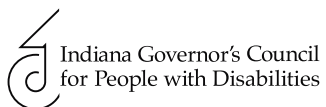


ignite thoughts into action

# spark



Indiana Governor's Council  
for People with Disabilities

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volume 4 number 1

## 2013 CONFERENCE RECAP



Game-changing  
communities



Dream to Dare  
workshops



Panel discussions

2013  
**CONFERENCE  
RECAP**

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**spark** is a bi-monthly publication of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, an independent state agency that facilitates change. Our mission is to promote the independence, productivity and inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of society. This mission is accomplished through planning, evaluation, collaboration, education, research and advocacy.

**Suellen Jackson-Boner**  
Executive Director

**Christine Dahlberg**  
Deputy Director

**“Within the neighborhoods, the towns, the local communities of America are the stirrings of a new movement of citizens acting together to solve community problems... It is a movement that begins with civic dialogue and leads to public action.”**

This quote, from the 1998 report of the National Commission on Civic Renewal, captures the spirit of the Council's 19th-annual Conference – Dream to Dare: Game-Changing Communities.

Two years ago, the Council forged into uncharted territory by building a Conference theme that depicts the elements of a livable community and deliberately declared a universal message that captures the attention of those beyond the borders of the disability community.

It was rewarding to see the diverse audience who attended this year's Conference. Because the Council has embraced a broader message, we in the disability community are gaining allies and expanding opportunities to realize our goals across the state.


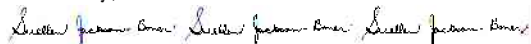
All Hoosiers want communities that:

- Achieve affordable, accessible, and safe housing and transportation
- Offer an inclusive and accessible physical environment
- Provide work, volunteer, education and social opportunities
- Ensure access to key health, support and retail services
- Encourage participation in civic, cultural and social activities

In this issue of Spark, we recap the Conference and challenge you to join us as we engage in conversations that make communities truly sustainable.

I would like to thank the Council's board members, staff, sponsors, attendees and speakers who made this year's Conference a challenging place for us to dream to dare. I am equally grateful for the support of the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, which co-authored invitation letters to Indiana mayors and altered the date of their conference to accommodate the Council's Conference schedule. These gestures indicate a larger, cohesive spirit of cooperation across Indiana to support the development of livable communities for all.

Sincerely,



Suellen Jackson-Boner  
Executive Director



# Game-changing communities

**J**ane Jacobs is a game-changer. A woman and a mother, she spoke out in the male-dominated world of urban planning during the 1960s. She authored “The Death and Life of Great American Cities,” introduced concepts like social capital (the collective benefits of a large social network) and organized grassroots efforts to protect neighborhoods from destruction.

Jacobs advocated without a degree in urban planning and with many critics against her. But her ideas were a dream shared by others in her city. She once wrote “Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

## **Igniting game-changers**

Jane Jacobs’ dreams are still an ongoing effort, and the Governor’s Council for People with Disabilities is doing its part to create and sustain

the livability movement right here in Indiana. This year, more than 400 people attended the Dream to Dare: Game-Changing Communities Conference, a statewide call to action that challenged attendees to be bold, creative, engaged and enlightened in their own communities. Conference-goers spent two days listening, learning, asking questions and networking with others to identify what it takes to create a welcoming, accessible and caring environment. Nine different workshops covered essential elements to planning, including:

- Making personal connections
- Universal design and ADA accessibility
- Examples of successful neighborhood initiatives
- Multifaceted, reliable and accessible public transit
- Emergency preparedness guidance

Two special panel discussions also gave attendees insight into initiatives happening around the state and nation, as well as tools for citizens wanting to take action. In addition, the Conference was honored to host two world-class authorities on urban design and planning, smart growth and sustainable communities – Ed McMahon, J.D., and Kevin Leyden, Ph.D. You can read more about their presentations on the next pages.

## **What creates game-changing communities?**

Throughout the Conference, presenters emphasized that when citizens and communities change the game, great things happen:

**Businesses flourish, making the connection between investing in the community and creating a great place for all to live.**

One in 5 Hoosiers has a disability. This means 1 in 5 customers

eating at a restaurant, shopping at a store or buying from online retailers may have a disability. That's also 1 in 5 sales that could potentially be lost if ADA accessibility standards – applied to physical buildings or on websites – are not in place.

