



Transcript of NCSET and NCIL Conference Call Presentation

Generation D/The Next Generation of Independent Living Leadership

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About the Teleconference Call

This teleconference call transcript is provided as a service of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET). NCSET staff participated in this teleconference call as key presenters. This teleconference call was jointly sponsored by the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) & Independent Living Net (an ILRU/NCIL Training and Technical Assistance Project.)

The teleconference featured two examples of how youth with disabilities are beginning to play a leadership role in Centers for Independent Living and in their communities across the states:

1. "YIELD the Power Project" (<http://www.yieldthepower.org>). YIELD the Power Project (YIELD is an acronym for Youth for Integration through Education, Leadership, and Discovery) is a 16 week intensive leadership and organizing training. The goals of YIELD are to:

- Learn about the disability rights movement and how it relates to civil rights
- Develop valuable leadership & advocacy skills
- Fulfill service learning requirements for graduation

People with disabilities between the ages of 14 and 21 can participate in the program.

2. Leadership in Transition Curriculum. This is a curriculum that was produced through the Minnesota State Improvement Grant (Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning) and the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living (MCIL). MCIL conducts the leadership groups.

Leadership in Transition is a 5-part module of education and training for young adults with disabilities that focuses on the following sections:

1. Independent Living and Philosophy & Self-Advocacy
2. Self Advocacy, Self Determination and Decision Making Skills
3. Assertiveness Skills & How to Be an Effective Team Member
4. Employment
5. Post Secondary Education Options and Technology

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DARRELL JONES: Welcome – we’re glad you can join us. I want to tell you just a little bit first about the IL NET project. As you know, this is one of the trainings that are brought to you by the IL NET. The IL NET is a collaborative project of ILRU and NCIL, the National Council on Independent Living. It’s a national training and technical assistance project, the purpose of which is to strengthen the independent living movement by supporting centers and statewide independent living councils, commonly known as SILCs. IL NET offers workshops, teleconferences, technical assistance, on-line workshops, training materials, and other resources on operating CILs and SILCs. I am here at the NCIL office in Arlington, Virginia, and with me on the other phone is Kristi Langhben, our logistics coordinator. Today, we were supposed to have 32 sites signed up. I don’t know if all of those have plugged in, but those 32 sites represent 19 states and approximately 282 participants. I’d like to thank our site coordinators across the country for your participation and your interest and for the preparations that you have done for your site participants. There will be opportunities for questions and answers at various points during the teleconference. We are taping this call, and you will receive a copy of that tape as part of your registration – so if you prefer not to take notes, you will have that to refer to later on.

Please keep in mind that your feedback about this call is important to us, because it helps us design future teleconferences that meet your needs. So please pull out your copy of the evaluation form that you will find in your participant’s materials, so that you will remember to fill it out after the call. There is one point I wanted to clarify before we get started. We sometimes get evaluations back from participants that say things like “It would have been helpful to get the materials before we showed up for the teleconference,” or “I need materials in Braille or large print, and you didn’t send them to me.” Getting materials put into alternate formats is the responsibility of your local site coordinator. That person receives the materials about three weeks in advance, so if you are not getting alternate formats, or not receiving the materials until you walk into the room the day of the call, please talk with your site coordinator about how these things can be accomplished in the future. Another reminder – today’s call will last two hours, unlike most of our teleconferences, so I hope you all have some snacks and some comfortable seating. One sad note – we are missing two of our trainers today, Sarah Triano and Heather Harris, because of illness for one, and a death in the family for the other. Their coworkers will be filling in for them.

I’m going to have you turn to page 1 in your Participant’s Manual now. That’s where you will find your agenda. We’ll give the site coordinators just a moment to find the corresponding page in the Braille and large print copies. I am now going to introduce our first speaker, who is going to give us a frame of reference for today’s topic. Why is this important? – why are we even talking about this? David Hancox is, among other things, the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living in St. Paul, Minnesota. I’m going to turn this over to Dave now.

DAVID HANCOX: The Metropolitan Center for Independent Living serves the 7-country metro area of Minneapolis and St. Paul, as Darrell mentioned. I appreciate this opportunity to have a couple of moments to frame the issue for us, on why this is an important issue, and why I hope to see more and more Centers for Independent Living across the U.S., paying some attention to these issues and devoting some of their resources and time to them. Throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, the first generation of independent living leadership was born, out of the general disability rights movement, with individuals like Ed Roberts and Judy Heumann, among many others, really promoting the independent living movement and its philosophies of consumer control and consumer direction. Those individuals, along with many of the rest of us, are now aging, and it’s time to start looking for that next generation of leadership for the independent living movement. Throughout the last 25-30 years of the independent living movement, we have learned a lot. We’ve learned a lot in self-advocacy, the socio-political processes involved in the IL movement; how to go about effectively bringing about public policy change at the local, statewide, and national levels through the resources of the independent living movement and the various Centers that are located across the nation. From the perspective of a Director of a Center for Independent Living, looking for that next generation of leadership and asking, “Where are those individuals coming from?” is important. In order to prepare that next generation of leadership so that they can continue this evolutionary movement of leadership in the disability community, and not be hampered by having to repeat some of the lessons that we have had to learn through the process, it is important that we pass along those lessons. And we need to do that in a competency-based setting, so that we can teach the individuals who are now young people with disabilities the importance of this rich culture. Many young people with disabilities today are not fully aware of the historical context that the independent living movement, in particular, has evolved

through, in the last 25-30 years. It's really important for them to be aware of that history, so that they can learn from our lessons and continue that evolutionary movement from that point. And who better to be in that leadership role than Centers for Independent Living! The CILs draw on partnerships with school districts, with other youth-related organizations, and with projects focused on youth in transition at state colleges and universities such as those we are involved with here at the University of Minnesota. It's important that we fashion these lessons so that not only are they passing along this historical information, and that we are instilling the concept and the awareness of this rich culture to young people with disabilities, but that we are also giving them the skills and the competencies they need to be effective leaders in this ongoing independent living movement.

DARRELL JONES: We're now going to hear from Delon Lewis, who is the youth leader organizer for the YIELD the Power project – and I love that name! – at Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago.

DELON LEWIS: My personal experiences, I feel, are important in my speaking about framing the issue. It is important to evolve and allow youth to take the initiative as leaders to enable them to have a sense of ideal acceptance. As such a youth myself, I feel that they enable me to export myself and not only play the lead role but also speak from personal experiences. This is a key factor, because there's not a verbatim, spoken script, but rather it's a true-to-life meditated attribute for being exposed not only to great things, but also to bad experiences. Being honest and true to those people who really don't understand where youth come from is important. Stereotypes are always out there. The fact that certain youth do specific things, and what they don't do – that isn't speaking of all youth. Honestly, who knows every youth in the world? Don't just judge me by what you thought of another person and generalize everything from that! – judge me from who I am! We all need to take the initiative to get out there and express ourselves, especially expression by a youth, who hasn't already experienced much, and also by an older adult, or by youth who have the ability to applicate and show leadership. It's a good, positive thing, and it really helps everybody. Even throughout our program, where we had our training sessions with the YIELD the Power project, it even changed me in certain aspects, because we have received emails, personal calls, and letters saying that people's lives are starting to change, and have really already changed by being in these programs that we're in, because they've never, ever experienced being involved with a program where they see so many people, all interested

in learning advocacy skills and learning to do things on their own and not always have to have someone “baby-sit” or do things for them. It really makes you feel good inside to know that you have the ability to do things on your own. The issues should be framed in terms of letting youth – I won't say take over – but show their role of responsibility and go as far as they can and lead as much as they can, while they still have the chance.

