

Background:

Staff compiled a report of recent public information activities from the last quarter for the Committee’s review.

Discussion topic includes:

- Public Information Report
- Article - Lora Taylor: From Passion to Advocacy
- Annual Report Infographics

Committee of the Whole

Agenda Item 7.

Expected Action:

The Committee will receive an update regarding recent public information activities and provide guidance as needed. No action is anticipated.

Council Meeting

Agenda Item 10. A.

Expected Action:

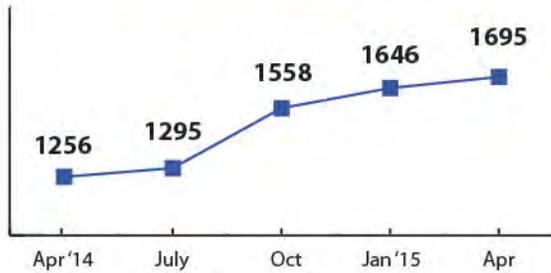
The Council will receive a report of Committee discussions on this item. No action is anticipated.

TCDD Public Information Report

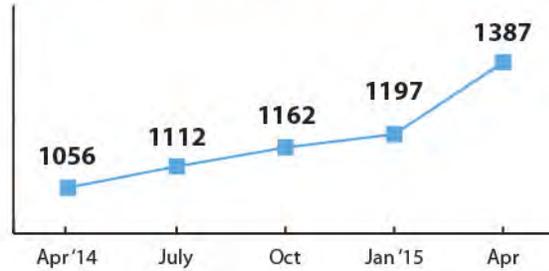
May 2015

Social Media

Facebook Fans



Twitter Followers



Top Facebook posts



TWINS: SIDE-BY-SIDE

Twins Will (left) and Scott (right) enjoy participating side-by-side in community events. One of the events they participate in – the Buddy Walk in San Antonio – promotes acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome.

Reach: **4,578**; Post clicks: **143**; Likes, comments & shares: **533**



TCDD BOARD MEMBERS AT THE CAPITOL

TCDD board members visited with their legislators today at the Capitol.

Reach: **2,424**; Post clicks: **208**; Likes, comments & shares: **132**



CLASSROOM SCIENCE PROJECTS: SIDE-BY-SIDE

Parker (far left) and his second grade classmates worked side-by-side on a school science project. Parker helped design and demonstrate the project, which shows action/reaction during sports. Parker has Down syndrome and his teachers work every week to fully include him in teaching and learning.

Reach: **1,495**; Post clicks: **30**; Likes, comments & shares: **107**



TCDD AT THE CAPITOL

Today, the House Human Services Committee held a public hearing for House Bill (HB) 1679 to continue the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD). TCDD staff and Council members attended the hearing. The bill was reported favorably with the recommendation that it should be passed.

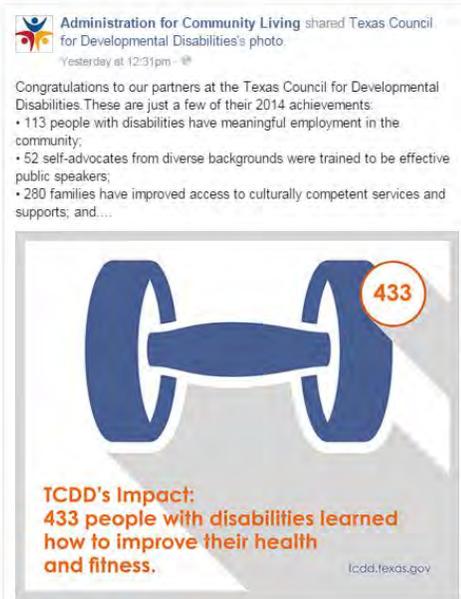
Reach: **1,283**; Post clicks: **92**; Likes, comments & shares: **124**

Reach: the number of unique people who received impressions of a Page post

Post Clicks: the number of times a person clicks anywhere on a post (image, video, link, "See More")

Likes, Comments & Shares: the sum of all likes, comments and shares on a post

Other Social Media Highlights



The **Administration for Community Living (ACL)** shared a TCDD infographic and other information from TCDD's 2014 Annual Report. ACL oversees the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD), which oversees a number of programs including DD Councils.



The **Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services** promoted NACDD's Side-by-Side campaign. The Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month campaign encouraged people to participate by sharing a photo, video or story that depicted community inclusion of people of all abilities.