**Purposeful design facilitates healthy, safe and friendly environments by embracing concepts like Complete Streets, mixed-use and the importance of the arts.**

The concept of shared, accessible public transit options is catching on. In fact, 130 communities across the U.S. adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2012, according to Smart Growth America. Complete Streets are those designed for access by all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders. And, out of the 488 Complete Streets policies in the nation, Smart Growth named Indianapolis as the top-ranked city for its comprehensive policy.

However, this is not just an urban issue. Recently, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy found the rates of biking and walking in small towns and rural communities were comparable to big cities. Thanks, in part, to the federal government's support of programs such as Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to Schools, we are able to make some parts of public infrastructure a priority in areas that may not be able to afford it. However, we also need to depend on communities for long-range visioning that spurs economic, social and environmental returns on investment.

**Residents feel valued and are respectful of one another – encouraging active participation by all in civic and recreational activities.**

In September 2013, the Huffington Post listed the 25 happiest, healthiest cities in America. A commonality shared by most was the act of being neighborly. Ample instances of involvement were highlighted – community gardens, active neighborhood associations, high attendance at religious services and support of outdoor recreation.

**Diversity is welcomed, providing support, access and a belief that everyone has gifts and talents to contribute to the fabric of the community.**

Biologists like to use the term biodiversity to describe the variety of life in an environment. The greater the biodiversity, the better equipped the ecosystem is able to survive because its inhabitants have everything necessary to feed, clothe and adapt to changes. When diversity of people, services and goods is applied in our own neighborhoods, we witness similar prosperity.

**Transcending the community of our dreams**

If you were a Conference attendee or are someone who wants to be a force for change in your community, there are a variety of grants and programs available statewide that may help jumpstart your goals. The box to the right provides a snapshot of these opportunities. We also encourage participating in March Disability Awareness Month. Visit [IndianaDisabilityAwareness.org](http://IndianaDisabilityAwareness.org) for more information and to order your free Awareness Month kit.

Our speakers and participants came together for an extraordinary two-day Conference experience where all attendees learned and shared their visions for the community of their dreams. The Council looks forward to the progress it will bring. \*

**Statewide grants and programs**

**ADA and Livability**

ADA Indiana Coros Grant:  
[ADAIndiana.org](http://ADAIndiana.org) (Grants tab)

**Community Development for Small Indiana Communities**

Stellar Communities Program  
[in.gov/ocra/2601.htm](http://in.gov/ocra/2601.htm)

**Sustainability**

2014 Leadership STAR  
Community Program  
[StarCommunities.org](http://StarCommunities.org)

**HUD**

Community Challenge  
Planning Grant  
[1.usa.gov/JQENFt](http://1.usa.gov/JQENFt)