DARRELL JONES: Well said. We're going to give it back to David, now, who is going to fill us in on the details of the program that they operate at his Center in St. Paul. The material from David's program starts on p. 34 of the manual.

DAVID HANCOX: I want to compliment Delon on his comments, as well. I agree very much that youth with disabilities need to be involved in framing this discussion and helping to define those issues that are important to youth with disabilities. For organizations like Centers for Independent Living, which are pursuing leadership development, empowerment, education and training, etc., youth need to be a part of that process. I would encourage Centers out there, if you are not currently involving youth in some meaningful way in your organizational process and service delivery/service definition, to start involving youth. Delon's comments in that area are apt. I particularly like the title of their project, as well, YIELD the Power, because that's really the concept on which we based our leadership-training program here, at the Metro Center for Independent Living. If you'll bear with me, I'd like to give you a little bit of the history of this project. About two years ago, the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning, which encompasses educational services and what used to be our Department of Education, received a state improvement grant – a SIG grant, as we call them, for short – from the federal Department of Education. The focus of that grant that was provided a couple of years ago was to provide some clarity of transition services and the educationally-based transition process for both youth and their families. Simultaneously, we were providing some additional information, some transition mapping, if you will, for youth with disabilities, as they go through the critical high school years, but also providing some reflective information, also, to parents and families of youth with disabilities, so that they are being made aware of some of the resources and services that might be available to augment what they might be getting from a school district. At the undertaking of this particular federal SIG grant by the Department of Children, Families, and Learning – or CFL, as we often call it, although some people always mistake that for the Canadian Foot-

ball League – they decided that in order to have a proper representation and involvement, they needed to infuse the independent living movement and philosophy into the activities and the material that they were developing, as well as an effective parent perspective. So they created sub-contracts with the Metro Center for Independent Living, our Center here, and with PACER. For those of you who may not be familiar with PACER, it is the Parent Advocacy Center for Educational Rights, a parent-training center located here in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area that serves a wide range of educationally based issues related to children and families with disabilities. While the Metro Center for Independent Living was contracted to provide some of the material development and actual education and training activities for the youth with disabilities, the PACER Center was contracted to provide similar activities targeting parents and families. Using that same context of yielding the power, as the Chicago group has named their project, we looked at it from a standpoint of asking What kinds of competency-based education and training opportunities can we provide for youth with disabilities to instill some of those leadership skills, and those leadership qualities, so that throughout the process of providing those skills and knowledge and some of those competency-based issues, we can also be doing that within the context of the independent living movement and that historical context, so that we can be drawing their interest to the Centers for Independent Living, as well? I believe Darrell indicated that the page number in the book is p. 35. If you turn there, we are going to look at the five different modules we developed our program around. Within each module, for each of those five areas, we have four hours of instructional time with students, for targeting students. So it's a total of 20 hours of classroom-based instruction for youth with disabilities. So it's not misunderstood – those hours that we spend in face-to-face contact with students are not all lecture. Obviously, that would not be an acceptable teaching method for young people with disabilities. We know that varying the methodology is often more successful, not only with youth with disabilities, but with the general population. So in that context, we not only use lecture and discussion, but we also use a lot of audio-visual materials, group activities and group dynamics, guest speakers, field-trips to appropriate sites – which you'll see as we go through the five modules in a moment. The first of the five modules that we have is Independent Living Philosophy and Self-Advocacy. The second is Self-Advocacy, Self-Determination, and Decision-Making Skills. The third is Assertiveness Skills and how to be an Effective Team Member. One of the

areas of importance that we focus on for youth with disabilities is the ability to participate effectively in the IEP process. For a lot of young people with disabilities, that is one of the very first opportunities outside of the home they are given to express their needs, wants, and desires. A good friend of mine told me one time that the first four phrases that any child with a disability in infancy should be taught to say, before even saying Mother or Daddy or Mommy or Sister or Brother – the first four phrases that a child with a disability should be taught are: I want, I don't want, I like, and I don't like. The reason for that, as we have found as the independent living movement has evolved, is that very seldom are people with disabilities either asked their preferences or provided the opportunity to express them. So when we talk about how to be an effective team member, we are really encouraging students with the acquisition of some skills and competencies to become more active and participatory members in their IEP processes, so that they take an active role in defining what their lives after high school are going to look like. So that's why that's an important one. In session four we focus on Employment Issues, and, as you can see, session five deals with Postsecondary Educational Options and Technology. Without reading it in its entirety, because I know you have it there in front of you, I would like to quickly walk through each of those sessions, say a couple of words about them, and then, as Darrell mentioned, there will be an opportunity for questions.

The first hour of the first session is Independent Living Philosophy and Self-Advocacy. We go over the rules of the training. We review the competencies, the expectations, and the ground rules. Please note that every one of these hours, in every one of these five modules, is designed around a specific set of competencies. When we bring young people together to participate in this training activity, we are not just selecting whatever is the favorite topic of the day. We have a clear mission in mind of what kinds of new skills and competencies we want to instill in the students. We want them to be able to walk away with a new skill, a new competency, and a new capability. Each one of these sessions is designed around a specific set of competencies, and they are included in your materials here, as well. In the second and third hour, we focus on the Independent Living Philosophy, reviewing the history and composition of IL services, and we also give a strong historical context of where that independent living movement came from, how it evolved, who were some of the key players, and what are the key foundations philosophically of the independent living movement. The final

hour in that first session is devoted to the definition of a disability. Now, why is this important? Well, this final hour we have found to be important because a lot of young people who are coming to us out of a school district setting, are clearly not identifying with their disability. Many students do, but a large number of students simply do not. When we start talking to them about disability issues, we have had several students in our training program say, for example, "I don't know why we're talking about all this disability stuff. I'm not disabled." They do not view themselves as part of that contextual group. We feel it's important for people to be able to identify with their disability, although not as their sole context for definition. We certainly know that every individual with a disability is a multi-dimensional person, not defined solely by the disability. But the disability is certainly a part of the individual, and something that the individual should be able to identify and talk about with some degree of comfort. So we spend some time talking about that, and the relevance to the participants, and then we blend in the context of the ADA, IDEA, and some of those other federal and state laws and statutes that are relevant to them. On the next page is the description of some of the competencies and expectations and the methods used in that session to provide the information, and there are handouts and resources identified, as well. I'll let you read through those at another time.

