

## Why College? We Asked Frankie....



Why go to college? Well, I'm going to college to get the career that I want. I want to study graphic design.

## Think College Mini-grant Sites Up-date

The eight University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) that were awarded grants to support statewide strategic planning to support students with intellectual disabilities to go to college have been hard at work. Debra Hart and Cate Weir of Think College have been to the following states in March offering training and technical assistance to their efforts:

- The Florida Center for Inclusive Communities at the University of South Florida in Tampa hosted a very successful statewide meeting to kick off their statewide planning efforts.
- The Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities at the University of Rochester (NY) hosted regional meetings in Rochester and in Albany.
- The Partnership for People with Disabilities at the Virginia Commonwealth University held a strategic planning meeting for their statewide team in Richmond.
- The Center on Disability and Community Inclusion at the University of Vermont held a statewide planning summit.
- The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities at the University of North Dakota Minot kicked off their statewide work. The meeting was featured that evening on the Channel 10 News in Minot.

Plans are underway for later this spring at the remaining grant-funded UCEDDs in Nevada, Mississippi, and New Mexico. "It is very exciting to see the level of enthusiasm and commitment in each of these states," said Cate Weir, "and to begin to look forward to the increased opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities that will result."

## A Book Worth Checking Out

*Think College: Postsecondary Education Options For Students with Intellectual Disabilities* By Meg Grigal and Debra Hart

*Think College: Postsecondary Education Options for Students with Intellectual Disabilities* seeks to uncover the bigger picture of postsecondary (PSE) options, before, during and after a successful transition to college for those students with intellectual disabilities (ID). The authors address how to understand the philosophical and practical purposes of bringing support for PSE options for individuals with ID. Three models for PSE are discussed within the book: inclusive individual support approach, the mixed hybrid approach and substantially separate options. *Think College* also provides suggestions in order to overcome the typical challenges these students will face within PSE and give effective person centered transition services for high school students as well as support students as they manage a positive PSE experience.

*Think College* seeks to address the future possibilities which lie within postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities. It prepares students and families for the sometimes difficult path to PSE, but illustrates through examples, case studies, research and various resources how to navigate the system and the lessons which have been learned over the years. To order, visit <http://www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/grigal-69179/index.htm>

## Claire Bible Shares Her Experiences as a College Student

Claire Bible is a student participating in the Cutting-Edge program at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin. Claire shared with Think College about her transition experience. Her parents made sure she was mainstreamed at an early age and as much as possible was always in class with students with and without disabilities. Claire has a learning disability in math so had extra assistance with math all through school. She also had occupational, physical and speech therapy through middle school.

Claire started her college experience with two years in Boston as part of the Threshold Program at Lesley University. She graduated with a certificate in early childhood and a few transferable credits. Claire shared that Threshold provided a solid foundation with its goal in independent living, having their graduates out in the community working and living, but she had a greater vision for herself—to go on to higher education. Claire shared part of her journey in her own words,

“I had to find my own way to opportunities in the arts outside of Threshold. I found a small door with a talking door knob, so to speak, which opened up to the world of the arts. But to go through this door, I had to go on my own separating myself from the Threshold life.”

Claire spent hours at the student center working on her novels, she went to every play and cause event. Eventually she ended up at an open mike on campus. That is where Claire said her poetry, “found its voice and first home and audience”.

Claire pursued her interest in more college and found her way back to Madison, WI where she was accepted into the Cutting Edge program at Edgewood College. It is based on a universal access approach to inclusion in college for adult learners with significant disabilities. Participants in the program are adults that have either traditionally not been able to meet the standard admissions criteria for college, or require additional supports in order to be successful in a college environment. The program has a set of core credit courses (a total of 5 credits each semester) that are required for students. In addition, Cutting-Edge students are encouraged to take 1 to 4 general education courses per semester. Students are directly involved with planning their course schedule. Housing is available both on and off campus.