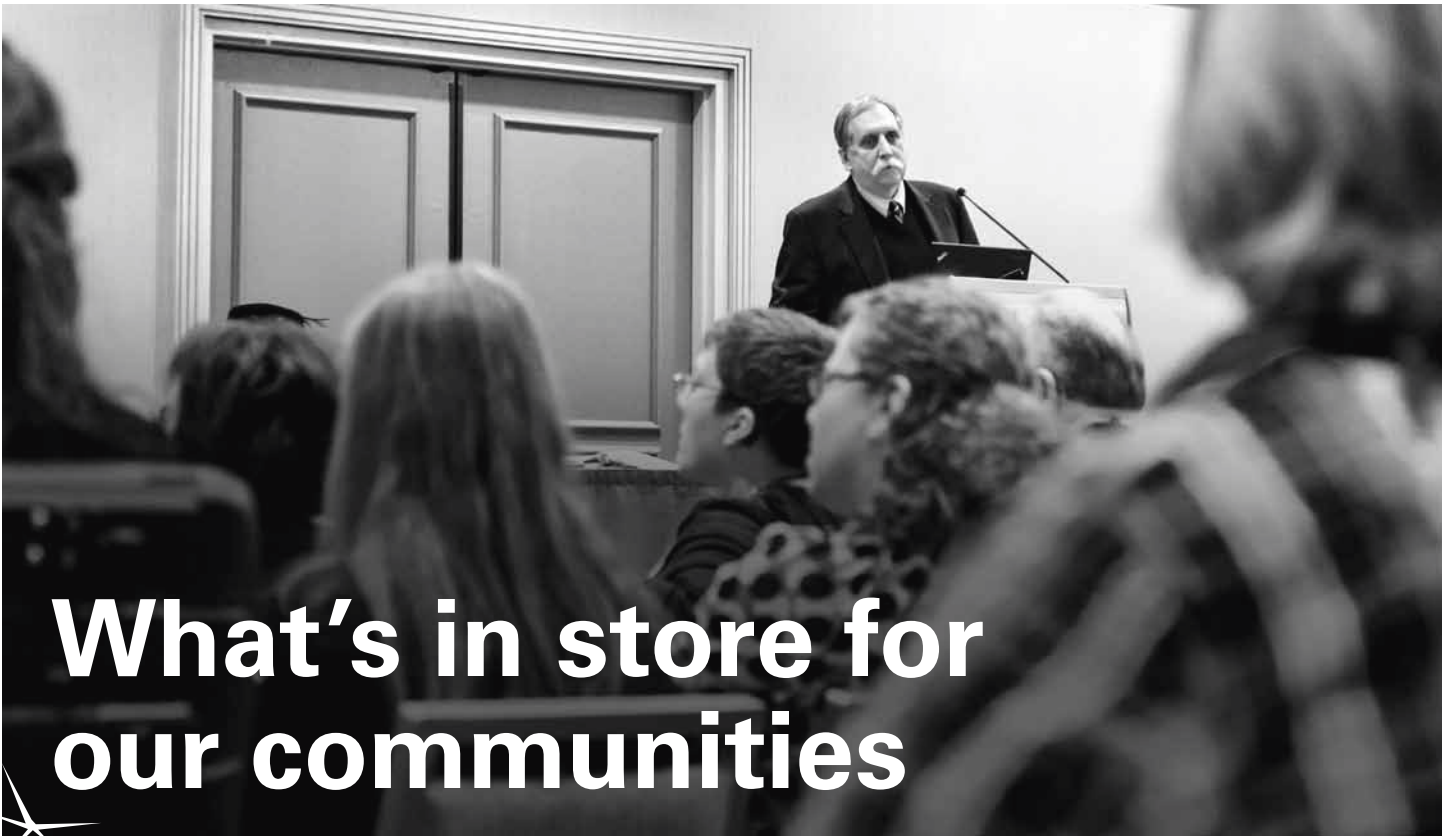
**Revitalization**

The Local Initiatives Support  
Corporation Grant Programs  
[Lisc.org](http://Lisc.org) (Our Work tab)

**Older Adults**

AARP Foundation Grants  
[AARP.org/aarp-foundation/  
grants](http://AARP.org/aarp-foundation/grants)

Local or county foundations may also provide funds for projects, like Evansville's YMCA bike rental program. Thanks to area advocates, the program now includes accessible bicycles. Contact your mayor's office or metropolitan planning division to find out.



# What's in store for our communities

**E**d McMahon, a senior resident fellow at the Urban Land Institute, is a nationally known leading authority on sustainable development, land conservation and smart growth. He headed this year's lineup of speakers at the Dream to Dare Conference.

McMahon provided a glimpse of what is in store for our communities. He spoke of change in demographics, climate, environment, technology, health care, consumer attitudes and market trends, energy production, and the national and global economy. And, he challenged the audience to be visionaries, to be engaged by investing time and resources into the community, and to work with others toward a common goal.

McMahon also emphasized the importance of strategic planning. He made it clear that we have a choice in shaping the future of

our communities by either being proactive in our planning, or doing nothing – and he warned there would be dire consequences if we choose the latter. “A community without a plan for the future is simply planning to fail.”

McMahon offered numerous snapshots from throughout the nation of what works in building livable communities. He showed a variety of examples of suburban sprawl and communities that do not work for people in concert with the environment. He also shared secrets of a successful community.

## **Develop a shared vision for the future**

McMahon believes, to make a blueprint for the future, it is imperative for communities to create a long-range plan. Although visions might differ, without a blueprint of shared

goals and ideas, a community will never flourish.

## **Inventory and build enhancement plans for local and regional assets**

McMahon states creating a vision for the future begins by taking inventory of a community's assets: natural, architectural, social, educational and economic, among others. And, having the “one big thing” – the one standout natural or man-made element in a city – may not always equate to a city's prosperity. For example, officials in Cleveland had debated whether to build a larger convention center, like Chicago's McCormick Center, to compete with bigger cities. Instead, they chose to rely on their assets – such as The Cleveland Clinic – and made it their mission to promote the city as the epicenter of medical and health-related conventions.

## About Ed McMahon

During his more than 25-year career, McMahon has helped communities in all 50 states with community planning and economic development.