Session #2 gets more into the specific skill development, defining and talking about the nature of Self-Advocacy, the strategies and competencies for effective decision-making skills. In both of these settings, we provide opportunities for students to role-play some of these activities, so that as they learn some of these new competencies and skills, they have an immediate opportunity to practice them. We also define and talk about Self-Determination, and what we mean by that term. For example, we know that one of the catch phrases throughout the 1990s was the term "empowerment." We've all heard it over and over again, to the point where, for many of us, it probably makes us want to retch whenever we hear the term "empowerment." A lot of people have that reaction to the term "empowerment" because it has been misused with them. Someone has suggested to them, "If you do what I say, and if you follow my example, or follow my instruction, then you are going to become empowered." Our concept here under Self-Determination is really not that "empowerment" is something that someone can give you or take away from you. Empowerment is an internal feeling that everybody has. It's an emotion. Empowerment can be awakened

in us by our life's experiences and the things that we are exposed to, but it is really not something that someone can give you or take away from you. It's something that we possess, and we choose when to exercise that empowerment. We try to take that concept and fold it into the context of Self-Determination and give people an opportunity to talk about what Self-Determination is. Again, some role-play activities are included. Following that session #2, there are the competencies and expectations, some selected methods and handouts, as well as resources that are needed for that presentation. You can read that additional detail on your own.

Session #3 is Leadership in Transition. Here we continue to talk about some of the specific skills that students may need. We talk about assertiveness skills and spend two hours defining role-playing and presenting and reviewing examples of assertiveness activities. We define that as separate from aggressiveness. I don't know about most of you who are listening, but I grew up in western Pennsylvania, and it was standard behavior then that you speak when you're spoken to. In fact, my father's favorite saying used to be, "When I want your opinion, I'll give it to you." All of us, at some time in our lives, have to learn to be assertive. We begin to realize that the person we trust most with our stories, the person we trust to represent us best is, obviously, ourselves. Who better knows what we go through daily in emotions, intellect, and perceptions? Who better knows our dreams and aspirations than we do? So what we try to do is to give the students some of the skills and competencies they need to feel not only comfortable with expressing all of those thoughts, feelings, ideas, and concepts, but also capable to do that. We give them the opportunity to role-play assertiveness and what that means and how to do that effectively. We then roll then into the idea of the team meetings, not just IEP meetings. For some young adults who are in that transition process out of school and who are now working with vocational rehabilitation counselors or other service providers, we might even be talking about the IHP, the individual habilitation plan. We talk about what their role needs to be in the team meeting and how critically important it is for them to be there to represent their own wants, desires, needs, likes, dislikes, etc. The question posed is: Who do you trust with your stories? Who do you trust to talk about you; in a way that adequately conveys what's important to you in your life? Then we do some role-playing of those team meetings. Again, you have the competencies and expectations, methods, materials, and resources laid out for you in the manual, along with facilitators' instruction sheets, etc.

The fourth module focuses on Employment. We talk about the goals of employment, how to go about looking for employment, how to match employment opportunities with your interests and focus, how people can go about attaining some of the new skills that might be needed to gain employment that they like. For example, one young man who was involved in one of our training groups wanted a career in music. He really enjoys doing some basic song writing, even now. We were able to hook him up with someone in the community here – who is not associated with the disability community in any other fashion, but is just a member of that generic community and who happens to be a professional song-writer, with a long history of writing jingles, music scores for theatrical productions, and things like that. Well, we were able to match them up, so that there could be a peer/mentoring relationship between them, and this young man could learn some new skills. We created a new relationship there – and then we back out. We let the relationship evolve on its own. This module is also where we begin to introduce young people with disabilities to some of the other community resources that are out there. Here in Minnesota, our Rehab Services program is operated by the Department of Economic Security. So we have a member of the Rehab Services staff come here to the site, provide an introduction to the various services covered by Rehab Services and how they can go about accessing those services and how to build in some appropriate expectations for those services. This also gives the students a chance to see yet another opportunity to practice their assertiveness skills, defining their futures for themselves, and placing an organization like Rehab Services on notice that the consuming public has expectations of them, and that they are going to have to live up those expectations. We also have here in Minnesota – I'm not sure how similar this is to some of the other states that are on line right now – Workforce Development Centers. Basically, what that is, is a one-stop shop for different employment-related services. We arrange a tour of one of the Metro area Workforce Development Centers. We take the students out there, and they begin to learn about the different services that are offered at that Workforce Development Center. Then when they prepare to create that relationship with the Rehab Services, or begin to look for those employment opportunities, they are not going to that Workforce Development Center as a “cold call.” They have had some introduction – they have an idea of what to expect the Workforce Development Center to be able to do and how to approach them. So it's not as intimidating for them to take that first opportunity, in

making the outreach there to go there, because they will have already been there and made some introductions, maybe gathered some business cards from folks, and used that opportunity to identify yet another community resource. Again, competencies, methods, materials, teachers' notes, etc., are in the manual.

The final module, Session #5, is Postsecondary Educational Options and Technology. Many of the students who come to us to participate in this have some specific skills that students may need some technology services, either for employment or for postsecondary education and independent living. So we talk about some of the employment-related technology and how to access that technology in terms of the various community resources here. There is a technology project here in Minnesota, the Star Project. We bring in representatives from Star to talk with the students about the various services that are available around the state that are technology-based, and how the students can go about connecting up with those resources and using them in their lives. We also talk about some of the different postsecondary education options available for students. Again, we invite someone from the educational community to attend. Usually someone from the University of Minnesota's Disability Services will come and spend time talking with the students about some of the different options and what the students need to do to prepare to access those options. It doesn't necessarily have to be a four-year college. It can be a two-year technical school, a two-year college, a specific educational training program for a specific field – it doesn't matter. But we try to identify all of the different options available that students can take part in. We end with some other resources for postsecondary options. So we spend time identifying for the students a wider range of community resources, what services they provide, and how students can go about accessing those services. Again, you have the competencies, expectations, methods, materials, and resources, discussion guide for the facilitator, and some handouts land the evaluation form for you in the manual.

So that is a complete, although brief look at some of the different aspects of our program and some of our different designs.

DARRELL JONES: Thanks, Dave. Let's see if we have any questions.

DEB BISNOWSKI (Madison, WI): Our group had three questions. What sort of outcomes have you seen as a result of this training program? How often do you offer this program, how do you fund it, and do you provide the curriculum or the training on this program to other people who might want to facilitate it? I guess that's more like five questions.

DAVID HANCOX: That's okay – we love Madison. I know your director down there. He's a great guy. Let me see if I can answer all of those. If I miss one, please jump back in and catch me on it. In terms of the outcomes, after each of the hour-long sessions – we break them up about an hour a week and never try to do all of them in one four-hour block - we do an evaluation form. One of the things that we have seen happening is that the information they provide on their evaluation forms becomes more and more complete, and more detailed. Their willingness to share more specifics with us I see as a positive outcome. They also make more suggestions about things in the session that we could alter, or give more background on. That's really helpful, too, because we can go back and make adjustments to the program, based on consumer comments. Another outcome that's been reported to us is that more of the students are becoming more actively involved and verbal during their IEP meetings. So the team is now hearing from the young person for perhaps the first time about what expectations that young person has. The student may not have been asked before. The team may have glossed over that, or talked around it, or talked about the student while the student is sitting around it, but may never have actively included the student. So we're seeing that kind of improvement in outcomes. A critical outcome is that there are two or three other centers here in Minnesota that are looking at our program and thinking about starting one like it. They're going, "Wow, this is great! – we'll start one here." So those are some quick, anecdotal outcomes we're seeing.