Claire’s passions are being fed and she credits Cutting Edge: “Through Cutting Edge I have been able to study the arts to my heart’s content. My favorite thing to do as a Cutting Edge student is taking mind-blowing classes, making friends that amaze me and being a part of the arts community. Cutting Edge is an inspiring program for me. It inspires hope that even though it takes hard work to get to your dream—it can happen! Cutting Edge possesses the fairy dust that can make us all fly!”

<http://www.edgewood.edu/prospective/undergraduate/cuttingedge/default.aspx>

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## Dear Think College

Dear Think College,  
I heard the term “mentor” the other day. What does it mean?  
Signed, Wondering

Dear Wondering,  
A “mentor” is a trusted friend, counselor, teacher, or guide who helps you on your academic or career journey. He or she may be employed at your school or where you work or may come from outside, depending on the program. A mentor may be your age or older and has training or experience that you can learn from. Mentors can give advice, help solve problems, offer support, and boost confidence. There are a lot of mentoring programs and a lot of kinds of mentoring. Here are some good Websites about mentoring:  
<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/paving-the-way-to-work>

<http://ici.umn.edu/ementoring/>

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

### **A Resource You Can Use**

Going to Work: A Guide to Social Security Benefits and Employment for Young People with Disabilities (2010 Edition)

This booklet from the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI), provides basic information about Social Security disability and health benefit programs, discusses what happens to Social Security disability and health benefits when a young person goes to work, and explains how to maximize a young person's options when he or she goes to work. For more information go to [http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article\\_id=211](http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=211)

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### **Hey Students! Check Out the Think College Web Site**

The student section of the Think College web site provides a good overview for students with intellectual disabilities who are considering college as their next step in life. Throughout this part of the website students share their college experiences and stories through pictures, quotes and videos as well as an interview with the Director of Think College, Deb Hart who discusses the necessity for promoting postsecondary education for people with intellectual disabilities. The student section of the web site also addresses information about how different people view college opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities. For the most part, there is a lot of public support for students to attend college. However, students should be aware of some negative responses as well since they may find themselves needing to work with some of these people in order to go to college.

Other highlights within the student section of the Think College website include tips and checklists for getting started with your college career, which includes information on traditional and non-tradition funding options and other post-secondary options besides college such as: certificate programs, adult education programs and lessons to develop skills. <http://thinkcollege.net/for-students>

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### **Upcoming Events**

#### **The Pacific Rim International Conference on Disabilities**

April 12-13, 2010

Honolulu, Hawaii

<http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu/>

#### **Think College Capacity Building Institutes**

For people interested in providing high quality postsecondary educational opportunities for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Scheduled or planned events currently include:

April 14, 2010 in collaboration with the Annual PacRim Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii.

April 19, 2010 in collaboration with Vanderbilt Kennedy Center and the Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Council, Nashville, TN.

For more information please visit: <http://thinkcollege.net/for-professionals/training-and-technical-assistance> and look for fliers via our listserv.

#### **Parents As Essential Partners In Transition**

April 19, 2010 Webcast

<http://www.nextsteps.peatc.org/peatc.cgim?template=webinars#year3>

#### **Council for Exceptional Children 2010 Convention & Expo, DDD Showcase Session Nashville, TN**

April 21-24, 2010

#### **2010 Closing the Gap Conference**

October 21, 2010 to October 23, 2010 in Bloomington, Minnesota

<http://www.closingthegap.com/conference/>

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**THE UNIVERSITY CENTERS FOR EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AT:**

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University of Hawaii University of Delaware The Ohio State University  
Vanderbilt University University of South Carolina  
University of California Los Angeles**

In conjunction with the **Association for University Centers on Disabilities**



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*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

**Administration for Children & Families**

*ADMINISTRATION ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (ADD)*



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To subscribe electronically, please send your email address to Carrie Coslin at [cosl0001@umn.edu](mailto:cosl0001@umn.edu).

Please distribute widely to interested parties.

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