Before joining the Urban Land Institute in 2004, McMahon spent 14 years at the Conservation Fund in Arlington, Va., where he helped protect more than five million acres of land of historic or natural significance. Before that, he taught law and public policy at Georgetown University Law Center. He also co-founded Scenic America, dedicated to protecting our national landscape. But, he first became inspired by urban development while flying helicopters over Europe during his tenure in the U.S. Army in Heidelberg, Germany.

McMahon is also the author or coauthor of 15 books, providing readers with many case studies, models and how-to guides for creating, maintaining and enhancing livable communities. \*

### Use education, incentives, partnerships and voluntary initiatives, not just regulation

According to McMahon, successful communities don't rely on government regulation to create the community of their dreams. They use education, incentives, partnerships and voluntary initiatives. Sometimes, government incentives help nudge community leaders toward positive objectives, such as curb cuts or crime reduction. But ultimately, it is up to community organizations to do something when the government neglects aspects of livability.

### Pick and choose among development proposals

For McMahon, "All development is not created equal." He believes, "Some development projects will make a community a better place to live, work and visit. Other development projects will not." A successful community should have high expectations for itself. McMahon uses an example that your local drug store does not have to be housed in a featureless, single-story building; communities can require more aesthetically pleasing touches on their retail establishments.

### Cooperate with neighbors for mutual benefit

Successful communities value cooperation at the local level so their economies can grow and prosper regionally. Real economic competition is regional, and it requires strategic, energetic allies at both the city and county levels to identify and leverage community assets that attract people and businesses.

### Protect community character as well as ecology and economics

More than anything, McMahon is a proponent of the "enduring value"



In his speech, McMahon mentioned how Carmel, Ind., is a prime example of how suburbs can change into denser, multi-modal areas of development.

of communities – the sustainable, harmonious balance between people and places. It is the place-making aspect, whether it be an arts district, sports field, river walk or farmers market, that attracts affection. In turn, a good image equates to economic well-being. "A healthy downtown equals a healthy town," McMahon said.

### Have strong leaders and committed citizens

McMahon believes a small number of committed people can make a big difference in a community. There will always be someone who disagrees or has something negative to say, but optimism overcomes difficulty.

McMahon showed Conference participants that we all have a choice, and we can make a difference. Get involved with local planning and initiatives. To find the most effective avenue for citizen input, call your mayor or town government office, or search online for opportunities. \*

# Community Spirit Awards



The Council was pleased to recognize many Community Spirit Award winners.

Each year the Council recognizes those who make our communities more livable. The following winners were honored during the Conference's opening session.

## 2013 Distinguished Leadership Awards

*Presented to a person with a disability and a parent or guardian of a child with a disability. Recipients are honored for extraordinary contributions to disability advocacy.*

The 2013 Distinguished Leadership Award for a Person with a Disability was awarded to David Carter of Spencer, Ind. Carter's almost 40 years of advocacy began while he was still recovering from being paralyzed by a barn collapse, campaigning to make his rehabilitation facility accessible. Nominated by the Fifth Freedom Network, Carter currently sits on their board and is a founding member. Among many organizations he

has benefited, Carter has been a Commissioner for the Indiana Civil Rights Commission since 1991 and serves as vice chair. And at the local level, he has been called the "driving force" behind the Bloomington Council for Community Accessibility.

South Bend native Hestina Monroe – Distinguished Leadership Award winner in the Parent of a Child with a Disability category – is a tireless advocate, teaching more than 8,000 parents to gain the skills they need to help their children with disabilities navigate the special education system. Starting as a volunteer with Indiana Resource Center for Special Needs, Inc. (IN\*SOURCE), also her nominator, Monroe became an employee in 1994. In her current role as a minority regional program specialist, she continues to advocate for children and families and has been called the "Harriet Tubman of Special

Education" by the schools in which she works.

## 2013 Disability Awareness Campaign Awards

*Presented to individuals and/or a group or organization for outstanding efforts to promote Disability Awareness Month in schools, businesses and/or communities.*

The Arc of Greater Boone County and Marcia Clutter, community relations representative, have continually boosted awareness of Disability Awareness Month in Zionsville, Ind., and throughout Boone County. The Arc not only sends communications to local school systems and public libraries, encouraging them to order and use the Governor's Council's Disability Awareness Month materials, but it also puts on one of the community's largest annual events – The Arc Artisans Art Show & Reception.

