Program, improving the capacity of educating children with challenging behaviors; and the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities in New Orleans, providing training to providers on behavioral support to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Since joining the Council staff in June 2007, Shawn has helped to expand the Council's advocacy efforts, particularly on education issues. His expertise and knowledge in education of children with disabilities and policy-making has proven invaluable in the Council's grassroots advocacy efforts. Along with a team of other advocates, Shawn worked with Senator Donahue in advocating for the establishment of regulations governing the use of restraint and seclusion on students with disabilities. His work throughout his career has made lasting improvements to the systems that serve children and adults with disabilities, enabling them to be included in their schools and communities.

Recipients of the other GOLD Awards include: Tammy Richard, Educator of the Year; Ester McGee, Volunteer of the Year; Geraldine Watson, Direct Support Professional of the Year, Matthew Robert Cole, Veteran of the Year; Pace, Service Animal of the Year; The Redmond Family, Family of the Year; McDonald's of Thibodaux, Employer of the Year; Fields Day, Youth of the Year; Katherine Hoover, Patsy Barrett Award; and Wallace Leo Johnson, The Ken Vince Memorial Award.



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