

# on target

March 2010  
Volume 23 Number 2

## Hoosiers host Disability Awareness Month activities throughout the state

**D**uring March, people with disabilities, families, schools and others will celebrate Disability Awareness Month statewide with community events, school assemblies and classroom curriculum, and many other activities. Governor Mitch Daniels has proclaimed March as Disability Awareness Month in Indiana.

Led by the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, this year's Disability Awareness Month, themed "Free Your Mind," will help guide Hoosiers to embrace the differences of adults and children with disabilities, who represent slightly more than 19 percent of Indiana's population.

Arc Opportunities in LaGrange County is one group celebrating Disability Awareness Month, conducting presentations at eight elementary schools that will reach more than 460 second-grade students. During the events, students will explore various disability awareness stations that will engage students with hands-on lessons about limited mobility, impaired vision, communication disabilities, learning disabilities and more. National Honor Society volunteers from the high schools will teach second-graders about various disabilities at each station.

"It's important for students to learn at a young age that although an individual might have a disability, it doesn't mean they are not able," said Karen Unternahrer, respite service coordinator at Arc Opportunities. "With focus and patience, the second-graders will learn that almost anything can be accomplished with hard work and dedication."

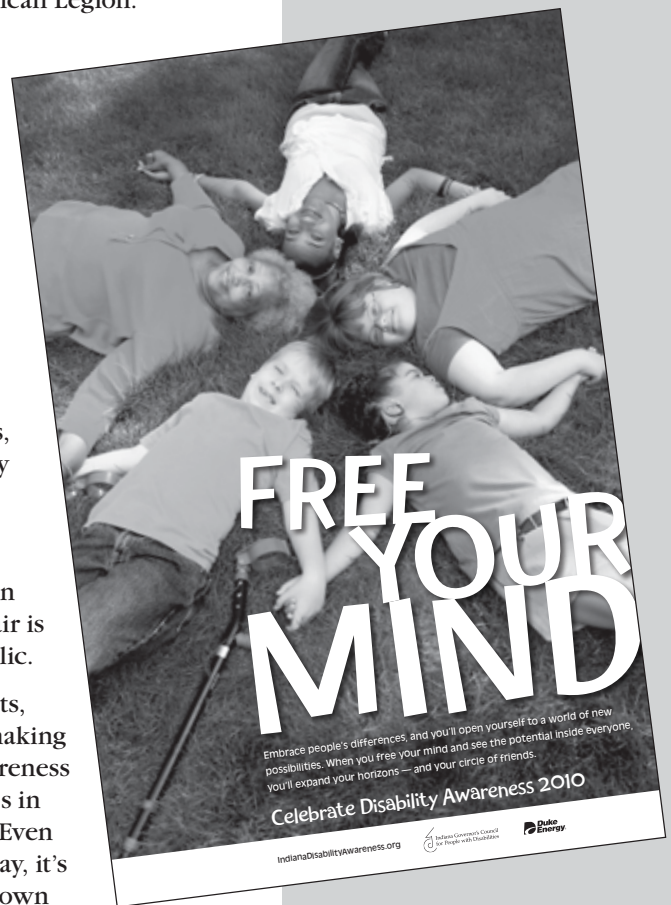
Blue River Services Inc. in Corydon, Ind., is hosting its seventh disability awareness poster and essay contest. The contest is open to students in the third through eighth grades in Crawford, Harrison, Scott and Washington county schools. Students at each school have the opportunity to express their interpretations

of the "Free Your Mind" message through a poster design or written essay. Last year, more than 750 students participated in the contest. Contest winners will be announced in May.

In Seymour, Ind., the Arc of Jackson County will host a disability awareness fair at the American Legion Post on March 23. The fair was originally started by the Seymour Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC) and now has several sponsors, including the Arc of Jackson County, Seymour Lions Club and the American Legion.