The Council presented a second award to Cathy Gross for her efforts on behalf of the City of Monticello Mayor's Advisory Council for the ADA. The Council's first multifaceted annual campaign included many elements – library display and mayor's story hour, local news coverage, radio PSAs, a mayoral proclamation, an Advocate of the Year award and an art contest. With the help of many community partners, the Council was able to build a greater understanding of the importance of inclusion and accessibility. ✨

# Dream to Dare workshops

This year's Conference featured a number of workshops that gave attendees the knowledge to become engaged in creating game-changing communities. Attendees were challenged to continue the conversation in hopes that more individuals will embrace and advocate for increased community livability.



Build Better Blocks with Jason Roberts.

## Build Better Blocks

Jason Roberts knows how long-range community visioning can be tiresome and filled with frustrations. That's why he founded Build Better Blocks, an initiative that temporarily transforms vacant blocks in 30 days or less. His concept involves creating pop-up shops, street entertainment, people-friendly aesthetics and other features that demonstrate the potential of an area.

Featured in the discussion were two Indianapolis blocks that went through the exercise: East Washington Street, led by Brent Aldrich, associate project manager at Englewood Community

Development Corporation, and Michigan Road, led by Ashley Kimmel, event and outreach coordinator at Crooked Creek Community Development Corporation.

For information on how to build better blocks in your community, visit the training tab on BetterBlock.org.



Left to right: Dana Robinson, Marie Beason and Kaitlin Thompson.

## Making Person-to-Person Connections

This workshop highlighted the many ways to build community by connecting with others. Dana Robinson, director of marketing and communications at CICOA Aging and In-Home Solutions, encouraged attendees to step outside of their comfort zones and explore something new. She mentioned CICOA's new website, [IndyCreativeAging.org](http://IndyCreativeAging.org), to find inspiration and events in which individuals can participate and share their gifts.

Marie Beason, director of member services and special initiatives with the Indiana Grantmakers Alliance, explained how Indiana is taking a statewide approach to raise the number of age-friendly communities through a national program called Community AGenda. They are partnering with the Council to conduct an "age and ability" study.

Lastly, Kaitlin Thompson shared her experiences with the online GimpGirl community ([GimpGirl.com](http://GimpGirl.com)), a place for women with disabilities to connect and share experiences. Thompson encouraged the use of social media as a great alternative for people with disabilities to connect, and GimpGirl makes this possible with its presence on Facebook and Twitter, as well as SecondLife, where members conduct virtual weekly meetings.

## The Intersection Where ADA and Livability Meet

In this workshop, Conference attendees heard about ADA implementation on the state and national levels. Christopher Hart, Peter Berg (both referenced on page 12), and Ric Edwards,



Christopher Hart (left) and Peter Berg.



director of safety and ADA compliance for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and chair of the Indiana ADA Steering Committee, explained some sections of the ADA in detail.

When ensuring compliance in Indiana, you must remember to consider federal standards as well. You must adhere to the more restrictive of the two codes. In several areas, Indiana code is more inclusive, so always make sure to be mindful of this.

Rounding out the workshop, Hart described some of his experiences adapting spaces for accessibility nationwide. He stressed that any construction not following accessibility standards is illegal.

## Power Lies Within the Community

What can ordinary residents do to initiate change? In this two-part workshop, attendees learned about Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) – people working together for the well-being of their home communities. Speaker David Portillo (see page 12) presented these three ideas:

1. Together we are better.
2. There is no one model or recipe when it comes to developing your community.
3. An ABCD approach is one that sees residents as key partners in developing game-changing communities.

Portillo emphasized how relationship-building is critical. At a high level, well-connected leaders can engage a wider community to act on what they care about. At the personal level, powerful relationships are built when two or more people share



David Portillo teaching ABCD.

their motivations, concerns, dreams and abilities. “Talk about your passions first, and then talk about next steps,” Portillo said. After doing that, you can find the specific assets and talents within your group, mobilize, and then, effectively work toward a solution.

For ABCD resources and community engagement information, visit [ABCDIstitute.org](http://ABCDIstitute.org).

## Complete Streets and Mass Transit: Moving All Around Town

Access to reliable and affordable mass transit and the creation of Complete Streets are crucial to livable communities. When asked how Indiana ranks in regards to the creation of livable communities, Kim Irwin, member of Indiana Citizens Alliance for Transit (ICAT) and executive director of Health by Design, said, “We are doing many things very well, but there are a lot of things we could do better.”

