



## Teachers' Corner

# Abandoning the Myth of Mental Retardation: Carefully Constructing Developmental Disabilities

**J. David Smith, Dean**

*School of Education and Human Services  
Longwood College*



In January, I received the ballot concerning the name change of the MRDD Division of CEC. I voted in favor of the Division of Developmental Disabilities title. I hope that the change will occur. I also hope that the movement away from the term mental retardation will provide us an opportunity to enhance our understanding of the people who have been described by the term, and our appreciation of their rightful place in the human community.

Just a glance at the long list of causes and characteristics associated with the term mental retardation yields evidence of the allure and power of typological thinking. Typology is the study of groupings of individuals whose differences are thought to be overshadowed by underlying types or essences. In anthropology, it holds that classifications can

be established for people by the critically defining characteristics they share. Gelb (1997) has found that definitions of mental retardation, regardless of their variations or details, have all been established on the assumptions of typological thought. From this perspective, the glue that holds the field of mental retardation together is the assertion that there is a mental retardation "essence." This essential quality is thought to be more compelling than all of the individual differences that otherwise characterize people who are classified by the term.

In 1992 the American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR) delineated more than 350 causes of mental retardation (Luckasson et al., 1992). This list does not, however, take into account the varying degrees and specific types of disabilities associated with those etiologies. If these variables are added, the multiple and complex meanings of what is called mental retardation are staggering. Mental retardation is held together as a category of human beings by the typological notion that there is some fundamental essence to the huge universe of characteristics and the vastly differing needs of the

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## ***Division Completes Name Change Process***

(see page 8 for details)

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## President's Message

*Val Sharpe*

*The prime condition of national survival has been timely adaptation to changing conditions.*

*-B. H. Liddell Hart (1895-1970).*

*"Adaptability is the Condition of Survival." 15 February, 1941. This Expanding War, 1943.*

The events of this past year have been dominated by the words: **change** and **paradigm shift**. When reflecting upon this year's Division activities, these very words become thematic. Five major changes have taken place over this past year:

**Change #1 The implementation of a new five year strategic plan.** The four goals of this new strategic plan are: (1) providing a quality Publications program that provides timely, valuable research, research-to-practice, and membership information that enables members to pursue professional development via MRDD membership; (2) developing quality conferences to disseminate and implement current research findings, best practices, and innovative service programs; (3) providing leadership in the development and implementation of programs and advocacy that increase members' ability to provide quality educational services for individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities; and (4) improving educational outcomes of individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities by maintaining a strong Division.

**Change #2 The Division name change.** During the past year, an ad hoc committee of the Board has interacted with the membership concerning a possible name change for the Division. At the meeting of the Board on April 19, 2001, the committee recommended a change in the Division name. A first reading to the

membership of the recommendation for a name change was completed on April 20, 2001, during the Division Business meeting at the CEC Convention in Kansas City. Following the business meeting an open comment period was provided for the membership to respond/react/provide input (April 20 – September, 1, 2001) to the proposed name change. In February, 2002 the membership was asked to vote, using a ballot format, for the Division name change. On April 4, 2002 during the General Business Meeting at the CEC New York Convention, it was announced that a ballot count of 667 in favor of the name change to 68 opposed was the culminating determining factor for the Division name change. As of April 4, 2002 our new Division name is: Division on Developmental Disabilities (Focusing on individuals with cognitive disabilities/mental retardation, autism and related disabilities).

**Change #3 The restructuring of the DDD Board of Directors.** Plans for possible restructuring the DDD Board of Directors to ensure an effective and efficient operation are being examined.

**Change #4 The addition of an Ad hoc Diversity Committee.** A focus regarding diversity issues and concerns continues to be of priority to this Division. If interested in serving on this committee, please contact me for further information.