According to Anne Baxter, executive coordinator of the event, the fair was created to raise awareness of the resources available to people with disabilities in Jackson County. Vendors will supply information on Social Security, Medicaid waivers, support systems, community activities, day programs and more. Last year, approximately 135 people attended the fair, which featured more than 30 vendor booths. The fair is free and open to the public.

In addition to these efforts, Hoosiers statewide are making great strides to raise awareness of people with disabilities in their own communities. Even though March is underway, it's not too late to plan your own awareness activity. For resources to help you conduct Disability Awareness Month activities, please visit [www.indianadisabilityawareness.org](http://www.indianadisabilityawareness.org).



## New online Disability Awareness Month evaluation form

Individuals who coordinated Disability Awareness Month activities and events can now complete their Coordinator Evaluation forms online. The new online form makes it easy to provide the Governor's Council with valuable information and feedback about the 2010 Disability Awareness Month campaign.

The Council urges both coordinators and participants to complete evaluation forms. Feedback from the evaluations helps shape successful future Disability Awareness Month campaigns.

If coordinators choose to use the online evaluation form, they do not have to submit the downloadable PDF or the hard-copy form enclosed in the Disability Awareness Month materials kit. If preferred, coordinators still have the option of completing a paper evaluation form and mailing it to the Council.

Completing the online evaluation takes five to eight minutes, and coordinators can provide detailed results and feedback on three events or activities. Before beginning, the Council recommends:

- ▶ Having the completed Event/Activity Participant Evaluation forms on hand for reference.
- ▶ Reviewing either a hard-copy or PDF version of the Coordinator Evaluation, so coordinators have the information needed to answer evaluation questions.

To complete an online evaluation form, visit [www.indianadisabilityawareness.org/coordinator eval](http://www.indianadisabilityawareness.org/coordinator eval).

# Summer camps provide unique opportunities for children

Summer is right around the corner, and March is an ideal time to start planning summer activities for children. Many parents turn to summer camps to keep children both physically and mentally stimulated during their three-month break from school.

Hundreds of camps are offered around the state, and the majority welcome children with disabilities. Camps that offer services to both children with and without disabilities provide a unique opportunity for children to learn about diversity, and to discover that "disability" doesn't mean "not able." Four Indiana summer camps that welcome children with disabilities are:

## Flat Rock River YMCA Camp St. Paul, Ind.

[www.flatrockymca.org](http://www.flatrockymca.org)  
(888) 828-9622 (toll free)

As part of Flat Rock's goal to build strong kids, it works to instill the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility in all campers and staff. According to Steve Heiny, executive director, the camp is fully accessible, allowing children with disabilities to be included in all camp activities. Some exceptions may apply, but the camp makes adjustments so children with disabilities can enjoy the activities offered.

Before the camp starts, staff discuss necessary accommodations to ensure that campers with disabilities get the most out of their experience. First-time campers and families are invited to the camp beforehand to make sure it is a proper fit for the child.

## Camp Tecumseh

Brookston, Ind.  
[www.camp Tecumseh.org](http://www.camp Tecumseh.org)  
(765) 564-2898

Camp Tecumseh offers fun and challenging activities to give campers a memorable experience. The camp welcomes children with disabilities, if the camp is a proper and safe fit for the child. Inclusive camp activities help children with and without disabilities develop teamwork skills.

According to the director, the camp is fully accessible and will make any accommodation for children with disabilities, as long as it is the safest choice.

## Camp Red Cedar

Fort Wayne, Ind.  
[www.awsredcedar.com](http://www.awsredcedar.com)  
(260) 637-3608

Camp Red Cedar, boasting 57 acres of woods, meadows and a 10-acre lake surrounded by a sandy beach, offers a variety of camps for children with and without disabilities. Although each camp has distinctive activities, campers come together to share common activities like swimming and boating. According to the Web site, all facilities are completely accessible, including the beach, lake and boats.

