

# Inquire & Inspire

I&I

The Council for Exceptional Children's resource for student professional development

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

AUGUST 2007

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

Remember to check the student section of the CEC website for the most up-to-date information!

Check out this issue's column called *What Students Need to Know About...* on page 4. If you are interested in publishing a similar article, check out the call for submissions on page 5!

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Student Mentoring Pilot 2

Leadership Positions 2

Career Center 2

Membership Specials 3

Chapter Highlight 3

International Minute 3

Self-determination 4

Upcoming Issue 5

## Student Membership Recruitment

It is time for universities to open their doors and for a whole new semester and year to begin. With the start of the Fall semester also comes the start of student CEC chapter activities. For every chapter, the first activity should be recruitment of new members.

First of the year activities create first impressions. The impressions chapters set often determine how successful the recruitment process will be. As you identify the first of the year activities that your chapter will hold, think about what those activities communicate to potential student members. Does the activity showcase what my CEC student chapter has to offer? Does my chapter's initial activity or event appear welcoming and encouraging of new membership?

Your chapter can use such questions to guide your initial recruitment process.

After your beginning of the year kick-off, recruitment efforts should continue through the year. By holding membership drives and visible events on your university's campus, you may be able to recruit additional members throughout the year.

Recruitment may go beyond throwing great events and activities. For many students, they desire an organization in which they can get involved. Offer ways

for students to become active members within your student CEC chapter. By getting involved, your chapter will become much more than a line on a resume; it will become a place to belong.

For more ideas on student membership recruitment, visit the following link:

[http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCEC/Communities/Students/StudentChapterResource/Membership\\_Recruitment.pdf](http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCEC/Communities/Students/StudentChapterResource/Membership_Recruitment.pdf)



## Start Raising Funds TODAY!!!

### The Student Voyage to the CEC Convention & Expo

Every year students face the challenge of raising funds to attend the Annual CEC Convention & Expo. In April 2008, the CEC Convention & Expo will be held in Boston, Massachusetts. With this city and what is sure to be a great convention program, you are not going to want to miss the opportunity to attend.

So what can you do? The key is to start planning early. Planning includes determining who in your student group wants to attend and how much it is going to cost. Once you have an idea of what you need to accomplish, then start the fundraising process.

For more information on great

fundraising ideas visit the following link:

<http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCEC/Communities/Students/StudentChapterResource/Fundraising.pdf>

# Student Mentoring Pilot

One of the recommendations of the Student Transitional Workgroup was the creation of a network of experienced professionals to mentor/support novice professionals. The CEC Pioneers Division (CEC-PD) agreed to conduct a Pilot (test) of a Student Mentoring project. Members of CEC-PD, including CEC Past Presidents, award winners, and many from the "who's who in special education," will serve as mentors.

The Pilot begins this Fall and will last for one year. The chapters selected to participate are:

- University of Cincinnati (OH) Chapter 0080
- Canisius College (NY) Chapter 0432
- Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville (IL) Chapter 0696
- Georgian Court University (NJ)
- Chapter 0970, and Hood College (MD) Chapter 1167.

Congratulations to these chapters, and thank you to the members of CEC-PD who will serve as mentors. We hope it is a great experience for everyone involved. Check future issues of Inquire & Inspire for updates on this mentoring Pilot!

## 2008 CEC Leadership Opportunities for Student Members

Serving CEC is an enriching, rewarding experience for student members who aspire to make a difference. It is an opportunity to be connected to the most dedicated leaders in the field and in a position to represent your fellow students in the leading organization for children and youth with exceptionalities. The remaining positions open for students in 2008 are:

### Member, Student Standing Committee

- Two positions available
- Two year term
- Nominations due August 31, 2007

To obtain additional information on opening student positions and their responsibilities, visit the following link:

<http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCEC/Communities/>

Students/  
Students/default.htm



## Career Center

Are you ready to enter a career in the special education field or preparing to take the next step in your career? If so, then CEC has a career resource for you, the Career Center! CEC's Online Job Board offers job seekers a way to get in touch with top recruiters from universities and schools who have opening special education positions. Through this resource,

you are able to browse job postings, create a criteria for your job searches, and even post your resume for employers to view.

To open your FREE CEC Online Job Board job seeker account today, visit the following link:

<http://www.specialedcareers.org/>

Good luck in your quest for your dream job!



# CEC Student Membership Specials



CEC's 2007 "Back to School" Student membership campaign is underway! Save \$10.00 off CEC Student membership when you join or renew by October 31, 2007. You'll receive all the CEC membership benefits - including online access to the CEC journals - for just \$56.00!