**Change #5 The Division Membership and Recruitment.** At a time when most CEC Divisions are experiencing membership recruitment and retention difficulties, DDD has developed a proactive recruitment and retention campaign. One of the major focuses of this campaign will be the recruitment of student members. It is my hope that the DDD membership will continue to provide input as to the implementation and evaluation of these campaign strategies. Continued feedback from our membership is essential for the growth of DDD.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as President of The Division on Developmental Disabilities (DDD) this past year. Serving as the DDD President has been an invaluable experience. I thank all of you for your continued input and support throughout this year.

Please feel free to contact me e-mail: VMKKO@aol.com or snail mail: 5104 Bonnie Brae Court, Ellicott City, MD 21043-7047. Best wishes for an enjoyable summer season!

## Showcase Session

# Speaking for Ourselves:

## Individuals with Autism Talk About Their Educational Experience

**Karen Kainz,**  
*Secretary DDD*

One of the most fascinating sessions of the CEC Conference in New York City was the panel discussion lead by Julie A. Donnelly of Autism Support Services, Columbia, MO. The session was sponsored by DDD and drew a standing room only crowd. Over 200 people crowded into a room with 70 chairs. People stood along the walls and sat on the floor for the entire two-hour panel discussion.

The panel consisted of five young men, ranging in age from 18 to 46. Each one of them was diagnosed with autism/autism spectrum disorder at some point in his life. One at a time, they told the story of their education.

Starting early in life, they heard comments such as “There is something quite different about him, I just don’t know what it is!”

The first speaker, Stephen Shore, wrote a book entitled *Beyond the Wall – Personal Experiences with Autism and Asperger Syndrome*. He was diagnosed before the age of two. He emphasized the things that were helpful, unhelpful, and significant in the various stages of his life. The helpful things included a mother who fought for him, early intervention programs with an emphasis on music and movement, and psychiatrists, teachers, and mentors who saw his potential and went the extra mile to provide the structure that he needed to succeed. Unhelpful things included poor communication between the school and the parents, teachers who were unwilling or unable to provide the needed structure, and peers and coworkers who exploited his differences.

One by one, these young men told a story about the problems that they had learning abstractions and analogies. They talked about the specific skills that they possessed that enabled them to be very successful in specific, concrete areas where their skill for memorization

was useful. They pointed out that the fixations that are common to students with autism could be used as a powerful motivation tool by a teacher who is wise enough to use them. They all agreed that social skills, anger management, and frustration are serious issues. These areas must be specifically addressed and taught.

Several of the panelists were identified late in life. For most of them it was a relief to be able to look back and see the reasons for the things that had happened to them in their lifetime. Many of them hide their diagnosis from friends and employers to avoid being patronized or being refused jobs that they are very capable of doing.

The theme that ran through every speech was that autism is a difference and not a disability. Stephen is a Graduate Study Teacher in Special Education/Autism at the college level. Michael is involved in music and theater and works in Foreign Service. Perry is finishing his degree in secondary education. Karl is an electrical engineer and computer scientist. Steven is starting an internship with a video game company. These young men are proof that with perseverance and hard work, young people with autism spectrum disorder are capable of holding jobs, marrying, having families, and succeeding in life.



“Speaking for Ourselves” Panel Members: (l-r) Stephen, Julie Donnelly (session leader), Michael, Perry, Karl and Steven

## DDD Honors Eight Award Recipients in New York City

The following eight DDD awards were presented at the CEC Conference in New York City. The deserving recipients are highlighted here.

**Teacher of the Year Awards** were presented to **Leisa Morreau Cummins** (Illinois), **Debbi Wicmanowski** (Florida), and **Marilyn MacLean** (Ontario). The Illinois subdivision noted Leisa's exemplary outreach to parents and use of community based instruction. Additionally, Leisa has been a cooperating teacher for much of her 15-year career, expertly mentoring over 30 student teachers and field base students. The Florida subdivision stressed Debbi's many leadership positions throughout her 23 years of service in the public schools. Debbi's efforts have resulted in many innovative practices in Florida's schools including student directed IEPs and the introduction of family life curricula. The Ontario subdivision noted that Marilyn, who just recently retired, was leaving behind a legacy of effective inclusive educational practices in Ontario's schools. Marilyn was especially adept at fostering peer acceptance and encouraging peer friendships. Congratulations to these three fine teachers!