The camp tailored to children with disabilities offers more individualized care, and the counselor-to-child ratio is much lower. Camp Red Cedar also hosts specialty camps for children with autism, Down syndrome and juvenile diabetes.

## Camp Riley

Martinsville, Ind.  
[www.rileykids.org/about/camp\\_riley](http://www.rileykids.org/about/camp_riley)  
(877) 867-4539 (toll free)

Considered one of the best residential camps in the Midwest for children with disabilities, Camp Riley offers a residential camping program in Bradford Woods for children ages 8 to 19 with physical disabilities.

According to its Web site, Camp Riley is fully accessible and customizes all activities to meet each child's individual abilities and needs. The camp offers traditional activities, including swimming, arts and crafts, nature projects and horseback riding, and challenges campers' physical boundaries and teaches them independence, self-esteem and living skills. The camp has a licensed physician and registered nurse on-site at all times.

Regardless of the summer camp, it is important that parents of children with disabilities visit potential camps before enrollment to ensure the camp is a proper and safe fit for the child. To learn more tips and to discover more summer camp opportunities, visit the American Camp Association's Web site at [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org) or call the association at (765) 342-8456. ●

# Special education dollars being spent elsewhere

**S**chool districts nationwide are using federal dollars — originally intended for special education — for other purposes, according to a January 2010 Wall Street Journal article. The article states a provision in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) allows school districts to use federal stimulus dollars allocated for special education for other uses.

As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the federal government spread about \$12.2 billion in stimulus funds across the states for special education as specified by Parts B and C of the IDEA. Indiana is receiving approximately \$253 million of those dollars for K-12 education, as well as \$9 million for pre-K.

However, an IDEA provision states that, in years in which there is an increase in federal funding for students with disabilities, school districts already meeting certain standards can reduce their local spending on special education by as much as 50 percent of the federal funding increase. The districts can use the money for other purposes, as long as they: 1) Use the funds for activities that

can be supported under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; 2) meet the requirements of the IDEA; and 3) can provide a free, appropriate public education.

A July 2009 report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), titled “Recovery Act: States’ and Localities’ Current and Planned Uses of Funds While Facing Fiscal Stresses,” indicates more school districts plan to designate special-education funds for other uses.

According to the GAO report, states received the first half of their IDEA Recovery Act funds in April 2009. As of June 26, 2009, only seven of the 16 states and District of Columbia had drawn down their funds (Indiana was not one of the states surveyed). In total, just more than 8 percent of allocated dollars had been drawn down. Before using the funds, many surveyed states say they need clearer federal government guidance about how the funds can be used and better instructions for reporting the use of funds.

To learn more about how Indiana is using federal stimulus dollars in education and other areas, visit [www.INvest.in.gov](http://www.INvest.in.gov). ●

## First Steps proposes rule to suspend services

Families enrolled in Indiana’s First Steps program may lose some services, if their payments are delinquent. In December 2009, the Bureau of Child Development Services (BCDS) — which oversees First Steps — proposed a new rule that would suspend co-pay eligible services to participants whose accounts are 60 days or more past due, until full payment is received.

BCDS said the new rule came about due to the number of families not honoring co-pay obligations.

First Steps is a state program providing early intervention services to infants and young children with disabilities who experience developmental challenges.

Opponents to the proposed rule fear that suspending services may be detrimental to children’s development. On its Web site, The Arc of Indiana says “While the State of Indiana is facing difficult financial times and every possible way to save funds must be looked at, ‘cost savings’ should never be taken at the expense of vulnerable children with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.”

In January and February of this year, the state conducted two public hearings and accepted written comments to gather feedback. At press time, the proposed rule change was still in review. For more information about the proposed rule, visit The Arc of Indiana’s Web site at [www.arcind.org](http://www.arcind.org) and view archived articles in the “News” section. To learn more about Indiana’s First Steps program, visit [www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2633.htm](http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2633.htm).