Download the campaign materials and special membership application from the Student

section of the CEC Web site at [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org). To receive this discount, students must use the special application or join/renew online at [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org) and enter promotion code SRFALL07. Or, call CEC's Constituent Services Center toll-free at 888/232-7733 and give the representative the promotion code. This discount applies only to Student membership in the U.S. and Can-

ada, and cannot be combined with any other offer.

Need to spread out your payments? Now pay your dues in three monthly installments! See the membership application for details.

## Chapter Highlight: Dr. Rosemary Jackson

At the heart of many student CEC chapters is the chapter advisor. The chapter advisor serves to guide and motivate student members as they build their chapter and pursue professional activities. Dr. Rosemary Jackson, Professor at Georgia College & State University (GCSU) and student CEC Advisor, has served as an inspiration to many students. In her 27 years in special education, Dr. Jackson has served in many capacities, but most recently her efforts have been focused on training special education teachers and building an active Georgia student CEC program. For 11 years, she has served as the CEC Chapter Advisor

for both the GCSU and state of Georgia student chapters.

Dr. Jackson views CEC involvement as integral to the professional development of teachers in training and to the continued growth of teachers in the field. Dr. Jackson shared, "SCEC is an excellent way for programs to help students evolve into professionals, to connect students with mentors, and to make teacher training programs stronger." By integrating CEC journals and conference attendance into course requirements, she creates high expectations for student involvement, learning, and leadership. The results of this approach are outstanding.

Her students have served as state and local student CEC officers, collaborated with Georgia CEC Pioneers, won national awards, and presented at state and national CEC conferences. Her students exit prepared to take positions of leadership in the field and to make a difference in the lives of students with disabilities. The accolades her former students receive (e.g., teacher of the year awards, Georgia CEC President-Elect) are testament to the impact of her mentoring.

As Dr. Jackson retires, we would like to express thanks to her for her years of service to special education and CEC!



**Rosemary Jackson,**  
Georgia College &  
State University

## International Minute

Countless children and families in nations worldwide do not have access to quality preschool programs. International Step by Step Association (ISSA), with the support of a global support network, is changing this. By providing training and services, ISSA is guiding communities internationally in developing and implementing programs for young children, including children with disabilities. Central to ISSA training and programs are a child-centered approach, parental and community participation, and research proven methods. Countries are paired with trained experts who offer intense mentoring and support while considering the specific needs of individual countries. Trainings are geared to varied audiences including parents, teachers, administrators, and teacher trainers.

The goal of ISSA is to provide flexible strategies that address the unique needs of each country and community. For many communities the most critical need is to provide parent education so that parents are prepared to support their children's development. ISSA is accomplishing this through parent-child training activities, parent education workshops, adult education, and child activities.

CEC has joined ISSA as a global partner. As a partner, CEC provides vital training and technical assistance on inclusive education for children with disabilities to programs in all participating countries. Resources provided by CEC include mentoring and professional development such as on-site training, web-based seminars, and

professional materials. CEC's collaboration with ISSA is supported by a grant from Open Society Institute, ISSA's founding organization. Twenty-nine countries are currently benefiting from CEC's involvement.

For more information visit: <http://www.issa.nl/> or <http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCEC/International/StepbyStep/default.htm>

Contributed by Sharon Wyatt, University of British Columbia



**Sharon Wyatt**

## Self-Determination



Catherine N. Grim

*Self-determination is not simply measured by the independent performance of behavior, but instead by the function of the behavior.*

*Self-determination is an important and valued educational outcome that can be made a reality by creating opportunities for students.*

For many of us, everyday life is filled with opportunities to exercise self-determination. These opportunities can be relatively minor, such as choosing between a turkey or ham sandwich. Other opportunities, such as attending college, require more complex skills like self-management and problem-solving. Most likely we have these skills because we were taught them, either directly or indirectly, and had opportunities to promote their growth.

Unfortunately, many students with disabilities have historically lacked the training and opportunity to become self-determined. This outcome is relevant because research has suggested positive educational and life outcomes for self-determined individuals with disabilities (Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003). Thus, starting in the early 1990's, self-determination has been explored as a valued educational outcome for individuals with disabilities.

Of the several theories of self-determination that exist, special educators often use the functional theory. The functional theory defines self-determination as "acting as the primary causal agent in one's life and making choices and decisions regarding one's quality of life free from undue external influence or interference" (Wehmeyer, 1996, p. 24). Therefore, self-determination is not simply measured by the independent performance of behavior, but instead by the function of the behavior. For example, because brushing her teeth left her feeling frustrated and fatigued, a young woman with cerebral palsy chose to have a personal care attendant help with daily dental care. While the young woman chose to be less independent, the action was self-determined because she made something happen to improve her quality of life.