A **Paraeducator of the Year Award** was presented to **Linda Brylowski**. The Ontario subdivision reported that Linda has taken full advantage of her professional development opportunities and has been willing to share her vast array of skills with colleagues in her school district. She is described as a true "partner in the process."

The Division also recognized two teams of presenters at the CEC Annual Convention. The **Herbert J. Prehm Student Presentation Award** was presented to **Natalie Sokol** and **Kristin Starosta** from Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. They presented "Using functional assessments to decrease self-injurious behaviors during eating routines." The **Practitioner Award** was presented to a team of presenters from Little Neck, NY: **Janet Healy**, **Debbie Blanc**, **Alisbel Zorilla**, and **Judi Levin**. They presented "Engineering classrooms for communication for students who are nonverbal."

The **Burton Blatt Humanitarian Award** was presented to **Scott Sparks** from Ohio University. Scott is no stranger to the MRDD membership, having served on the Board in a variety of capacities for nearly 15 years. Scott is recognized for his leadership in the area of diversity in the field of developmental disabilities. Standing out among his many contributions has been his work with the Bureau of Indian Affairs on tribal schools. Scott is especially committed to his teaching role at Ohio University. He makes special efforts to get to know his students and he maintains contact with many former students long following their graduation.



*Debbi Wicmanowski (r), receives the DDD Florida Subdivision Teacher of the Year Award pictured with Val Sharpe, DDD President*



*The DDD Practitioner Award presented to a team from Little Neck, NY (Janet Healy, Debbie Blanc, Alisbel Zorilla and Judi Levin); Janet and Debbie (r) pictured with Jim Thompson and Val Sharpe*



*Scott Sparks (r) honored with the DDD Burton Blatt Humanitarian Award pictured with Jim Thompson and Val Sharpe*

Scott is a wonderful leader, a fine mentor, and all who are fortunate enough to know Scott can attest to his generous spirit and humble manner.

The *DDD Legislative Award* went to **Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD)**. Rep. Hoyer is a tremendous advocate for people with disabilities and has a remarkable array of legislative accomplishments on their behalf. In 1989 Rep. Hoyer led the charge to ensure the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act. His leadership efforts were outstanding, resulting in the enactment of that landmark law in 1990. He continues to watch over that important law, to fend off weakening amendments, and to work with the community to ensure that it is effectively enforced. In his position as a member of the Labor/HHS/ Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Rep. Hoyer has proved to be an effective champion of funding for programs serving people with disabilities. Last year, he led the charge to ensure increases for programs under the Developmental Disabilities Act, as well as a significant \$8 million increase for personnel preparation funds under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Also, Mr. Hoyer took the lead on an amendment to the Assistive Technology Act to ensure that 9 states (including Maryland) would not be eliminated from this vital program. As the Congress begins the process to reauthorize the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Mr. Hoyer will no doubt be an active advocate on behalf of people with disabilities and their families. *(Dr. Jane West, consultant in Washington, DC nominated Rep. Hoyer.)*

Please remember that it is not too early to nominate someone for an award to be presented at next year's convention in Seattle, Washington. For information about the various DDD award categories, contact Jim Thompson at (309) 438-2837 or jrthomp@ilstu.edu.



*Cindy Perras (r) receives President's gavel from Val Sharpe (outgoing President of DDD)*



*DDD Past Presidents met at CEC. From left: Ed Polloway, Tom Smith, Darlene Perner, and Jim Patton (Andy Berg, not pictured)*

## JOIN A COMMITTEE!

### *DDD Committees and Chairpersons*

The following is a list of the DDD Committees and Chairpersons (2001-2002). Contact any Committee Chairperson directly to obtain information and/or to *JOIN A COMMITTEE!*