You asked how we pay for the program. The original materials and modules were created with a small SIG grant in a subcontract from the Department of Children, Families, and Learning. The grant was small in the sense of a small amount of money that we were able to use to develop some of the materials. It was a five-year contract that we had with them. We were able to use a small portion of that money in each year to fund some of the training. And the school districts assist. From the way we pitch it to them they see it as a wonderful supplement to some of the activities that they're already doing in their educational programs for young people with disabilities. Some of the things that we can talk about and encourage the kids to do are things they are not as comfortable doing in the school setting, so they're coming to us and saying, "We really want our students to go through this program." So we're actually able to charge the school district a fee for service, so much per session, for reach student. That's one way that we are able to facilitate the ongoing process – to have the

school districts contract with us to provide this training for their students.

Your third question was whether we provide training to other centers. Absolutely! One of our goals is to share this. None of our materials is copyrighted or limited in any way in how it can be used. We encourage other centers to pick it up and use it. I'm more than happy to spend time with staff or individuals associated with any other centers that might be interested in learning more about it in a more expanded presentation than we can do today. I can walk you through it in a more detailed way and would be more than happy to do that. I think that was all your questions.

NICK STEEN (Progress CIL of Illinois): I'm the program director here. Our big problem is two-fold. These programs are wonderful, and we want to get involved in them, but our problem is identifying youth to participate and, once we've identified them, to get the parents' support. We find that the parents are apathetic in terms of providing those youth with transportation back and forth, or permission to attend, and all that. Have you found that to be something you face, and do you have any ideas on how to go about that?

DAVID HANCOX: Those are two good questions. One of the means that we use for identifying youth to participate is through the school districts. Our Center here has a strong transition program, anyway. It's part of our IL program, our independent-living skills program. I don't know how the other states operate, but in Minnesota our Legislature gives each of the eight Centers for Independent Living a small amount of money every year that specifically targets transition services for youth with disabilities. It's not a huge amount, only about \$35,000. But with that, we're at least able to employ someone part-time – in our case, someone at three-fourths time – who can really focus on transition-based issues and spend a lot of time pursuing and developing relationships with school districts. So our recruitment, our identification of youth to potentially participate is kind of built into our infrastructure, because we have that outreach going on to the schools. As for apathy of parents – We have found that if we have direct contact with the parents, if we have an opportunity to sit down with them either in a small group or by ourselves and tell them about the services and opportunities provided by a Center for Independent Living, then often the first reaction, after the jubilation of having us identified, is, "Where have you people been all our lives?" They simply don't know we exist. I think Centers for Independent Living are a huge well-kept secret out there. It's unfortunate. But once we draw the parents in and make them

a part of it in that kind of context, we find that we have a greater sense of participation from them. We haven't had to deal with that problem much, because our main conduit to the kids has been the school districts. I don't know if that's helpful, or if it answers your question. If there's another dimension I can respond to, I'd be happy to.

DAVID KRIS (CIL Initiated Living): I'm from SILO. You mentioned a SIG grant. Maybe you could give us more information on that. We'd also like to know what you meant by "competency-based."

DAVID HANCOX: The SIG grant – I know there's a time set on the agenda for us to talk about some of the funding strategies. I'll talk a little more about the SIG grant then, as well. Briefly, SIG stands for State Improvement Grants. Most of the federal departments offer some kind of State Improvement Grants to various state departments. For example, this particular SIG grant came out of the federal Department of Education, and that money was available to statewide Departments of Education – or, in our case, to the Department of Children, Families, and Learning, because that includes our Department of Education. That money is made available for them to use in their states to bring about specific change. This particular State Improvement Grant was to focus on transition services for youth with disabilities. Our Department of Children, Families, and Learning provided a proposal, along with several other states, and we were one of a couple of states that got funded. Built into that proposal by the state department was the strategy of using community-based vendors and service providers as a means of developing some of their materials.

What we refer to as "competency-based" – each of the five sessions, the five modules that we developed, is developed around a specific set of competencies. On p. 38 of the manual, for example, Session #1 describes. There are several headlines there. One is competencies/expectations, one is methodologies, and one is materials and resources. In the competencies section, we say first that, as a result of having successfully completed the four hours of this session, students will be able to describe the independent living movement, its correlation to the rehab services role, and its variance from the rehab services philosophy. The second competency is that students will be able to describe the protections provided them as employees and citizens by laws such as the ADA and IDEA. Those are new skills, new knowledge, that we believe the students will have after they complete these training activities. I could talk more about why those competencies are important. For example, with the first one, we

think it's important for students with disabilities, in order to identify with the disability rights movement effectively, to be able to see the separation, to see how it is different from the rehab services philosophy. Because the rehab services philosophy is very different from the IL philosophy. I think for many of you who are on the line, it would be like preaching to the choir to say how different. You know that already. A lot of young people with disabilities don't. And they can get trapped by the rehab services philosophy if they don't have a clear understanding of how it differs from the IL philosophy – and if they don't have a good definition of the IL philosophy. So when we talk about "competency-based," what we mean is new skills and capabilities that we would like to see each young person walk away from the training now possessing. I hope that's a complete answer for you. If not, I'd be happy to expound.

DARRELL JONES: I know there are some more questions in the queue. Hang on to them, because we'll have more time for questions shortly. We're going to have the folks in Chicago tell us about their program now. We have a couple of folks from the YIELD the Power project who are going to fill us in, Marquito Day and Kristin Berg. Marquito will start us off. He is the youth leadership and organizing head.

MARQUITO DAY: Greetings to all of you. I'd like you to join our YIELD the Power cheer. It goes something like this. When I say "YIELD," you say "the." When I say "power," you say "to." When I say "the," you say "people." YIELD!

ALL: The!

MARQUITO DAY: Power!

ALL: To!

MARQUITO DAY: The!

ALL: People!

MARQUITO DAY: Greetings to everybody from Access Living Center of Metropolitan Chicago. It is a pleasure to be here with you today on this presentation. It is an unfortunate pleasure for me to have to be sitting in for our project director, the incomparable, dynamic leader and activist, Sarah Triano. I am joined today by two of my esteemed colleagues, Kristin Berg and Delon Lewis. Kristin is our youth leadership and organizing coordinator, Delon is one of our leadership and organizing trainers, and I am the youth opportunity and outreach coordinator. Sarah, who is our project director, can't be with us today. Heather Harrod, who is also part of our team, was unfortunately not able to be with us today. She is another of our youth leadership and organizing trainers. You can find many of our materials in the manual, beginning on p. 57. Our summary is on p.

58. We'll go into more detail about it, but our summary tells who we are, what the YIELD project is, and what our mission is. On p. 61 is one of our general flyers. We hand these out when we are advertising the project and send them out to schools, institutions, rehab centers, anywhere where there are potential applicants eligible to be in our training project.

DARRELL JONES: I apologize, because we had a formatting problem with the flyer. The stuff on p. 62 should actually be moved up under the line "Youth for integration through education leadership and discovery."