Irwin explained that while the number one issue is transit, streets also play a big role in helping people get around. For example, Indianapolis was recently recognized as having the

strongest Complete Streets policy in 2012 by Smart Growth America. Health By Design’s Complete Streets Initiative promotes policies that ensure streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. Visit [HealthByDesignOnline.org](http://HealthByDesignOnline.org) and click on Indiana Complete Streets Campaign for more information.

Overall, it’s important to actively encourage others to participate in transit dialogue. The easiest way to start is by signing the petition at [IndianaCAT.org](http://IndianaCAT.org).



Kim Irwin, executive director of Health by Design.

The Council is also working with Health by Design and ICAT to hold ‘Livable Communities’ workshops in 2014 that will address transit and other livability issues. If you are interested in learning more about or attending these workshops, contact Kim Irwin at [kirwin@acsm.org](mailto:kirwin@acsm.org) or (317) 352-3844.

We hope you will continue these conversations at home to create livable communities near you. \*

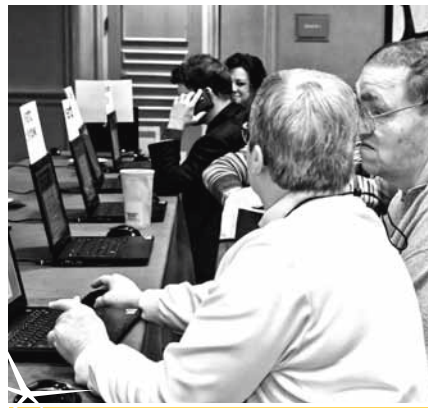
# 2013 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



Conference-goers enjoyed Tuesday evening's magical, Mickey-themed reception.



The latest in assistive services, resources and technology were on display in the Assistive Technology Lab.



Participants expressed their viewpoints and opinions on livable communities via the eighth-annual disability poll.



Jack Sparrow and Woody! Attendees dressed up as their favorite characters at Tuesday's reception.



Several Indiana mayors were in attendance, including Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson from Gary, Ind.



Workshops discussed livability, long-range community planning and advocacy, and local involvement.



The informational sessions were interactive and full of inspiring advice and perspectives on livability.



More than 30 exhibitors were present to explain the variety of disability and livability resources in Indiana.



Suellen Jackson-Boner and Council board chairman Steve Tilden revealed the 2014 Disability Awareness Month poster during the opening session.



Improv troupe ComedySportz entertained the audience at Tuesday's reception.



Nancy Morris from Indiana Department of Homeland Security presented emergency preparedness tips for community members.



Wanna dance with somebody? Easy to do at this year's reception!



Fun prizes were awarded after Wednesday's panel presentation.



During Wednesday's panel, conference participants shared (and signed) what the heart and soul of their community is.



# Panel discussions

## Day 1: The Essence of Community

Tuesday's panel discussion provided a wide-angle look at livable, sustainable communities and served as a precursor to the afternoon workshops.

Peter Berg, project coordinator of technical assistance and employer outreach at Great Lakes ADA Center in Chicago, reminded the audience that because the ADA is a civil rights law, it cannot change inaccessible buildings. It only affects new construction. Work needs to be done to educate the business community so people with disabilities can remain in their communities. For information and training resources, visit [ADAGreatLakes.org](http://ADAGreatLakes.org).

"The 25th anniversary of the ADA is in two years. Let's use the renewed media attention to bring awareness to progress that's been made,

while highlighting that we still have a long way to go," Berg said.

From Rick Brooks, co-founder of Little Free Libraries, attendees learned that people support that which they create. He gave the example of one woman who decided to set up her own Little Free Library – a dollhouse-sized box where anyone can take a book and leave a book. Within a week, the woman said she had met more people than she had in the past 30 years.

"Living in the community means each of us uses our gifts. 'Giving it forward' is what Little Free Libraries does," Brooks commented. You can get your own library started using tips from [LittleFreeLibrary.org](http://LittleFreeLibrary.org).

Christopher Hart, director of urban and transportation projects at the Institute for Human Centered Design, offered his viewpoint that

universal design is not compliance with the law, but a way of thinking about every choice for every environment. One in 7 people in the world has a disability, and this should compel us to start thinking about creating the built environment differently. People with disabilities need to position themselves as subject matter experts, not just advocates, so smart livable choices are made. The Institute offers a number of helpful resources promoting truly human-centered design at [HumanCenteredDesign.org](http://HumanCenteredDesign.org).