---

# 8-year-old girl inspires bill to ban “mentally retarded” from federal language

**A** recently introduced congressional bill would eliminate the phrase “mentally retarded/retardation” from federal law, an initiative inspired by 8-year-old Rosa Marcellino. Rosa, who lives with her family in Maryland, has Down syndrome and was labeled as “mentally retarded” by her school, according to an ABC News report.

After hearing the family’s story, United States Senator Barbara Mikulski introduced Rosa’s Law, Senate bill 2781, which would change variations of the negative phrase to “intellectual disability” in federal legislation terminology.

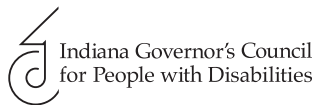
Locally, The Arc of Indiana is supporting the bill. “The only ‘R’ word that should be used with any human being is ‘respect,’” said Kim Dodson, associate executive director for

The Arc of Indiana. “We need to be doing more to showcase the positive community involvement of people with disabilities and not continue to degrade people with the use of antiquated terminology that is hurtful.”

According to the ABC News report, Rosa’s brother Nick — a high school freshman — testified before the Maryland General Assembly to help pass a law to eliminate the negative phrase at the state level.

“My sister might be one of the smartest kids I’ve ever met, and that’s the truth!” Nick told legislators, according to the ABC News report.

At the time of printing this newsletter, Rosa’s Law had been read twice in the Senate and had been referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. ●



Indiana Governor's Council  
for People with Disabilities

150 W. Market St., Suite 628  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

(317) 232-7770  
E-mail: [GPCPD@gpcpd.org](mailto:GPCPD@gpcpd.org)  
Web site: [www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd)

**Address Service Requested**

March 2010

Presorted Standard  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit #7374  
Indianapolis, IN

**on target** is a monthly publication of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities. We welcome your suggestions for newsletter content and ideas concerning the actions of the Council.

**on target** is made available in accessible formats upon request.

## Of Note

### ADA celebration

The ADA's 20th anniversary will be honored with a celebration in Indianapolis July 26, hosted by ADA-Indiana, the Governor's Council and other partners. All who are interested are invited to attend. Look for more information in a future issue of "On Target" or at [www.arcind.org](http://www.arcind.org).

### New audio cast on Arc Web site

The Arc of Indiana is producing an online audio-cast series to address various issues relevant to people with developmental disabilities and their families. Called "A View from My Window," the audio casts are hosted by Michelle Fischer, who was born with cerebral palsy and hopes to one day be a television news anchor. To listen to the audio casts, visit [www.arcind.org](http://www.arcind.org) and click on "Media Gallery." To learn more about Michelle, click on "News & Events" from the home page.

### Free disABILITIES Expo April 10 in Fort Wayne

The very first disABILITIES Expo in Fort Wayne, Ind., will take place Saturday, April 10, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The expo will be hosted by the Turnstone Center for Children and Adults with Disabilities and held at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum. Admission is free, and attendees will be able to listen to

keynote presenters, participate in workshops, engage in paralympic sports demos and browse through a variety of exhibitor booths. The expo is designed for people with physical and cognitive disabilities, persons with vision and hearing impairments, and seniors, as well as their families and caregivers. To register or get more information, visit [www.turnstone.org/expo](http://www.turnstone.org/expo) or contact Jennifer Neher at [jennifer@turnstone.org](mailto:jennifer@turnstone.org).

### Is green your color?

The Governor's Council is now offering an electronic version of On Target that you can receive by e-mail. The electronic version is in HTML format and features live links, including a link to a downloadable PDF version. If you'd like to help the environment, or if you just prefer getting your information electronically, send us an e-mail at [GPCPD@gpcpd.gov](mailto:GPCPD@gpcpd.gov). We'll remove you from the print-version mailing list and send you the electronic version only. ●

**Suellen Jackson-Boner**  
Executive Director

**Christine Dahlberg**  
Deputy Director