MARQUITO DAY: Our flyers are actually brilliant, if I may say so myself. The back of our flyer lists many famous people who had disabilities – some of them people even we weren't aware of. This is something youth really need to be able to identify with. For example, President Clinton was listed there as having a hearing impairment. This is something most people don't know. We all know about President Franklin Delano in the wheelchair, but we never knew that President Clinton, one of our most recent presidents, had a disability. This is something that we try to show in our brochure. It's a very colorful, detailed brochure. If anyone wants a copy of our brochure, we have them in all formats. We could talk about that later in the question/answer session. Then there is our flyer for the actual training program, on p. 65. Those of you here in Illinois and the Chicago area, especially, if you know persons who might be interested in our program and benefit from it, our application form is there, too. The YIELD the Power project is made up of five specific components. Kristin Berg and I will talk about those components, and then we'll field any questions that you all may have. Now I'll turn this over to my esteemed colleague, Kristin Berg, who will introduce our project and talk about its youth component.

KRISTIN BERG: Hello, everybody! The YIELD the Power project is an innovative demonstration grant through the Department of Labor. It is founded on an important idea, the idea of youth-led social change. Our project's five key components are built into the title, as Marquito mentioned, Youth for Integration through Education, Leadership, and Discovery – YIELD. Equally importantly, the project is based on the work of five young adults, under the age of 30, with disabilities. We have a wonderful staff, and we have a lot of fun doing this. We work with four collaborators in the Chicagoland area, the Chicago Public Schools, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities the Mayor's Office on Workforce Development, the Great Lakes ADA Technical Center, and several researchers and scientists

who help with evaluation measures. The youth component, the letter Y if YIELD is extremely important to every movement, as we saw with the civil rights movement. It was primarily youth who brought forth those important changes that also helped the disability rights movement to get its start. But we also have to think about the future of the disability rights movement: if we don't nurture future leaders, we're not going anywhere. Our program does a good job in passing on the history and philosophy of the movement. Often, youth with disabilities don't get this material from their families. These youth are going to be able to go out into the community, maybe not necessarily as advocates, but also as civic and business leaders, out in the wider community, knowing their rights. We feel that that's important for the next generation. It's also important to draw from a wide variety of ethnicities and religious backgrounds. We strive for the most diversity possible, including a wide range of disabilities. Lastly, one of the most important aspects of our program is YIELDing the Power. If we want to promote substantive, long-lasting change in the lives of youth, we need to YIELD the power over the decision-making process. That power generally is with adults, but we need to give youth that power, because they are the ones who are affected by these problems, and they need to exercise that power to get smart, to realize what they need to do to make these changes, and to learn those skills. So that's Y.

Leadership component In my role as youth outreach and advocacy coordinator, I work a lot on the Education component of our project. That entails going out to the Workforce Investment Act of Title I Youth Programs, the One-Stop Centers, here in Chicago and working with each of them to ensure that they, as components and institutions and agencies that are pre-employment-based agencies are equipped and ready for our youth, especially once they come through our training. But even those who have not gone through our training are ready and able to assist. Currently, Chicago has 53 WIA Youth Programs. Only three of the 53 – only three! – are currently fully accessible in serving youth with disabilities. We're not satisfied with allowing only three out of 53 to be accessible to youth with disabilities. Moreover, we're not willing to be satisfied with the notion that youth with disabilities have to be segregated into three programs. Just like any other youth in the community without disabilities, they should have the privilege of looking down a long list of pre-appointment service providers and being able to choose which one they will go to, and not limited to just the three accessible. We're working assiduously to get all the WIA Youth Programs

One-Stop Centers accessible. We're not going with a militant attitude, but with our hands extended, saying, "Look, these youth are a precious resource here in our country. They have just as much creativity, and in many cases just as much knowledge, skills, and talent, as anybody else. There are many reasons – we're putting together a Guide – why you should incorporate youth with disabilities into your pre-appointment program." I think our efforts, and the efforts of the youth who will actually be going out and evaluating these programs – I'll be talking more about that later – will do an excellent job in bringing Chicago along and making Chicago the center of the country in terms of pre-appointment programs and other public accommodations of providers, and so on, so that youth with disabilities will be able to successfully integrate into these situations. For more about how we are going to do this, working through the youth, Kristen Berg will talk now about the Leadership component of our project and the curriculum that we're using to provide self-advocacy skills to the youth we are dealing with. She'll tell you more about our training program, how many we have, and the logistics off doing that.

KRISTIN BERG: The Leadership component of the program consists of four 16-week intensive leadership development trainings over the course of two years. The trainings were designed to impart a deep awareness of disability history, to examine long-term independent living skills, and to teach the skills of systems-change advocacy. Specifically, our participants learn how to develop their leadership skills through seminars on travel training, financial management, employment, and housing options. They also learn about disability rights and how they relate back to their lives and to the civil rights movement in general. They explore issues like dating, parenting, assertiveness, and self-image, and they plan and facilitate workshops and presentations to give them more experiential learning opportunities. Through these trainings, we hope to significantly strengthen and improve the cultural identity, self-esteem, integration and independence of these program participants. We hope that that will ultimately lead to improved educational and occupational outcomes. We're now about halfway through the training curriculum. We have a core group of 20 youth from various ethnic backgrounds, with various types of disabilities, who are consistently there, participating in the training. With the help of speakers and presenters, we have covered a lot of cool topics. We have talked about disability history, diversity, gender stereotypes, economic justice, education, health care, etc. On April 6, we planned and executed our first field trip. We

had 22 youth and a whole bunch of staff, and we went out into the Chicago neighborhoods and toured accessible housing. Then later we went to a restaurant and talked about what it means to have accessible housing, and what our rights are under the law. This Saturday, April 27, we will have Mike Irvin come to talk about disability and representation in the media. This is timely, because the youth are now gearing up to start a campaign of their own. They will identify an issue that is important to them, develop a plan of action, and see how they can make changes in the community. So far, it's just been a great time. Delon, do you want to say anything about it? We have learned that one of the most important things so far with the group is keeping it real and keeping it cool. We're developing a list of 10 commandments for all trainers and all presenters to follow when they're with the youth, but, above all, keep it real and keep it cool. We're also now starting up our recruitment operation for the August 3 training session, so we're working with the Chicago high schools and colleges, networking with agencies and rehab counselors, and just putting out the word that we're going to be starting up again on August 3. So that's the Leadership component.

MARQUITO DAY: I'd like to add that, besides the training program we have for three hours each Saturday for the youth participants, we have a program running concurrently for the parents. We have the parents of the youth who are currently in the program, and we are open to parents who have children with disabilities or who work as service providers for persons with disabilities to come in and sit in on our parent group. What we're trying to achieve in the parent group is the understanding that it is okay to advocate for youth with disabilities, but that we need to recognize the need to give self-advocacy tools to the youth, to be able to make the transition successfully from needing others to advocate on their behalf to becoming active as self-advocators. In our parent group, we have covered many of the same topics, but from the different angle, that we cover in the Leadership and Organizing trainings. I must say, it's going very well thus far. As part of our Youth Power project, we will be hosting two conferences at the end of each of our fiscal years. The guests to the conferences will primarily be community leaders, WIA youth program providers, and legislators, and we will hire 4-5 youths from the training programs to work with us to design the conferences, letting us know what they feel the guests need to know when putting together programs, deciding on WIA re-authorization, deciding on other sorts of appropriations and legislation that will affect the funding for WIA programs and one-stop centers

and the future of programs similar to ours, for instance, when the Department of Labor is deciding about giving out further grants for programs such as ours. We're gearing up for the first of these two conferences. It will be at the end of September this year. If any of you are interested, we certainly invite you to attend, as well.

