



President's Message

You Can NEVER Be Too Prepared – Hurricane Ike

Kim Littlejohn, President

Being a member of an Emergency Response Team here in Austin, I have learned a lot about disasters and the importance of emergency preparedness. I think it is human nature for us to avoid thinking about possible disasters. However, planning ahead and having emergency supplies in easy to carry containers will serve you well, no matter what kind of natural or manmade disaster you may face.

Before Hurricane Ike, I did quite a bit

of research about emergency preparedness. I found many supply checklists out there for people to use while preparing for a disaster. Well during the week of September 11-19, I found that most of those checklists left out some very important recommendations. Besides the obvious of having a flashlight, batteries, three day supply of food and water, medications and assistive devices, there are things that might not be so obvious.

Disaster Preparedness Checklist

- Make sure your photo ID has your current address and that it has not expired
- Don't depend on your cell phone for emergency contact numbers because they die and you can't access the numbers. Always have a hard copy of phone numbers of family, friends, doctors, pharmacies and other important contacts
- Be prepared to take a pillow, blanket and/or sleeping bag because not all shelters supply these items
- Include three to seven days of change of clothing if you have to evacuate
- Include important documents such as birth certificates, written copies of prescriptions, Medicaid card, Medicare card, proof of residence, bank account information and any information you may need to process insurance claims. Maintain them in a waterproof container.
- Leave an extra key to your residence with someone that can check on your home if you have to evacuate
- If you or someone you support has a Representative Payee, make sure you have the name, address and phone number of that person
- Include cash (power outages mean banks and ATMs may be unavailable)
- At your residence, make sure you have a plug in land line because cordless phones are useless during a power outage
- If you are a person with a disability, pre-register for transportation assistance with the Texas 2-1-1 Information and Referral Network

There are things that you can do to prepare for predictable and unpredictable disasters such as preparing a disaster kit and following a supply checklist like the one above. However, it is important to stay informed about what might happen in your community. I recommend that you visit www.ready.gov and www.redcross.org for extensive information about specific types of emergencies, how to plan for each including training for you and those you support.

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Defending Independence ... Determination, Leadership and Community

Terry Crocker, President Elect - Convention Committee Chair

The 33rd Annual Convention brought almost 500 attendees to San Antonio this year for a great event in July.

Our thanks to Department of Aging and Disabilities Commissioner Addie Horn for a thought provoking and excellent keynote address to open the convention this year. The speakers and events were all outstanding and sessions well attended. We appreciate the feedback from attendees, and we will be integrating recommendations received into next

year's planning activities.

My thanks to the convention planning committee - they made the event a success. A special thanks to Pat Holder who is the key person in pulling off our conventions every year. And of course, a huge thank you to our sponsors – without them the event could not happen.

Thanks everyone for your continued support of our organization and

annual conventions. I look forward to seeing everyone next year in Corpus Christi.



2008 Convention Committee. Additional 2008 Convention photos throughout this issue

33rd Annual Convention Committee

W. Terry Crocker, Chair
Program
Tropical Texas Behavioral Health

Kim Littlejohn
Awards/Nominations/Local Arrangements/Program
Austin Travis County MHMR Center

Bob Welsh
Awards/Nominations/Consumer Stipends
MHMR of Tarrant County

Dion White
Program
Central Plains Center

Ellis (Pat) Craig, Ph.D
Consumer Stipends/Program
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Melissa Rasco
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Karrie Shogren, Ph.D.
Program/Awards/Nominations
The University of Texas at Austin

Maria Quintero, Ph.D.
Local Arrangements/Program
MHMRA of Harris County

Beverly Black
Consumer Stipends
MHMR of Tarrant County

Lisa Shelby
Program/Local Arrangements
Austin Travis County MHMR Center

Charlotte Kimmel, Ph.D.
Local Arrangements
Mexia State School

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Thank You Convention Exhibitors

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Thank You Convention Sponsors

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Bronze

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Thank You Silent Auction Donors

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Grapevine Market of Austin
Cynthia King
Kim Littlejohn

Amy and Tracy McMahan
Olliewood Jewels
Omni Corpus Christi Hotel
Maria Quintero, Ph.D.
Steve and Melissa Rasco
Tanner Rasco
Teresa Schane
Karrie Shogren, Ph.D.
The Unicorn Center
Vita-Living, Inc.
Dion White
Wildflower Pottery



2007-2008 AAIDD Texas Chapter Award Winners

President's Award - Awarded for significant contributions on behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Ellis M. (Pat) Craig, Ph.D.

Support Award for Excellence in the Provision of Direct Supports - Awarded for exceptional work in the delivery of high quality direct service and supports in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Connie Cisneros, B.A.