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Contact</b>	
Awards	Jim Thompson	jrthomp@ilstu.edu	(309) 438-2837
Conference	Cindy Perras	cindy.perras@cogeco.ca	(905) 845-2280
Critical Issues & Legislative	Bob Stodden	stodden@hawaii.edu	(808) 956-9199
Ad hoc Diversity	Scott Sparks	sparks@oak.cats.ohiou.edu	(740) 593-4437
Finance	Dan Ezell	dezell@mail.ucf.edu	(407) 632-1111
Membership & Unit Dev.	Jim Forristal	jimfortpa@aol.com	(813) 681-1080
Nominations	Tom Wood	EDU_TAW@shsu.edu	(915) 747-5221
Professional Dev. & Standards	Scott Sparks	sparks@oak.cats.ohiou.edu	(740) 593-4437
Publications	Jack Hourcade	jhourcad@email.boisestate.edu	(208) 426-3544
Research	Bob Sandieson	sandie@julian.uwo.ca	(519) 661-2088

*DDD Committee Chairpersons for 2002-2003 will be listed in the Fall Issue.*

## Election Report

### Two Members Complete Terms of Office

Two members of the DDD Board of Directors will complete their terms of office for the 2001-2002 year:

**Thomas Wood** is completing his term as Past President, and **Robert Sandieson** is completing his term as Canadian member. Both of these individuals have performed a significant service to DDD and to individuals with disabilities. We thank them for their service and wish them well in the future.



*Thomas Wood,  
Past President*



*Robert Sandieson,  
Canadian  
Member*

### Election Results

This was the first year that all elections were conducted through a mail ballot. The Constitution and By-Laws were amended to change our election procedures at the MRDD business meeting last spring in Kansas City. This year the following individuals were elected to DDD Board positions:

**Barbara Gartin**, from Arkansas, was elected Vice President

**Dan Ezell**, from Florida, was re-elected Treasurer

**Leslie Brown**, from Ontario, was elected Canadian member.

Thanks to all who voted. On the ballot for next year will be Vice President, Mid-West Member, Northeast Member, and Student Governor. A call for nominations will be in the Fall 2002 newsletter and elections will be held during the beginning months of 2003.

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## Subdivision News

### OSIDC Award Winners

**Carol Nelson**,  
*President, Ontario Subdivision IDC*

The Ontario Subdivision honored its best. These award winners received plaques at ceremonies in their own schools and workplaces.

**Jonathan Watt** was STUDENT OF THE YEAR. His participation in community work programs, ongoing cheerful attitude made him the outstanding candidate for this award.

**Virginia Bint** received the SUPPORT WORKER'S AWARD. Virginia is the transportation officer for the Toronto District School Board and overlooks the transportation for 900 students with developmental disabilities every day of the school year.

The TEACHER OF THE YEAR award was presented to **Patricia Weatherbee**. Her contributions to the education of young students with developmental disabilities in a positive learning situation make her a role model for all staff in her school.

THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD was presented to **Paula J. Stanovich**. Paula has dedicated many years to research in the field of developmental disabilities. In her role as a professor, she continues to educate others about people with developmental disabilities.

**Linda Byrlowski** was chosen as the PARAEDUCATOR OF THE YEAR. Linda has been involved with students with developmental disabilities in both the mainstream and contained classes. Through her varied experiences, Linda has maintained a positive and enthusiastic outlook.

## Teachers' Corner

(Continued from Page 1)

people identified by the term. Clearly, however, mental retardation is a term that has been used to describe a vast aggregation of diverse human circumstances. The only rationale for this aggregation appears to be the typological reasoning that the category contains people with intellectual, social, and developmental traits that make them more alike than different.

### Mental Retardation: Disaggregation of a Myth?

The authors of the 1992 AAMR manual characterized their revisions to the definition and classification of mental retardation as a paradigm shift. The shift was presented as consisting of two facets. First was a change in the conception of mental retardation from a trait existing in an individual to an expression of the interaction between a person and that individual's environment. The second element of the shift was an emphasis on the pattern of the person's needs rather than his or her deficits (Schalock, et al., 1994).

Paradigm shifts may be critical to the advancement and improvement of any field of endeavor. Thomas Kuhn, in his classic book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, defined paradigms as shared worldviews. Kuhn argued that shared views eventually become so strong and institutionalized that only a sudden and dramatic break from these conventional perspectives can bring on a positive revolution in thinking (1962).