Website Posts & Articles



Lora Taylor: From Passion to Advocacy

January 15, 2015

Lora Taylor got so frustrated with the lack of van accessible parking that she decided to do something about it. Read about Lora's inspiring and instructive journey from passionate parent to disability advocate.



2014 TCDD Annual Report

March 2, 2015

TCDD's 2014 Annual Report — Impact — highlights grants, projects and activities that worked to create change so that people with disabilities are fully included in their communities and exercise control over their own lives.



Side-By-Side: An Inclusive Social Media Campaign

March 3, 2015

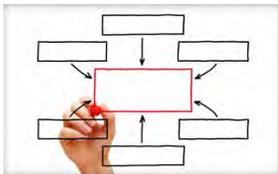
March is DD Awareness Month and NACDD is leading a social media campaign – Side-by-Side – designed to celebrate togetherness and raise awareness about the importance of community inclusion for people of all abilities.



TCDD Seeks Executive Director to Lead Organization

March 4, 2015

TCDD seeks an experienced, passionate, and strategic chief executive to lead the Austin-based organization as it continues to work to improve the lives of Texans with disabilities. The deadline to apply is April 13, 2015.



TCDD Seeks Planning Specialist

March 24, 2015

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) is accepting applications for its Planning Specialist position until April 6, 2015. The Planning Specialist is instrumental in the development and implementation of TCDD's strategic state plan.

Information Requests & Distribution

E-newsletter: The e-newsletter, *TCDD Connection*, was distributed on Feb. 4 to 877 contacts and on Mar. 3 to 872 contacts.

E-mails: The following single-topic email blasts were issued:

- TCDD Seeks Public Policy Assistant (Feb. 26)
- TCDD Seeks Executive Director to Lead Organization (Mar. 4)
- Legislative Update (Mar. 6)
- TCDD Seeks Planning Specialist (Mar. 24)
- Legislative Hearings Next Week (Apr. 3)

I&R Requests: Staff responded to 59 requests for information and referral.

Materials Distributed*

- People First Language Handout: 1000
- Higher Ed Guide (English): 3,500
- Higher Ed Guide (Spanish): 2,000
- The Next Step (DVD): 516
- BDR (English): 13
- BDR (Spanish): 3
- Every Member Matters: 25
- 2014 Annual Report: 55 (mailed to all DD Councils and NACDD)

** On Monday, March 16, the 2014 Higher Education Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities was shipped to customers. Many of the orders for the guide included requests for other TCDD materials, so more materials were distributed than during a typical reporting period.*



Lora Taylor: From Passion to Advocacy

Accessible Parking Woes

Lora Taylor would arrive at a Houston-area medical center in her family's accessible van and she couldn't find a spot to park.

The medical center had plenty of accessible parking spots, but the van accessible spots were usually occupied by cars that displayed disabled parking placards or license plates. Even though van accessible spots are designed for vans, any vehicle with a placard or plate can legally park there.

The Americans with Disabilities Act stipulates that one in every six accessible parking spots must be a van accessible spot. What makes van accessible spots unique is that they feature an 8-foot-wide access aisle that accommodates the ramp or lift (about 4 feet) and provides space for the wheelchair to get off the ramp and turn (3 feet). Van accessible parking is also closest to the entrance.

Not being able to park in a van accessible spot posed a problem to Lora and her family.

Lora's 33-year-old daughter, Julie, has complex medical needs, so trips to the medical center are common place for the family. When they would arrive at the center and be unable to find a van accessible spot, Lora would have to improvise.

"I would park my van sideways across two regular spots so there would be enough space to open the side door and use the lift," said Lora.

In order to find two adjacent spots, she would often have to park on the roof of the parking garage. Julie has a severe seizure disorder and exposure to extreme heat can cause a major medical problem. Being in the heat while going to and from the center can be dangerous; getting back into an extremely hot van just exacerbates the problem.

As a self-described "Do it yourself" type of person, Lora improvised again and she now uses a sedan to transport Julie to her medical appointments. She keeps a fold-up wheelchair in the trunk and Lora physically picks Julie up to help her get in and out of the wheelchair. Their accessible van sits idle in their driveway.

Lora is a 60-year-old piano teacher and her slight build is not well suited for lifting another person. Eventually, the combination of years of frustration due to a lack of van accessible parking

and a sore back caught up with her. Lora decided that, if it was legal for any vehicle with a placard or license plate to park in a van accessible spot, it was time to change the law.

Advocacy Journey

Lora wanted the law to be changed so only vans could legally park in van accessible spots. For the law to change, she knew she would have to raise awareness about this issue with state legislators and hope that there would be support for a bill.