It is important to note that self-determination has historically been rooted in values of the dominant cul-

ture, such as independence and personal autonomy (Trainor, 2002). Understandably, many individuals still consider self-determination to be synonymous with the value of independence. This belief becomes problematic because not all individuals in our diverse society share this value. This collision of values can result in conflicts between families, students, and educators. In order to reduce such conflicts, special educators should become more culturally responsive by collaborating with diverse families to determine how self-determination fits into the context of their daily lives.

Within the functional theory, self-determined behavior emerges as students have opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes associated with self-determination. These skills and attitudes, also called component elements, include: choice-making, decision-making, problem-solving, goal-setting and attainment, self-evaluation, self-instruction, self-advocacy and leadership, as well as an internal locus of control, positive attributions of efficacy, self-awareness, and self-knowledge. Educators can foster the development of self-determination by creating IEP goals and objectives, and systematically teaching and assessing these component elements. But as with other educational outcomes, individual students will vary in their capacity and opportunities to learn and perform these skills. Based on their age and severity of disability, students will need various levels of support to learn and express the skills associated with self-determination (Wood, Fowler, Uphold,

& Test, 2005).

So what can teachers do to support self-determining behaviors? Here are a few suggestions: (a) actively engage students in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of their education; (b) create high but realistic expectations; (c) teach choice-making skills and assess preferences; (d) provide problem-solving opportunities; and (e) encourage independence and reasonable risk-taking. While self-determination is often discussed in the context of transition planning from high school to adult life, educators should not limit instruction to high school students alone. The skills associated with self-determination are developmental in nature, and can be taught and fostered starting in early childhood. For example, choice-making and expressing preferences are common goals for young children with developmental disabilities.

In conclusion, while self-determination looks different for each student, it is an important and valued educational outcome that can be made a reality by creating opportunities for students to learn and express the skills and attitudes discussed above.

*Contributed by Catherine N. Grim,  
The University of Texas at Austin*

**See References on pg. 5**

### Self-Determination Online Resources

#### Beach Center on Disability

[http://www.beachcenter.org/education\\_and\\_training/self-determination.aspx](http://www.beachcenter.org/education_and_training/self-determination.aspx)

#### OHSU Center on Self Determination

<http://www.ohsu.edu/oidd/CSD/>

#### Self-Determination Technical Assistance Center

<http://www.sdtac.uncc.edu/>



## Council for Exceptional Children

1110 North Glebe Road

Suite 300

Arlington, VA 22201

Phone: 888/232-7733

Fax: 703/264-9494

Website: [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

## Upcoming Issue

Are you a student expert on the topic of **Reading Instruction**? Want to be published in our *What Students Need to Know About...* newsletter column? Send a brief article (700 words or less including references and suggested readings) to Cynthia Chambers at [chamberc@mail.etsu.edu](mailto:chamberc@mail.etsu.edu) for potential publication. Deadline is November 15.

Is your chapter doing something exceptional in the area of membership, fundraising, or service? Is your CEC faculty advisor or a member of your chapter worthy of being recognized? If so, send a 250 words or less story on your chapter's, faculty advisor's, or chapter member's accomplishments to Cynthia Chambers ([chamberc@mail.etsu.edu](mailto:chamberc@mail.etsu.edu)).

Interested in serving as a reviewer for the Student Newsletter? Contact Cynthia Chambers ([chamberc@mail.etsu.edu](mailto:chamberc@mail.etsu.edu)).

Do you have an internationally focused CEC story? Send your stories (225 words or less) to Sharon Wyatt at [swyatt@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:swyatt@interchange.ubc.ca) for potential publication in the Student Newsletter.

## Comments or Questions

Contact Cynthia Chambers at [chamberc@mail.etsu.edu](mailto:chamberc@mail.etsu.edu)

## What Students Need to Know about Self-Determination References

Trainor, A. A. (2002). Self-determination for students with learning disabilities: Is it a universal value? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(6), 711-725.

Wehmeyer, M. L. (1996). Self-determination as an educational outcome: Why is it important to children, youth and adults with disabilities? In D. J. Sands & M. L. Wehmeyer (Eds.), *Self-determination across the life span: Independence and choice for people with disabilities* (pp. 24-48). Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks.

Wehmeyer, M. L., & Palmer, S. B. (2003). Adult outcomes for students with cognitive disabilities three-years after high school: The impact of self-determination. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 38(2), 131-144.

Wood, W. M., Fowler, C. H., Uphold, N., & Test, D. W. (2005). A review of self-determination interventions with individuals with severe disabilities. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 30(3), 121-146.

## Newsletter Staff

### Editorial Board

#### Cynthia R. Chambers

Editor, East Tennessee State University

#### Amy Childre

Associate Editor, Georgia College & State University

#### Susan Simmons, CEC Staff

### Reviewers

Cheryl Snyder

James Williams

Robyn L. Schroeder

Shea Obremski

### Contributors

Catherine Grim

Sharon Wyatt