The last component of our program is Discovery. The core issue there is evaluation. We are keen on getting the youth to realize and put this into practice through our training sessions. We want them to get to the point where they are evaluating everybody and everything that affects them in their lives. They will be evaluating their teachers, as David Hancox said earlier. In their IEPs, so often they are merely participants, sitting on the sidelines. We want them to evaluate what goes on in their IEPs, to give feedback, to contribute to what's going to happen to them. We want them to be able to evaluate the various tests, the services that are provided by the one-stops and the WIA Youth Program, and the services that they receive from doctors. In the disability community we find that young people with disabilities are often the victims of sexual abuse, often at the hands of their own physicians, and we want them to be able to stand up and evaluate the situation, and through the power that we hope will be yielded to them, be able to stand up and say, "Stop. No." We want them not to feel afraid to say "No!" when they feel something is not right. This is a part of the evaluation component. Not only that, we want them to be able to evaluate us. We're not saying, "Evaluate everybody else, but not us." Built into our training program is an evaluation form we submit each week to the youth for them to use to evaluate the actual training, the trainers, the facilitators, and the YIELD the Power staff. Then we also complete evaluations evaluating how we feel things are going on as staff in this project with disabilities. Evaluation is an important and dynamic component of our project. After all, youth with disabilities are constantly being evaluated, so it seems only right that the tables should be turned in this situation, as we seek to have the power YIELDED. We have a long way yet to go on this project, but we believe in a few key models. "Nothing about youth without youth" is a core philosophy in our program: "We don't want anything decided for or about or concerning us without involving us." There is a lot to be done, and we know that power is not conceded without a struggle. But we're not hesitant, we're not timid, we're not reluctant, we're not worried about the struggle before us or about what we have yet to accomplish. We believe that we're going to do mighty things here in Chicago. Our ultimate goal is to go on marching until

victory truly is won, and until we believe that the power has truly been YIELDED.

DARRELL JONES: Thank you. You did a wonderful job, even without your "fearless leader." Let's take questions now.

JEAN GUSTAVUS (Heightened Independence and Progress): I'm interested in workforce development. I had originally hoped to talk about it with David Hancox— and I hope he can also shed some light on that later — but I'm glad that my question waited, because what Marquito said has really pepped up my questioning. We here in New Jersey have the WIB, the Workforce Investment Board, which I presume is the same as workforce development, the one-stop program. I'm curious about John. How did your relationship with your workforce development people come — well — develop? Did you have to approach them, did they approach you, do you have issues of access such as Marquito described, and do the programs of the workforce development activities actually end up in helping people find jobs?

DARRELL JONES: Is that a question for David?

JEAN GUSTAVUS: Both David and Marquito. Marquito evidently had a very active relationship with workforce development in the Chicago area.

MARQUITO DAY: Again, we are in a partnership with the Mayor's Office on Workforce Development, and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities here in Chicago. Through the Mayor's Office on Workforce Development, we have been able to begin to foster a bi-directional, progressive relationship with our WIA Youth Program providers and our one-stops. A few weeks ago, there was a meeting of all the WIA Youth Programs, which our project director, Sarah Triano, and I attended. We were able to present our program in depth. Each of the WIA Youth Programs in the city received printed materials on our programs and also was made aware of our desire for them to assist us in the recruiting efforts. They are fully aware of what our mission is and what we hope to achieve. While some of them feel that working with us, trying to get their programs accessible, is just another bureaucratic mess going on top of their desks, many of them, I would say, the majority, are very willing to at least approach the idea of becoming accessible and serving youth with disabilities. We are working on a handout that we hope will be finished soon. It details why it is important to include youth with disabilities. I think it will be a tool that will help us to get connected with each of the WIA Youth Programs. The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, in their partnership with us, is going to be providing eight training sessions. Their ADA people will be working directly with our

staff to hold training sessions with the WIA Youth Programs and one-stops throughout Chicago, teaching and showing them how to become accessible, showing them that making accommodations isn't always about shell-ing out massive amounts of money. Accommodations can be as simple as taking a document and enlarging the print on a word-processor or on a photocopier. We'll hold those eight training sessions in partnership with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities. So those are a couple of the things we're doing in Chicago. Right now, our relationship with the WIA Youth Programs and the one-stops is a friendly one; free of the hostility or animosity that you might imagine could intrude.

DAVID HANCOX: I'm very impressed with the program that Chicago is doing. It obviously has a slightly different focus than ours, but it sounds absolutely fantastic. I would love to learn more about it, myself. To answer the caller's question – We are in the second year of our project now, and one of the things that we are doing, in addition to continuing some of the training, is working on writing further materials to make available to young people with disabilities, as well as their families and other individuals who might be interested, from whatever their perspective. It's kind of a Transition Map. We're really writing it to the student – that's our target audience. Looking at the five normally accepted areas of transition, we're going to be providing some additional information to young people about various types of community resources that are out there and how they can go about accessing those resources, and giving some advice about things to think about as well. We hope it will give them an idea of what's available – the things that someone in seventh grade should be paying attention to, someone in tenth, someone in eleventh. Regarding the Workforce Development Centers – I'm not sure of the number of Workforce Development Centers we have around the state of Minnesota right now. Like many of the other states on line now, Minnesota is facing some significant budget issues legislatively this session. As a result, several Workforce Development Centers have been closed in the past 5-6 months. So I'm not sure how many there are right now. Basically, our Workforce Development Centers in Minnesota have the ability to provide one-stop servicing for individuals with disabilities, so that they can go there and learn about employment opportunities, benefit opportunities, and other services that might be available to them in their communities. We identify that entity, that setting, the Workforce Development Center, to the students with disabilities so that they can add that to their list of community-based resources. We also give the student

some information about the types of services that the Workforce Development Centers are obligated to provide. Like the Chicago group, we are not interested in creating an antagonistic relationship, but rather in giving the student a clear and appropriate expectation for what services Vocational Rehabilitation should be providing. One of the challenges we have found here, and I'm sure many of you have found it in other states, as well, is that Vocational Rehabilitation doesn't always fully advertise the depth and breadth of the services that they are by federal law and definition required to provide to people with disabilities. As some case managers have said to me on the side, with a fear of being quoted, "Well, we don't want to tell everybody everything, because then they might want it." They're afraid that they may not have the capacity to meet the need, should the need to 100% identified to them. So what we're trying to do is to work with the students to identify the Workforce Development Center as a reasonable resource in the community, and to instill in them a reasonable understanding of what that service is supposed to be providing for them, so that they can use that resource effectively. And, also, so that they can hold that resource to an effective level of accountability.

DARRELL JONES: I'm going to pull a bit of a switcheroo here, because we're running a bit late. Dave, if you don't mind, I'm going to have Julia and John talk now about the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. John Smith is the project coordinator at the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Community Living at the Institute on Community Integration, at the University of Minnesota. If we have difficulty understanding John, I'm going to stand by to clarify what's said.