In 1961, Thomas Ssaszs jolted many of the psychiatric world's paradigms by proclaiming that mental illness is a myth. He asserted that the medical terminology associated with the vast array of emotional and social difficulties that people may encounter in life was inaccurate and misleading. According to Ssaszs, although the term mental illness "made good historical sense—stemming as it does from the historical identity of medicine and psychiatry—it made no rational sense. Although mental illness might have been a useful concept in the nineteenth century, today it is scientifically worthless and socially harmful" (Ssaszs, 1961, p. ix).

The effort to define mental retardation in a scientifically accurate manner has been continuous for centuries. The effort to define it in a way that promotes greater sensitivity to the needs of people described by the term has also been continuous. A scientifically sound and socially helpful definition of the term mental retardation, may not, however,

be achievable. Perhaps the paradigm shift that is now needed is an even more dramatic one than that which was presented in the 1992 AAMR manual. The paradigm shift that is most needed is, in my opinion, the deconstruction of mental retardation. The best definition of mental retardation will be no definition at all.

I believe, it is time to admit that the term mental retardation is, to use Ssaszs's words, "scientifically worthless and socially harmful". It is time to face the reality that it is a manifestation of typological reasoning that has created a false and unhelpful categorization of people. Perhaps the plurality of the term developmental disabilities will more effectively define the heterogeneity of the people who have previously been labeled mentally retarded. I hope it will also be more helpful in protecting their individual dignity because of its generality.

### References

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Lesley Graham (r), DDD member and past DDD Board member, pictured with Susan Phillips Gorin (l). Lesley is the 2002 recipient of the Susan Phillips Gorin Award (honoring a SCEC Advisor).

# Division Completes Name Change Process

Robert A. Stodden, *Chairperson, Ad hoc Committee on Name Change*

On April 5, 2002, President Valerie Sharpe announced at the Annual Business Meeting that the proposal to change the name of the Division had passed by a significant margin of the voting membership. The new name will be:

## **Division on Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

*Focusing on individuals with cognitive disabilities/  
mental retardation, autism, and related disabilities*



During the past year, an ad hoc committee of the board has worked with the membership concerning a possible name change for the Division. At the meeting of the Board on April 19, 2001, the committee recommended the change in the Division name. A first reading to the membership of the recommendation for a name change was completed on April 20, 2001, during the Division Business meeting at the CEC Convention in Kansas City. Following the business meeting an open comment period was provided for the membership to respond/react/provide input (April 20 – September, 1, 2001) to the proposed name change. At the mid-year meeting of the board (October, 2001), members of the board discussed the provided input and comments, and approved the new name for a vote by the membership.

Following are a number of reasons offered by the membership and considered by the board for changing the Division name:

1. The label “mental retardation” was is offensive and degrading to many of the persons it refers to and those educators and related service providers working

in the field. Request was for a more “person first” and a non-stigmatizing name for the division.

2. During the past several years the Division has been addressing the needs of a wider range of persons with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, including persons with autism. There was an identified need to consider a Division name that was more inclusive of these groups.
3. Over the past several years, states have increasingly moved away from modes of special education service delivery that are based upon categorical labels, such as mental retardation. As states have moved to more non-categorical or cross-categorical service models, professionals have had an increasingly difficult time identifying with categorical labels.
4. Many other professional organizations and groups using the label “mental retardation” have changed their name over the past few years in response to changes in the field.

## Executive Director's Corner

Tom E. C. Smith,  
*Executive Director*



It was good to see some of the subdivision officers in New York. At our subdivision officers' meeting, we discussed several issues related to subdivision development, membership, and division support. Please take advantage of the following two ways that DDD can support your subdivision: (1) Support money. The division will give \$100 to subdivisions for virtually any worthwhile activity, each year. All you have to do is submit your request to me. A recommendation will be made to the president who will approve your \$100. In the past, subdivisions have used their money to support a

conference, membership drive, pay membership fees, etc. A request has never been rejected. (2) Speakers from the board. If your subdivision would like someone from the board to attend your state conference and serve as a speaker, just ask. The division will support a board member to come to your meeting. The subdivision may be asked to provide some support, but in most cases, the division pays the majority of the costs associated with the speaker. Just send your request for a speaker to the president or me. Make sure you give us plenty of time to make the arrangements.

