

## **Chairperson's Report July 2018 Council Meeting**

### **Committee Appointments Made**

- Self-Determination/Community Inclusion Committee: Kim Basile, Mitch Iddins and Julie Foster Hagan
- Education/Employment Committee: Bambi Polotzola and Crystal White
- Act 378 Sub-Committee: Enrice Jones, Hyacinth McKee and Crystal White

### **Legislative Advocacy Activity**

- Communicated with legislators in informal meetings at the Capitol during the Special and Regular Legislative Sessions.
- Attended all 3 yellow shirt days at the Legislature this past quarter
- Testified before the Senate Finance Committee on May 7<sup>th</sup> in support of the restoration of cuts to the LA Department of Health (LDH)
- Took action on all of the action alerts during the past quarter.

### **Interview with Governor Edwards**

I had the opportunity to participate in a video with the Governor promoting the employment of people with disabilities. The Governor wants Louisiana state government to set an example for private businesses to hire people with disabilities. The video will be shared on the Governor's website and on social media.

### **Meetings Attended**

- Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs – June 19<sup>th</sup>
- Partners Ad Hoc Committee – June 21<sup>st</sup>
- State As a Model Employer Task Force – June 22<sup>nd</sup>
- National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Annual Conference and Chairperson Leadership Training in Maryland July 9-12<sup>th</sup>

### **Report from NACDD Conference**

The Conference was held at Gaylord National Resort in Maryland. The theme of the conference was "See Me for Me: Connecting with Our Communities". I attended the Chairperson Leadership Training on the first day. I received information on how to work effectively with Council staff members in my state and also received information on how councils should make the public aware of the needs of people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities by training self-advocates and also by inviting legislators to attend DD Council meetings.

During the conference being prepared for natural and man-made disasters was one of the topics that was discussed frequently. People representing the DD community should be one or more of the members on the state's Emergency Preparedness Team. I learned how DD councils should have team members to go and evaluate shelters to make sure that the needs of people with disabilities are being met at the shelters. Speakers from Texas and Puerto Rico shared how they responded to the needs of people with DD after hurricanes and flooding. They have now learned how important it

is to identify people who will need assistance to evacuate and to get them to a safe place where their needs will be met as soon as possible. They have direct contact with FEMA to get medical equipment and supplies replaced as soon as possible.

The conference topics also included several sessions on how some states have implemented programs to encourage state and local government agencies and private businesses to hire people with disabilities. Self-advocates spoke about how they worked with various agencies to get businesses to hire people with DD. I had an opportunity to speak with Mr. Lance Robertson who was appointed by the president and confirmed by Congress as the Administrator for Community Living. He shared with us how the federal government is hiring people with DD in meaningful employment and how they are encouraging state and local government and the private sector to hire people with DD. Some states give members of the private sector tax breaks or other incentives to hire people with DD.

Several people from various states also shared how they are moving people from sheltered workshops to meaningful employment. Education is the key because legislators in many states are not aware that citizens who work in sheltered workshops work for 40 cents or less per hour. It was noted that it is impossible to live independently if you are earning subminimum wages such as this.

Finally, the next NACDD Conference will be held July 8-12, 2019 in New Orleans at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel. I asked if the Louisiana DD Council would be expected to be involved in organizing the conference. I was told that the staff from the national office will do all of the organizing. It was suggested that we could work the registration tables at the Conference if we wanted to be involved.

I learned so much at the conference and I am very glad that I had an opportunity to represent Louisiana at the conference.

### **Recognition of Council Members**

We recognize and thank Mark Thomas for his 4 years of service to the Council. We also want to congratulate him for his new position as Deputy Secretary of LDH.

### **Executive Committee Recommendations from July 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

#### **Timing of Executive Director Evaluation**

The Executive Director's evaluation is normally conducted prior to the April Council meeting and is reported on at the April meeting. The Executive Committee believes it would be more appropriate to conduct the evaluation in conjunction with the first Council meeting of the New Year.

The Executive Committee recommends updating the Policy and Procedure Manual: Section VI Number 6 "Evaluation Process for Executive Director" to read:

"In conjunction with the January Council Meeting, the Chairperson and the Executive Committee will evaluate the Executive Director on behalf of the Council based on the

position description and feedback from Council members” and will offer this as a motion for the Council's consideration.

The Executive Committee also received information and discussed the following issues:

- The federal government's change in interpretation of the time period Councils have to complete initiatives using each year's grant funds. The National Association of DD Councils is working with Councils to fight this change and hopefully prevent it from being implemented.
- The new system to disseminate LaCAN Alerts and LaDDC News – VoterVoice (Sande will provide more information on VoterVoice in her report)
- Louisiana's Disaster Plan for People with Disabilities
  - Mary Tarver will follow up with representatives from the Louisiana Hospital Association's emergency preparedness group to determine what resources are available for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. If a need is determined, Mary will work with this group to establish the needed resources and supports.
- Advocacy on the Federal Level
  - Executive Committee encourages Council members and advocates to reach out to their Congressmen and Louisiana's two Senators regularly to establish and foster relationships, educate them on issues affecting the disability community and the importance of protecting funding for Medicaid and other services and programs for individuals with disabilities.
- NACDD Conference in New Orleans
  - The Executive Committee decided the Council will support as many Council members as possible from the combined stipend fund and Council leadership travel budget to attend the NACDD conference in New Orleans.