JOHN SMITH: I'm here with Julia Washenberger, my colleague. I want to begin by telling about our National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. It is a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. We are housed at the University of Minnesota, and we are working with five other partners around the country. They are listed on p. 2 of the booklet. Our Center was designed to address a number of critical issues in transition in postschool outcomes for students with disabilities. Those critical issues are described in a paper in the booklet, on p. 16. I won't repeat that here, but I hope you'll take time to read it. Our Center is organized into four Technical Assistance Networks. They are listed on p. 2 of the booklet. Julia and I work with the youth and family technical assistance network. The other networks focus on secondary education assessment and curricu-

lum, postschool outcomes and results for students with disabilities, and improving systems linkages and services coordination.

DARRELL JONES: So you work to improve assessment practices and curriculum, and you build system linkages to enhance service delivery, and you work to improve postschool outcomes for young adults after they leave school.

JOHN SMITH: Julia and I work with the activities relating to youth leadership and development within the work of the National Center on Secondary Education & Transition. Through our work, we have two major goals. One, we are working to create and promote a definition and image of youth leadership that is inclusive of all youths who have disabilities. Two, we are working to encourage the development of many community opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills. We focus particularly on youth leadership and development. One goal is to develop partnerships with organizations around the country. We actually started with organizations such as 4-H, Boys & Girls Clubs, and many others and are working to develop active and mutually supportive partnerships that will enhance youth leadership opportunities. The fourth is to include all youth, including but not limited to youth with disabilities. Currently, we are working in partnership with Americorp, with 4-H, the National Service Inclusion Project and with National 4-H. We also want to provide information and technical assistance to leaders and other youth in organizations to ensure that they are inclusive of youth who come in their doors. We have a relationship the National Youth Leadership Network, and we are excited about our new relationship with the National Service Inclusion Project. Finally, our youth and family technical assistance network is making contact with organizations, which employ youth with disabilities in traditional youth leadership and development opportunities. The other activity you might be interested in is how we facilitate information dissemination. The National Center has collected lots of information which might be helpful to youth leadership organizations, communities, and youth and family members that want to support involvement in leadership activities for their children, youth, and adults with disabilities. We distribute information around the country, and we publish in journals. Finally, we hold regional and national 1-2 day workshops that we call capacity-building institutes. These institutes are a great way to get information out to people with all youth leadership and development organizations. For example, in the area of youth leadership, we are hoping to hold capacity-building institutes on national cam-

pus for youth to come and get information and to talk to them about ways that youth with disabilities can own their programs and have quality development programs. Right now I will turn it over to Julia Washenberger.

DARRELL JONES: Julia, before you get started, I'd like to summarize some of the things you were saying, since some folks may not have caught some of the items. I would like to emphasize that you guys are a tremendous resource for the independent living field, because of all the materials that you have – your E-newsletter, the institutes and the workshops that you're holding – and you have a very nice packet of material. Some of it is reproduced in the participants' manual, but you have a lovely folder that you will send out to anyone who requests it, so I'd like to mention that, as well. You are interested in hearing from folks in the field who have model youth programs, so that you can add that to the information that you have. Julia Washenberger is now going to talk about their dissemination strategy and the youth leadership Web site.

JULIA WASHENBERGER: I'm going to go over some of the things we are doing with the youth leadership Web site. Regarding the development of our youth leadership Web site, I'd refer you to p. 12. One of the activities that we are doing to collect material for the development of the youth Web site is called Profiles of Leadership. We hope to collect profiles of youth, young adult, and adult leaders in the disability community who have identified themselves as having a disability to share their experience on how they became active in a wide variety of leadership activities, which can include becoming active in church activities, community organizations, or some of the other activities which John mentioned, like becoming involved with 4-H, or Americorps programs. Those are opportunities that many young folks with disabilities are taking advantage of. We're excited about doing the Profiles. We'd like to collect these stories as a means of sharing stories of individuals who are already active in their communities in the hope of getting other young adults into these opportunities and to show them what's possible. So that's an important piece on the youth Web site, and we're excited about it. The youth Web site for the National Center will primarily be marketed to youth with disabilities, but we also understand that they may be directed to the site by teachers, by youth development organizations, support folks who are working with them, and we hope that it's a tool not only for youth with disabilities, but also for teachers and the other support people in their lives to help them make the connection to some of the opportunities that they have available in the community. We are develop-

ing the content areas of the sections of our Web site, and we hope to have something up as soon as July, possibly. We'll focus on disability history, how to connect with youth leadership organizations, and sharing the profiles. Originally we thought of it as a searchable database. Then youth with disabilities interested in becoming involved in a church organization, let's say, could search for individuals who have already done that and read their profiles. We're tossing around some ideas for that. We also hope that this will be interactive. We're thinking about how to do that. If they've read a profile of an individual who interests them, some mentoring could take place there. Otherwise, it would be directed to the leadership program they've been involved with and be a sort of intermediary contact in there. We're still working out the details, but we are excited to get the profiles collected and up on the site. There are many dimensions to what we're doing, and I don't want to take too much time. I know we're running short. I'll welcome questions.

DARRELL JONES: Thanks, Julia and John. I know that there are probably a lot of questions out there about funding. Dave, I'm going to ask you if you would take about five minutes now to give people some different ideas for finding funding for youth leadership development programs. Then let's switch over to some final questions.

DAVID HANCOX: I'll try to be succinct – which many of you have probably already discovered is not easy for me. I know that just about all the folks on line now are involved at Centers for Independent Living. A lot of the obvious opportunities are there for fund-raising. Diverting some of your course service money for these efforts is one opportunity. Diverting those corporate partnerships is another, going out and knocking on doors and creating an interest with some of those corporate partners in your communities. For example, one partner that we've developed here in Minnesota, particularly in the metro area, has been the American Express Corporation. Their home base is here, so it's been easy for us to develop that relationship with them. They actually provide some underwriting for a couple of our specific community outreach programs out of our Center. Any time you can identify a corporate partner, try to develop a relationship with them. I would also encourage looking at your state legislatures. As I said before, an advantage we have here is that our legislature provides each of the eight centers with some money that is targeted specifically to transition services. Of course, state and federal money goes only so far. None of us, absolutely none of us in Centers for Independent Living, want to be overly dependent on state and federal money.

So one of the areas we've been looking at in trying to develop resources is the fee-for-service area. Every other vendor in the community charges a fee for their services. In accordance with the IL philosophy, we will never charge the consumer. But we might charge fees in developing those relationships with school districts, or with vocational rehabilitation counselors. Vocational rehabilitation counselors have money budgeted to spend. They buy services for their consumers that they work with all the time, so why should they not be contracting with Centers for Independent Living, like everybody else? Maybe some of you are further along in that process than we are. In Minnesota, it's hit-or-miss. We have some vocational rehabilitation counselors who are open to using some of their service dollars and purchasing services from us. Some are not. But it's a good idea to look for opportunities to form fee-for-service relationships, to develop fee relationships with your local school districts to provide services to youth with disabilities. Looking at other organizations is also a good idea. We have a program in Minnesota called Transition Plus. They provide some services to young people with disabilities after high school. If they took their diplomas at 18, they are still eligible for some services until age 21. Transition Plus provides some of those services and some after-school activities and programs. We contract with them for services, as well. You may find opportunities to ask for fees that will at least provide enough revenue to support and sustain the program so that it can continue. We don't look to get rich off of any of that. Like many of you, we're a non-profit organization. But we're looking to create different revenue streams to support the continuation of those programs. I'd be happy to receive individual phone calls from you outside of this teleconference, if you'd like me to talk about this further.