Some of the subdivisions still do not submit their annual reports. These are due at the end of the summer. We cannot send you your rebate check without your annual report. I will be sending out report forms in June. All you have to do is complete the forms and send them in with your next year's officer list. We will then calculate your subdivision's rebate (\$2.00 per member) and send you a check. If you have any questions about your annual report or anything else, please contact me at (501) 569-3556; tesmith1@ualr.edu.

## Students' Corner

### DDD Student Governor Report

*Kim Carper*

As we resume our hectic schedules, in the wake of the National CEC conference in New York, I am overwhelmed by the magnitude of information still left to process from the conference! It is clearly an exciting time to be a member of DDD, and to revel in our most recent affiliations with varied colleagues across the profession. Educators and students alike can appreciate the remarkable additions to our division, as well as the renewed commitment for exemplary professional development opportunities. I am incredibly proud to sit on the DDD board during this exceptional time, particularly with the advent and inclusion of service provision for individuals with Pervasive Developmental Disabilities ranging the spectrum. The importance of wholly embracing those with like needs, and professionals with parallel dedication within our discipline is integral to the mission of DDD.

For students, professional development is a fundamental piece of any educational program. CEC and DDD afford many unique opportunities for the continued improvement of professional knowledge over sundry topical areas. Additionally, conferences of all types enable students to network with professionals in the field, as well as, students from various institutions. I strongly encourage each of you to attend the PAC Rim, Biennial, and National CEC conferences in early 2003. Please review this newsletter for additional details on the upcoming conferences.

Currently, there are several issues under the intense scrutiny of the Board of Directors, all of which directly impact each of you. They range from the development of professional standards for our field to the continued issue of membership initiatives. Should you have any questions or input, please contact me at your earliest convenience. Thanks to all of you who took the time to speak to me (and the rest of the Board of Directors) at the various committee meetings and the General Membership meeting in NY – your input and ideas are beneficial and significant.

For those of you not familiar with the General Membership meeting, it is the annual meeting that takes place at the CEC National convention, where members make decisions and brainstorm about policies that affect the entire division. It is important to note that all members, including student members, have an equal voice and vote. I would like to encourage each of you to attend the next General Membership meeting, that will be held in Hawaii, in February 2003 – this is an excellent opportunity to contribute your unique wealth of knowledge and ideas.

It is an honor to serve as your Student Governor and I welcome your comments and suggestions concerning how to best facilitate the mission of DDD. I will be happy to communicate any input you wish to offer the Board of Directors. Please feel free to reach me via e-mail at [kcaper@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:kcaper@mail.ucf.edu).

## Be Involved in the Children's Literature Award!

At our last biennial conference we presented the first Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award to the authors and illustrators of *Tru Confessions* and *Ian's Walk*. The books have been very successful in promoting the positive contributions of individuals with developmental disabilities. (Rumor has it that *Tru Confessions* is being made into a made-for-TV movie!)

The Children's Literature Award committee chair is now seeking committee members for the next cycle of awards. This is a fun way to be involved with the Division! For more information, contact Tina Taylor Dyches at [tina\\_dyches@byu.edu](mailto:tina_dyches@byu.edu).

# Membership/Unit Development News

**Jim Forristal,**

*Membership/Unit Development Chair*

**Dan Ezell,**

*DDD Treasurer*

Membership continues to fluctuate in terms of numbers. The last report generated March 30, 2002 showed an increase in DDD Membership from 4844 members to 4867. It appears that some of you members have taken my challenge to recruit one new member into our DDD Division. If your professional membership is about to expire, I would like to encourage you to renew your membership.