But where to start? And how?

Lora had never participated in a formal advocacy training program, so calling legislative offices and visiting the Capitol were new to her – and a little intimidating.

As luck would have it, Lora's friend bumped into Lora's legislator at a political function. Her friend explained Lora's situation and the next day a staff person from the legislator's office contacted Lora.

From there the process was off and running.

"I started to make legislative visits and talked to everyone I could about accessible parking," she said.

During September and October 2014, Lora visited legislative offices at the Capitol in Austin. Believing accessible parking is more of an urban than a rural issue, her strategy was to focus on legislators who represented the largest metro areas in Texas. Once a visit was scheduled, Lora maximized her trip and scheduled additional visits with other legislators who had offices nearby. In all, Lora visited 18 senators and seven state representatives in two months.

Lora developed an effective routine when meeting with legislators. She started by introducing them to her daughter.

"Any mother can go and talk about their child – that's the easy part," Lora said.

Lora would show them a picture of Julie in her wheelchair and describe Julie's medical conditions. She would explain how the lack of van accessible parking impacts her family and why changing the law can help not just her family, but others who are affected, too.

Capitol Feedback

So far, the feedback Lora has received has been overwhelmingly positive and addressing the issue seems to have bipartisan support. Most of the people she has met with agree that changing the law makes sense. If accessible parking spaces are created for vans, they should be saved for vans.

Lora is optimistic that a bill will be introduced in the 84th legislative session that will make it illegal for vehicles that don't have ramps to park in van accessible spots. Ideally, the bill would not include a fiscal note (i.e. it won't require funding), thus potentially increasing the likelihood that it will pass.

If a bill is passed, it could take some time to be phased in. And it will have to be enforced, which can be a whole other issue. Lora believes an awareness campaign could inform people about the new law and explain why it's important.

Lora is well aware that the legislative process can be unpredictable and she is prepared to work on this issue for multiple sessions, if necessary. She is also determined to not let one bill – pass or fail – prevent her from advocating on future issues.

Get Involved

Before this journey began, Lora was familiar with phrases like “The Capitol belongs to the citizens” and “It is up to the citizens to make change.”

She heard these phrases but they hadn't clicked in her mind.

Now they do. She's experienced them first hand.

Lora's at the point where she is comfortable in the Capitol and she's actively involved in the legislative process, working to solve problems to help people.

Lora also admits that she had not entirely grasped the concept that the government is there to serve the people. She does now.

“When you have a problem, that is what your representative is there for,” Lora said. “They really want to help.”

So how does Lora describe her experience, which included intimidating first-time visits to the Capitol?

“It's been fun to get to know the people and learn that they really want to help,” Lora said. “Besides, it's easy to go in and advocate for something you're passionate about. I would encourage everyone to pick an issue and get involved.”

Lora Taylor is a governor-appointed member of the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities. She lives with her family in Houston, where she is a piano teacher.

Published January 15, 2015

2014 Annual Report Infographics



989

TCDD's Impact:
989 self-advocates and family members participated in leadership and advocacy training.

tcdd.texas.gov



280

TCDD's Impact:
280 families have improved access to culturally competent services and supports.

tcdd.texas.gov



599

TCDD's Impact:
599 people made their faith communities more inclusive of people with disabilities.

tcdd.texas.gov



EVENTS

TCDD's Impact:
TCDD grantees presented to over 4,000 people at events. TCDD also supported 24 people to speak at events.

tcdd.texas.gov



113

TCDD's Impact:
113 people with disabilities have meaningful employment in the community.

tcdd.texas.gov



433

TCDD's Impact:
433 people with disabilities learned how to improve their health and fitness.

tcdd.texas.gov

2014 Annual Report Infographics



17

TCDD's Impact:
17 people with disabilities and family members were supported to serve on boards, committees, and workgroups.

tcdd.texas.gov



EF

TCDD's Impact:
TCDD played a key role in the formation of the Tx Employment First (EF) Taskforce and the expansion of EF policies.

tcdd.texas.gov



19

TCDD's Impact:
19 people with disabilities were supported to develop meaningful relationships with people in their community.

tcdd.texas.gov



INFO

TCDD's Impact:
"14 Facts About the Service Dog Law" blog post had over 5,000 views.

tcdd.texas.gov



APP

TCDD's Impact:
An app was developed to support people with disabilities to monitor inventories while competitively employed.

tcdd.texas.gov



52

TCDD's Impact:
52 self-advocates from diverse backgrounds were trained to be effective public speakers.

tcdd.texas.gov