DARRELL JONES: Thanks, David, that was very helpful. I know everyone is tired, but let's see if we can squeeze some more questions in before we sign off.

QUESTIONER (San Juan Center of Independent Living, New Mexico): On the directions with DVR and the local agencies – how did you begin developing those relationships? So far, we've hit stumbling blocks with DOH and DOL.

DAVID HANCOX: Yes, we hit some major stone walls with Vocational Rehabilitation here, as well. I think they have a misperception about the value of Centers for Independent Living and the quality of services that we provide. We have had to be assertive in reaching out to them. Specifically, various members of our IL staff, as well as myself, have gone out to staff meetings at the various vocational rehabilitation centers and done

orientation presentations for them about the Centers for Independent Living and the services we provide. The Deputy Commissioner in Minnesota, five years ago, in public testimony to a legislative committee, referred to the Centers as providing wonderful volunteer services. When we heard that coming from the top down, we knew that we had a significant issue to deal with. We knew that we had a major problem, because the perception, even within the hallowed halls of the state department, was clearly not appropriate and not an accurate description of what we do. So we have set about to do some active outreach on our own. It's the sort of thing that takes a lot of tenacity and continual outreach to them. It's a continual process of interacting with them and looking for opportunities for your paths to cross where you can provide that education and replace some of that myth and misinformation with accurate information.

QUESTIONER (Self Initiated Living): Your programs in Chicago and Minnesota are great. Why aren't these programs and advocacy skills started in grammar schools?

MARQUITO DAY: Why they aren't taught in grammar school? Delon is closer to grammar school than I am, so he can answer this question better than I can.

DELON LEWIS: I think that these types of programs were not and are not taught in grammar school because the teachers feel too much intimidated already. A grammar school student with these advocacy skills would catch on more to the hidden, subliminal barriers in the schools. What is taught at the YIELD the Power project is to stand up for ourselves, but we don't at the same time have to be disrespectful or downgrading a person. Kids nowadays grow up fast, anyway. When they are given the opportunity to set up for themselves, the teacher is no longer seen as "the parent away from home." They gain the right to speak up for themselves, which is also included in the First Amendment, which guarantees freedom of expression and speech. And sometimes, some grammar schools are pretty much baby-sitting classes. I mean, they're teaching things, at the same time, but they don't teach things that we really deal with in life, personally. So it's kind of a cover-up for not teaching these types of things. I agree that they should be taught.

DAVID HANCOX: I'd like to add some points. The points Delon made are right on, and I absolutely agree. I'd add that one of the difficulties that we deal with in wanting to have some of these activities offered to younger individuals with disabilities is getting the minimum ages lowered. One of the things we're trying

to do at the Center is to get that age backed up. We're trying to work with younger and younger people as the programs evolve. But we're finding that even today, in 2002, we still see a lot of individuals coming out of postsecondary education settings – colleges and universities – with teaching degrees in special education that are based on that old-world model, what I call a "deficit learning" model. A lot of teachers – I don't know if John and Julia, working at a university, would agree – learn this deficit model, i.e., that if we work with grade-school kids, we can fix them. Well, you know what? I have a brother with cerebral palsy. I have a niece with Down's syndrome. I have a niece with developmental delays. My niece with Down's syndrome will always have Down's syndrome. You're not going to fix it. The responsibility of the school district needs to be to work with her to give her the skills and competencies that she can use, the things she needs to know to be a participating and included member of her community, so that she can live a successful and happy life and can be content with her life. But people shouldn't try to "fix" her. Even more so in grade school than in high school, there's a deficit model in teaching kids with disabilities, and I think that really gets in the way of believing that a young person in that age group can have any kind of self-empowerment or self of sense to be able to participate even on a rudimentary level in making decisions.

DEB BISNOWSKI: We had a couple of questions about the YIELD the Power project in Chicago. Are the topics and issues that you cover in your six-week session planned out ahead of time, so that you know what issues you're going to cover, or are they defined in response to the interests and needs of the particular group that's involved? Also, we notice from your materials that a group may talk about sensitive issues, such as sexuality and sexual orientation. How do you deal with the issue of confidentiality among the members of the group?

KRISTIN BERG: We do have the topics planned ahead of time. On the other hand, the discussions are shaped by what the youth want to talk about. So we may have a general focus on economic justice, but we tailor it to what the youth want to talk about. That's keeping it real, keeping it close to what they want to talk about, close to what their needs are at that moment, so that they stay interested and involved. Ultimately, it goes back to the youth, and the youth have the power to choose. We haven't had our sexuality session yet. We're going to be having that in two weeks, and I'm interested in how this is going to play out. So far, we've established the confidentiality rules within the session. What's said in the room stays in the room. So far, that's been pretty

successful. We've been talking a lot about sensitive issues, and so far we haven't had any breaches of confidentiality. We hope to maintain that. Again, we're going to see how it goes and meet these needs as they coming up during that session and see what we need to work on or focus on.

JOHN (Progress CIL): This is a follow-up question on the primary school, about hitting kids in primary school instead of secondary school. You touched on the advocacy part of it – how it doesn't necessarily fit the best to have the kids learn advocacy so much. But how much just about the general education model, giving them some background on the history of the disability rights and making it more of a casual atmosphere? Is that something that's been discussed? Is there any sort of angle that you can use to approach primary school students that could work to help transition them into the secondary school?

DAVID HANCOX: First of all, in case I was misunderstood earlier, my comments were meant to reinforce my belief that we should definitely be teaching self-advocacy concepts and techniques and the rest to elementary-aged kids, especially kids with disabilities, but it would be a really good idea for all kids in that age group. In terms of addressing your comment from the historical perspective – again, that's a marvelous idea. It's a cultural aspect of our communities that we have overlooked for a long time. I don't think it's just a context that we should be teaching to young children with disabilities in that age group. It's something we should be teaching to all kids. The non-disabled kids also need to have some clear expectations and understandings and appreciations for this very rich culture that they live among. So I agree with you – I think it's a marvelous idea. It's certainly something that we should all be pursuing. Absolutely.

KRISTIN BERG: I'd like to comment on the last question. In our YIELD the Power program, we have several people who are in junior high now. We address disability history right away, and they really got into it. And it has been successful having them, even with other students who are 20 and 21. So we are recruiting in some junior highs and including those students.

DARRELL JONES: Thank you, everyone, for your excellent questions today and for your attention. I'm sorry that we're out of time – there's never enough time for these teleconferences. A quick reminder – please complete your evaluations and get them back to the IL NET office. I'd like to thank Kristin, Marquito, Delon, David, John, and Julia for all your hard work to make this training a success. Goodbye for now.

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