Congratulations DDD student members! Your population has increased from 981 to 1024. With that in mind let me share with you another piece of good news. The DDD Division has a special opportunity for Student CEC Chapters! The DDD Division will provide a \$75.00 grant to your Student CEC chapter to help organize a membership drive to sign-up new DDD student members. The deadline to submit your grant is June 30, 2002. Your chapter can use the \$75.00 in many creative ways to boost your DDD student membership. Your SCEC chapter could use the \$75.00 to produce membership flyers, to buy materials for a fund-raiser to sponsor new DDD members, to sponsor an event for DDD memberships, etc. To take advantage of this great opportunity, go on-line to ([www.mrddcec.org](http://www.mrddcec.org)) and complete and submit the Student CEC DDD Grant Form. Your SCEC organization will have until January 15, 2003 to increase your DDD student membership and submit the final report of your efforts and official tally of new DDD student members you recruited. If your chapter has recruited the most new DDD student members, your chapter will be given \$100.00 to use however you choose. Additionally your SCEC Chapter will be recognized at the DDD Business Meeting at the CEC Conference and Expo in Seattle, Washington in April, 2003. Don't miss out on this chance to increase your DDD student membership!

Other exciting news to our Division members is the impending name change of the Division. Over the past year and half discussion has taken place regarding the name of our division, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. Much interactive discussion with our membership and those associated with children and adults



*DDD Members at DDD Membership Booth at CEC Convention*

who are mentally challenged took place to see if a name change was an appropriate step for our Division. As a result of these discussions and the hard work of Dr. Bob Stodden and his Critical Issues Committee a mail ballot vote by membership was held prior to the Annual Convention in New York City. Effective April 4, 2002 The Division Of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MDDD) officially became known as The Division on Developmental Disabilities (DDD). During the past several years the DDD Division has been addressing the needs of a wider range of persons with cognitive and intellectual disabilities including persons with autism.

Our focus will be on individuals with cognitive disabilities/mental retardation, autism, and related disabilities. The Division is excited about this name change. We, as a division, are also excited about the possibility of serving the needs of a more inclusive group of individuals.

I want to thank the many of you that took time from your busy schedule during the New York Convention to attend our general business meeting. We hope that you gained insight into how the Division works and what we have been doing on your behalf for the past year. For those of you who stopped by the DDD Membership Booth to say hello, thanks. Many of you met some of your DDD Executive Committee for the first time. I wish to also thank those members of DDD who gave some of their time to help at the booth, particularly the students from University of Central Florida, Brevard Chapter 1050 and their advisor Dr. Dan Ezell. The Division appreciated your help.

## Diversity News

### Scott Sparks

*Ad hoc Diversity Committee Chair*

The Board of Directors of the Division on Developmental Disabilities (CEC-DDD) demonstrated its commitment to diversity yet again at the CEC convention in New York City this April. They have given wonderful support to our efforts to make the division more sensitive to issues of diversity as they pertain to our constituents. A great big thank you is in order for providing this kind of leadership for the entire CEC community.

Thus far, our committee has been in the process of brainstorming ideas for infusing diversity into the division and to our membership. Some ideas so far are: begin a regular column in the *Express* newsletter (this represents our second straight one, future ones will be written by committee members and other interested persons), encourage authors to submit papers about diversity and developmental disabilities to our journal, develop a glossary of terms and disseminate them through our publications, develop a mailing list of other professional and interest groups that advocate for people with developmental disabilities (this is particularly important now that our name and realm of influence has changed and expanded), develop issues for research such as disproportionate numbers of kids from diverse backgrounds being labeled with mental retardation or developmental disabilities and the role poverty plays in this identification, develop a mailing list to extend our knowledge in this area beyond our membership (this might be a good use of our web site and that will be explored thoroughly), as we change our mission, constitution, etc. due to the name change, we will make sure that it includes diversity language, develop diversity trainings for our membership and actively recruit members from diverse groups to assume leadership roles in CEC-DDD.

