

Inclusive Recreation Resource Center

Fall 2011

Happenings and Highlights

As we near the end of the IRRC's fifth year, we would like to provide you with some of the highlights of 2011, and wish you all a wonderful 2012!!

- 215 people attended Inclusion U training this year, representing 5 states outside of NY and people from 4 other countries! That brings the total number of Certified Inclusivity Assessors to 1,190!
- 84 people attended Recreation Inclusion Tips and Tools (RITT) training to learn how to assist people with disabilities develop meaningful leisure goals. The IRRC has received very positive feedback not only about the quality of the training, but also of the great value of the assessment tools provided.
- In order to reflect the IRRC's broad impact well beyond the state of New York, several changes have been made to the Center's name, mission statement and logo. Formally the NYS IRRC, the Center is now simply, the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center.
- In addition to Inclusion U and RITT, staff of the IRRC provided many presentations and trainings to a wide variety of audiences. In June, Dr. Lynn Anderson delivered the keynote address at the Canadian Congress on Leisure Research. In July, Dr. Vicki Wilkins and Laurie Penney McGee created an ability awareness training for youth and staff at the Ulster County CYO's Hook A Kid On Golf Camp. More recently, sessions were provided at the World Waterpark Association's international conference in New Orleans, and at the National Recreation and Park Association's annual conference in Atlanta. The IRRC has also developed a number of regional trainings, including those given at the Cortland Recreation Conference, the Downstate Conference and the Genesee Valley's Recreation and Park Society's annual conference in Rochester.



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The IRRC Delivers Inclusion U to an International Audience!

In October, the IRRC was contracted by the World Waterpark Association to provide Inclusion U training at their international conference, held in New Orleans, Louisiana. Dr. Lynn Anderson, Dr. Vicki Wilkins, and Laurie Penney McGee presented the full-day training to people from the USA, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates. Conversations about varying inclusion practices around the world made the training of great interest not only to attendees, but for the IRRC staff as well. In addition to Inclusion U, Dr. Lynn Anderson and Laurie Penney McGee presented a conference session entitled, "Let the Mainstream be a Widestream" which provided professionals with a new way to approach inclusion, viewing all of their facilities, staffing, programs and practices through an inclusion lens. Both the conference and trip to New Orleans were great experiences for the IRRC staff!



Meet Katie Wryk IRRC Grad Assistant 2011-2012



In August, the IRRC welcomed Katie Wryk as the Center's new 2011-2012 Graduate Assistant. Katie, who has an undergraduate degree in Elementary and Special Education from SUNY Geneseo, brings a wealth of personal experience and education to her role at the IRRC.

Katie is currently pursuing her Master's Degree at SUNY Cortland in Outdoor and Environmental Education. While she is required to attain a master's degree for her teaching certification, Katie's interest in furthering her education in the field of recreation developed during her nine years working at summer camps that served children with and without disabilities. During her student teaching in Africa, she became passionate about using alternative teaching methods, such as those used in the outdoors. After graduation, Katie would love to work with school districts that utilize outdoor education as part of their curriculum. Katie would also welcome the opportunity to teach in a foreign country. When asked about what impacted her the most while working in Africa, Katie said that, while it may seem cliché, she was struck by how "grateful I am for what I have here." She described working with children who were always eager to learn and expressed gratitude daily for things many students in the United States take for granted; such as being given a pencil or having a teacher to teach them each day.

Initially, Katie seems quiet and reserved, but she loves working with people and enjoys chatting once she gets to know someone. Her recreation interests include reading, drawing, and outdoor activities. She loves working with youth and recently enjoyed volunteering at a Christmas tree sale where she taught children how to make "Reindeer Food." She loves Christmas and is a big fan of gingerbread houses and building snowmen, which is a common winter activity in her hometown of East Aurora, just outside of Buffalo, NY.

Katie has spent much of her IRRC time working on Inclusivity Assessments and Inclusion U data. Katie especially likes to know how things work "behind the scenes" and is looking forward to being trained to use the IRRC database. The IRRC is grateful to Katie for her work this semester and is happy to have her as part of the team!



The Global Reach of the IRRC Newsletter

Dr. Ori Caroleo at Lehman College writes, "About a month ago I received an email from a man in Italy. Apparently, he read your Inclusivity Newsletter that included me as your "hero". Well, he was taken aback when he read my name, the same name as his grandmother's long-lost brother who moved to America. Well, guess what, we are cousins! We've been emailing each other and sharing photos. I now have a couple of HUNDRED new cousins! After "talking" to him, so much has become clear regarding my paternal grandfather's family. He's the medical director for a hospital in Italy and is interested in inclusion and trying to move hospital staff to an inclusive mindset. Who would have thought that your article would bring families together!"