As a program officer for the Denver Foundation's Strengthening Neighborhoods program, David Portillo oversees grant gifting to deserving residents who want to make a difference in their communities. He stressed the importance of listening to stakeholders before creating a plan. Building relationships with stakeholders and hosting

community meetings inside neighborhoods are some of the most effective tactics to create change.

Finally, Jason Roberts, founder of Build Better Blocks, detailed his experiences helping transform Dallas into a more livable city. He reminded attendees to “think small.” Focus on a single city block. Have goals measured in days, not years. Test things temporarily to remove fear. Share co-responsibility of something you love. And, remember – money is not the answer. It’s people.

## Day 2: The Heart and Soul of Community

In Wednesday’s panel, Phil Stafford, Ph.D., director of the Center on Aging and Community at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, led a discussion posing thought-provoking questions.

### What is the heart and soul of your community?

**Katrina Gossett, J.D.**, attorney and Council board member – “Being in a wheelchair, I chose to live on Massachusetts Avenue [in Indianapolis] because I wanted to live where I could walk everywhere. I’ve fallen in love with

the local mix of restaurants and shops. And it feels exciting to be part of the economic development happening in the area.”

**Linda Dunno**, advocate, AARP and Complete Streets – “I love the feeling of safety, a place where I can grow personally, and green space.”

### What are the barriers to community development?

**Andy Frazier**, director of Indiana Association for Community Economic Development – “There are individual factors like fear of change and advancement. Then, there are systemic factors, like economic climate, not understanding a city’s assets and not seeing diversity.”

**Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, J.D.**, Gary, Ind., elaborated on her city’s well-being, noting how it went from being the “Magic City” during the era of steel mills to a politically challenged one whose Achilles’ Heel is its high crime. She stressed how crime is associated with many things, but citizens need to understand the role they play to be each other’s keepers. In addition, she assured the audience Gary was leaving its insular past behind. “Right now, we’re building on the assets we

have – the airport, the lakefront, parks. Yes, we’re challenged, but we’re looking to other cities to see how to duplicate change and form it to our needs,” she said.

### What role do small business and the media play in the community?

**Erika Smith**, Indianapolis Star metro columnist – “Social media definitely churns community excitement. Ultimately, [economic] boom and pride is all local.”

**John Britain**, small business owner, Audrey’s Place – “Communities can be affected by negative attitudes. But, I’ve never lost a customer due to crime. Everything you put into the community you get out of community.”

**Robert King**, Indianapolis Star reporter for Indianapolis’ near Eastside – “There’s a small coffee shop in my neighborhood that has become the place where ‘everybody knows your name.’ I’ve learned if you find a person to share ‘community’ with, it makes a city seem smaller.”

### And finally, how can we overcome barriers?

**David Smith, Ph.D.**, former director, Yale’s Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics – “To change people’s lack of trust and respect, religious communities are critical. They’re remarkable in the growth of this area.” Dr. Smith also mentioned, “If you wait for volunteers to help your cause, you’ll wait a long time. Ask for help!” \*



Left to right: Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, Robert King, Erika Smith, John Britain, Dr. David Smith, Andy Frazier, Katrina Gossett, Linda Dunno, Dr. Phil Stafford.



# Building to improve social capital

**K**evin Leyden, Ph.D., a professor of political science at the School of Political Science and Sociology and The Whitaker Institute, National University of Ireland, wrapped up this year's Conference by providing a compelling argument for designing communities to be mixed-use, walkable and pedestrian-oriented. These accessible, sustainable communities not only connect places, but more importantly, unite people, which he calls social capital.

According to Leyden, "Social capital is defined as the social networks and interactions that inspire trust and reciprocity among citizens. Individuals with high levels of social capital tend to be involved politically, to volunteer in their communities and to get together more frequently with friends and neighbors. They are also more likely to trust or to think kindly of others.

Social capital has been found to be linked to more than just good health. Empirical linkages have been found among social capital, the proper functioning of democracy, the prevention of crime and enhanced economic development."

For the past several years, Leyden has explored how walkability affects us socially and mentally. Leyden conducted a survey that compared a connected, livable community with a suburban neighborhood. He asked community members to record what places they could access by walking, such as churches, parks, local schools, child care facilities, pharmacies, pubs, etc., and their contentment for living in that space. He found that people who had direct access to these places by foot were happier, healthier and more connected than those living in car-dependent suburban areas.