The Board of Directors has agreed to undergo a short training during their Hawaii conference in 2003 so that they can give feedback to the development of training instruments that we might disseminate. They have also agreed that we should allot 10% of our program slots at DDD programs such as in Hawaii and at CEC conventions to diversity issues in developmental disabilities. So if anyone out there



*CEC Divisions' Meeting on Diversity, from left: Katy Fearn (CEC), Sherri Strawser (CEDs), Scott Sparks (DDD), Pamela DeLoach (DPHD), & Phyllis Simmons (DVI); Darlene Perner (DDD) not pictured.*

has an idea along those lines, please make sure your submission clearly identifies it to be considered for one of these sessions. They will be appropriately highlighted during the meetings. We also plan to have a well-known expert in this field as an invited speaker at our conferences (that's in the works right now, any ideas?).

We are excited about this positive move for our division and equally excited about sharing what we learn with others particularly other CEC units. This fits in with a goal expressed in New York City that we need to advocate for greater diversity among teachers of learners with developmental disabilities both new ones and those already in the profession. We are anxious to hear from teachers who are already practicing diversity in their classrooms, please send me your ideas: Scott Sparks, 3750 Old St. Rt. 56, New Marshfield, OH 45766, sparks@ohio.edu, (740) 593-4437.

I have talked with many members over the past year on this topic and the enthusiasm and encouragement I've received has been both positive and helpful, thank you. I want to thank Hillary Schulman, Rosa Lockwood, Beverley Argus-Calvo, Christine Jackson and Darlene Perner for their being terrific committee members. We picked up another one in New York, Orville Kirk who I know will make a wonderful addition. I also received the names of others that I can't recall right now but they will be hearing from me soon! Thank you DDD members and remember that your division is taking a lead in this area and needs your help more than ever, stay in touch and have a great year! Diversity is strength!!

## Hawaii Conferences in 2003

### DDD

The 8<sup>th</sup> International DDD Conference on **Developmental Disabilities** —*Research to Practice* will be held **February 12-14, 2003** at the Sheraton Poipu on Kauai, Hawaii.

Contact: Cindy Perras, DDD Conference Chair at [cindy.perras@cogeco.ca](mailto:cindy.perras@cogeco.ca); 905-844-4806 (fax); or 905-890-1010, ext. 3125 (o).

### PACIFIC RIM

The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Pacific Rim Conference on Disabilities will be held prior to the DDD Conference (**February 9-11, 2003**) at the Sheraton Waikiki, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Contact: Valerie Shearer, [valerie@cds.hawaii.edu](mailto:valerie@cds.hawaii.edu); 808-956-5713 (fax); or 808-956-2673 (o).

**CALL for PAPERS**  
(see insert for details)

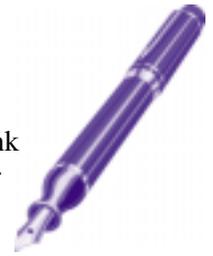
## Editor's Note

Darlene Perner, *Editor*

On behalf of DDD, I would like to thank **David Smith** for his contribution to our *Teachers' Corner* and to **Karen Kainz** for reporting on the **Showcase Session: Speaking for Ourselves...**

In our next issue, we will have **Julie Donnelly** share more on autism. We truly thank all showcase session participants led by Julie. Also thanks to **Jane West** for her nomination of Rep. Hoyer for the DDD Legislative Award and to all recipients of our Awards. Congratulations to **Lesley Graham**, recipient of the 2002 Susan Phillips Gorin Award to honor a SCEC Advisor.

Next issue you should see the change from *MRDD Express* to *DDD Express*—logo is being designed right at this moment! If you have information about your subdivision for *Subdivision News* as **Carol Nelson** did from Ontario's subdivision, and/or practical articles for the *Teachers' Corner* or *Students' Corner*, please submit to: [dperner@bloomu.edu](mailto:dperner@bloomu.edu) or 570/389-3980 (fax). For more information, please call me at 570/389-4075 (day) or 570/784-2686 (evening). Look forward to hearing from you! The Fall Issue deadline is July 15<sup>th</sup>.



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