2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design Effective March 15, 2012 Are You Ready?



Over the past year, the IRRC has been working closely with recreation providers across the state who are making changes to become more inclusive and address the 2010 changes to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Our Spring Newsletter focused on the programmatic regulations which became effective in March. The next change, the 2010 Revised Standards for Accessible Design, will become effective on March 15, 2012. The standards include several new regulations specific to recreation areas, such as fishing piers, boating facilities, play areas and swimming pools. For example, the law requires accessible means of entry and exit for swimming pools. If you operate a miniature golf course, at least 50% of the holes must be accessible, and they must be consecutive and located on an accessible route. These are just a few of the changes that directly impact recreation facilities. It is important to note that the law requires that providers either meet the guidelines or have a transition plan in place by March 15, 2012 that addresses how the agency will “soon” meet the guidelines.

The U.S. Department of Justice provides a wealth of information, including the guidelines and resources about the Americans with Disabilities Act on their ADA Home Page, which can be found at www.ada.gov.

The IRRC is Awarded an AmeriCorps Staff Member

The IRRC is very happy to announce that a new AmeriCorps staff member will be joining the team in January. Deanna Moore, a graduate of SUNY Cortland's Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies Department, is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist who will be involved in all aspects of the Center. We congratulate her on her new position and welcome Deanna to the IRRC!



Certified Inclusivity Assessor Needed on Long Island!

Since 2004, HOPEFitness has been providing inclusive fitness centers for people of all abilities. With two locations serving Long Island, one in North Bellmore and one in Bohemia, HOPEFitness strives to provide accessible exercise facilities, equipment, programs and services to people with disabilities. In order to promote this resource to individuals, families and providers, HOPEFitness President Harvey Greenberg



would like to have both locations assessed for the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center's on-line database. If you are a Certified Inclusivity Assessor who would be willing to complete one or both assessments, please contact the IRRC at InclusiveRec@cortland.edu or call us at (607) 753-4833.

Thank you in advance for your help!

The Growth and Development of the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center at SUNY Cortland: Looking to a Bright Future

In late 2006, the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center (IRRC) was launched at SUNY Cortland with funding from the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC). Under the leadership of Dr. Lynn Anderson, CTRS, CPRP, a professor in the Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies Department at SUNY Cortland, the Center began its work by hiring staff and graduate assistants, as the development of a state-wide resource center to promote inclusive recreation was a significant task. We were fortunate, in January, to hire Laurie Penney McGee, CTRS. Laurie came to us from Exceptional Family Resources, an agency also dedicated to inclusion of people with disabilities.

In our first year, we worked very hard to develop the activities of the Center, based on research and best practices. We conducted focus groups across the state, reviewed the research literature from the past several years, and conducted pilot studies. By the end of our first year, we had developed the *Inclusivity Assessment Tool* and the first version of Inclusion U, the training for foundations of inclusion and the *Inclusivity Assessment Tool*. In that first year, we also developed the Recreation Referral Service, a more individualized service for people with disabilities, and our evaluation and research plans for all our services and activities. We formed our State Advisory Committee and began forming many regional advisory committees, all with the intention of having an ongoing communication channel with those in the state who most need assistance with inclusive recreation. We developed many partnerships around the state that we sustain today.

In our second year, we developed and launched our well-received website, loaded with resources to promote inclusive recreation. Our most important resource, the online recreation database, was launched in 2009. The ever growing database contains the recreation inclusion information collected by numerous trained *Certified Inclusivity Assessors* around the state, and provides accurate, specific, and descriptive information about recreation inclusion to people with disabilities and their families. Dr. Vicki Wilkins, CPRP, a professor in the Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies Department, joined the Center in our second year. We continued to develop partnerships with new colleges and universities that offer degree programs in parks, recreation and therapeutic recreation, including: Corning Community College, Erie Community College, Ithaca College, Kingsborough Community College, Lehman College, Onondaga Community College, Paul Smiths College, St. Joseph's College, SUNY Cortland, and Tompkins Cortland Community College. Presently, nine colleges state-wide have incorporated Inclusion U into their recreation degree programs. We continue to forge more partnerships with universities, with the goal of having every college student entering the parks and recreation field as a *Certified Inclusivity Assessor*, ready to promote accessibility and inclusion in their parks, community centers, sports programs, gyms, and the like.