Because of our heavy reliance on automobiles, it's no surprise social capital is in severe decline. This automobile reliance creates negative consequences like car accidents, pollution, obesity and few chances to casually "bump" into our neighbors. And, our pocketbooks are directly affected – an average American spends \$2,100 on gasoline each year. Leyden encouraged the audience to shift its focus to a right-of-way for pedestrians and cyclists and let cars take a back seat.

"The way we plan and design our community matters for us, for human health, our connections and our happiness," Leyden ended. "That's something we need to work on together."

To view Leyden's study, "Social Capital and the Built Environment: The Importance of Walkable Neighborhoods," visit [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1448008/](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1448008/). \*

# More conference highlights

The Conference provided many opportunities for attendees to be active and involved. Some of these included:

## Story Tent

More than 15 people visited this year's Story Tent to help tell the history of the disability rights movement in Indiana. Throughout the Conference, interviewers from the Center on Aging and Community, part of the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, gathered unique perspectives from advocates and people with disabilities who shared their experiences empowering the Indiana disability community.

These stories will become part of a larger project co-sponsored by the Council, Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services and the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community to document and share Indiana's progressive history in the disability movement. Look for these videos or find out how you can post your story at [MuseumOfThePerson.org](http://MuseumOfThePerson.org).

## March Disability Awareness Month

This year's Conference also kick-started planning for 2014's Disability Awareness Month. This annual event, sponsored by the Council every March, reflects the Conference's theme, "Dream to



This year's Disability Awareness Month poster complements 2013's theme.



Great personal stories were shared at this year's Story Tent.

Dare." The theme inspires and encourages all of us to challenge each other to take our dreams of livable, sustainable communities and make them a reality. Building off the 2013 "Community Connections" campaign artwork, this year's poster art uses poetic text to help frame our attitudes toward what we all want to achieve – a community that is sustainable, healthy and safe for all.

To order your free March Disability Awareness Month kit, visit [IndianaDisabilityAwareness.org](http://IndianaDisabilityAwareness.org). The kit provides a variety of printed materials, resources and event-planning guides to start building your campaign. We look forward to hearing about how you celebrate this special month! ✨

ignite thoughts into action

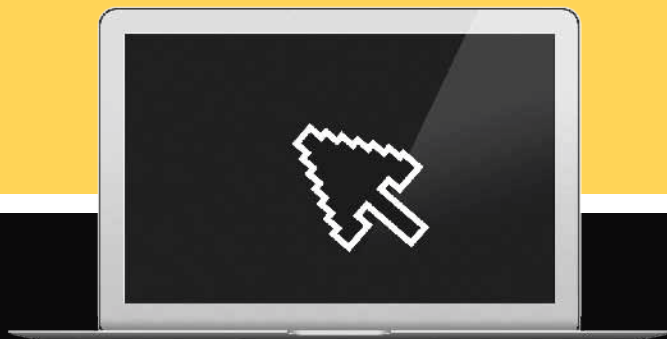
# spark

We welcome your suggestions  
for newsletter content and  
ideas concerning the actions  
of the Council.

phone: (317) 232-7770  
email: [GPCPD@gpcpd.org](mailto:GPCPD@gpcpd.org)

[www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd)

## Help us improve Spark!



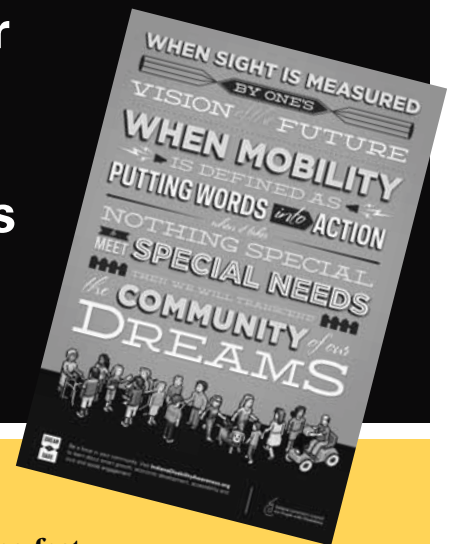
### Take the survey at

[SurveyMonkey.com/s/Spark-readership-survey](http://SurveyMonkey.com/s/Spark-readership-survey).

We value your feedback as we strive to continue meeting the needs of our readers. Participants in our five-minute readership survey will be entered into a prize drawing.\*

\*Some restrictions may apply

## Order your FREE Disability Awareness Month materials.



### March is approaching fast.

Help us get the word out with these posters, bookmarks and more.

### Order online at

[www.IndianaDisabilityAwareness.org](http://www.IndianaDisabilityAwareness.org).