In our third year, we continued to refine all our activities, grow the database, and train an ever growing army of *Certified Inclusivity Assessors*. We continued to work with more universities and other partners, including the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation,

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I Love New York Tourism, the New York State Recreation and Park Society, and the New York State Therapeutic Recreation Association.



Through continued funding from the DDPC, in our fourth and fifth year, we developed a new half-day training in collaboration with the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. This training, called Recreation Inclusion Tips and Tools (RITT), focuses on helping those who work in direct service with people with disabilities, like Medicaid Service Coordinators or case managers, facilitate inclusive recreation. A key focus has been to help people learn about the online recreation database and how it could help people with disabilities plan quality recreation in the most inclusive setting. In the last year, we have also begun offering Inclusion U on a contractual basis to outside organizations, which has been very successful. In our fifth year, we “graduated” our 1,000th *Certified Inclusivity Assessor* from Inclusion U. And that number continues to grow.

The Inclusive Recreation Resource Center has grown and developed from an idea to a thriving Center. Through our evaluation data, we know that people learn more about inclusion and have a more positive attitude toward inclusion. We know that Inclusion U, the website, and the online database are regularly used, well received and evaluated positively. We continue to involve undergraduate and graduate students in our work and as a key focus of the Center.

We are now ready for the next phase of growth for the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center. Over the next year and half, we are planning to develop Inclusion U as an online training. By having Inclusion U web-based, anyone anywhere will be able to complete the training, learn about inclusion, how to use the *Inclusivity Assessment Tool*, and become a *Certified Inclusivity Assessor*. We will be able to broaden our reach, make our work more accessible to a wider audience, and do so in a more sustainable manner. At the same time, we will continue to deliver Inclusion U in person for those who contract with us, and will continue to work closely with colleges and universities. The database will become more populated, more automated, and hopefully, more useful to those who need it most.

As we move toward the future and the next phase of development, the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center will be saying goodbye to Laurie Penney McGee, who has served for nearly five years as a full-time project coordinator. The coordinator position will end March 31, 2012. Laurie has been an important part of the growth and development of the Center, and she will be missed. Laurie’s cheerful, positive presence has helped build a multitude of partnerships and contacts for the Center and we will continue to sustain that work. Laurie’s passion for inclusion is an asset that will continue to shine for all. We wish Laurie the best in her future work and know that she will continue to make a positive impact for people with disabilities.

Dr. Lynn Anderson, CTRP, CPRP

Dr. Vicki Wilkins, CPRP

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FUNDED BY



Our Mission

To promote and sustain participation by people with disabilities in inclusive recreation activities and resources

Inclusion U Training!

Become a Certified Inclusivity Assessor!

Learn about best practices in inclusion and accessibility so that you can assess recreation sites and facilities for physical, administrative, and programmatic inclusion. Whether you are a person who has a disability, a family member, a recreation professional, human service provider, student or advocate, this training is for you!

How do you register for training?

Pre-register for Inclusion U training by contacting the IRRC at (607) 753-4833 or email inclusiverec@cortland.edu. The cost of the training is \$95.00 and includes the bound Inclusion U Manual as well as the toolkit needed to complete assessments.

Inclusion U provides 7 full training hours. If you would like to purchase Continuing Education Credits, CEU's will be available on site for a payment of \$8.00. Please bring a **separate** check payable to "NYSRPS."

- We welcome people of all abilities to attend Inclusion U. If any accommodations are needed, please provide that information when you register for training.
- All Trained Assessors are asked to complete 2 Inclusivity Assessments at recreation sites or facilities of their choice within 6 months of training. The IRRC will be happy to assist you in identifying a site.

2012 Inclusion U Training Dates and Locations

Friday, February 3rd, 12:30-9:00 PM: SUNY Cortland, Cortland

Friday, February 17th, 8:00-4:30 PM: Onondaga Community College, Syracuse

Sunday, March 25th, 8:00-4:30 PM: Saratoga Springs (NYSRPS Conference Pre-institute)

Saturday, April 14th, 8:00-4:30 PM: Saratoga Springs (NYSTRA Conference Pre-institute)

Reduced Rate.....only \$40.00 for pre-institute Inclusion U trainings for conference attendees!

Bring Inclusion U to Your Agency!!

Significant cost savings!!!

Are you interested in holding an Inclusion U at your agency? The IRRC offers several training options for agencies who would like to train their staff in the best practices of both physical and social inclusion. By bringing Inclusion U to your organization, you can provide training for up to 25 people at a significantly reduced rate. Save costly travel and accommodation expenses for staff by hosting Inclusion U at your facility. For more information, contact

Dr. Lynn Anderson at lynn.anderson@cortland.edu or call (607) 753-4833.