Knowledge Award for Excellence in Education or Research - Awarded for significant contributions to the dissemination of knowledge in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities through education and/or research.

Christie Enzinna, M.A.

Empowerment Award for Excellence in Promotion of Self-Advocacy - Awarded to self-advocates and/or the professionals who support self-advocates for courage and dedication resulting in outstanding contributions to the self-advocacy movement.

Cynthia Singleton

Student Award for Excellence in Knowledge, Support or Empowerment - Awarded to college students who have shown significant potential for making outstanding contributions in the areas of knowledge, support or empowerment

Mandy J. Rispoli, M.Ed.

Helen G. FitzSimmons Leadership Award - Awarded for outstanding contribution in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Carey A. Amthor, BLS



2009 AAIDD Texas Chapter Leadership

At the Annual Business Meeting of the AAIDD Texas Chapter, held on July 16 in San Antonio, the following people were elected to lead the organization in 2009:

President

W. Terry Crocker
Tropical Texas Behavioral Health

President Elect

Maria Quintero, Ph.D.
MHMRA of Harris County

Past President

Kim Littlejohn
Austin Travis County MHMR Center

Treasurer

Kirk Coats
Daybreak Community Services

Self-Advocate

Beverly Black
MHMRA of Tarrant County

Direct Support Professional

Posie Nicholson
St. Giles Living Centers, Inc.

Members At Large

Eva Aguirre
The Center

Pat Craig, Ph.D.
Licensed Psychologist

William Eckenroth, Ph.D.
Richmond State School

Shelly Heck
Daybreak Community Services

Lisa Shelby
Austin Travis County MHMR Center

Karrie Shogren, Ph.D.
The University of Texas at Austin
Department of Special Education

Dion White
Central Plains Center



AAIDD National Update

Karrie A. Shogren, Ph.D.

AAIDD Board of Directors & AAIDD Texas Chapter Board of Directors

AAIDD had a number of membership options for professionals in the disability field. For students and direct support professionals, there is discounted membership that still provides access to all of the cutting edge resources provided by AAIDD. There is also a Corporate Membership option, where multiple employees from a service organization can join AAIDD together at a discounted rate. And, when you join AAIDD you are automatically a member of the Texas Chapter as well. Check out

the various membership options on the AAIDD website (www.aidd.org). Share this information with your employer, with your peers, and with students and early career professionals you work with.

AAIDD membership provides a number of benefits beyond just access to AAIDD's F.Y.I – the Association's monthly electronic newsletter – and access to Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the American Journal on Mental Retardation - two of the leading journals in

the disability field. AAIDD frequently hosts teleconferences and webinars on topics of interests to professionals in the disability field. For example, in September, AAIDD has a webinar for early career professionals on Building a Professional Network. AAIDD also has a teleconference series on environmental health for professionals in the disability field, the next topic is Environmental Contaminants and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Check out the AAIDD website (www.aidd.org) for more benefits!



The Texas Chapter of AAIDD is committed to developing the professionals of tomorrow in the area of developmental disabilities. Beginning with the 34th Annual Convention in Corpus Christi, the AAIDD Texas Chapter will confer four, \$500 awards to college or university students who submit presentations that are accepted for the convention. Students may be enrolled full-time or part-time, and direct service professionals who are also pursuing a degree are strongly encouraged to participate.

The 34th Annual Convention is scheduled for July 15-17, 2009 at the Omni Hotel in Corpus Christi. If you are a student, the AAIDD Texas Chapter applauds your dedication, and would be proud to recognize your work. The Convention Program Committee looks forward to your presentation!

Should People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Vote?

Ellis M. (Pat) Craig, Ph.D. & Maria Quintero-Conk, Ph.D.
AAIDD Texas Chapter Board Members

In a free society, it can be argued that each person should have a voice through his or her vote. However, in the very early years of our country, voters in many states had to be property owners and of certain religious affiliations. The right to vote for newly freed slaves was first established in 1870 in the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In 1920, the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote, and in 1965, the Voting Rights Act eliminated literacy tests, which had been applied selectively to African Americans. In 1971 the 26th Amendment established age 18 as the minimum voting age. However, despite these important milestones, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are one of the few groups still singled out regarding voting and are not even allowed to register or are turned away at polling places throughout the country.

The Constitution reserves to the states the authority to determine the qualifications of voters, as long as federal law is not violated. As of 1997, 44 states barred voting of some persons with a mental disability through statutes or constitutionally. For example, the Texas Constitution establishes that "persons adjudicated mentally incompetent shall not be allowed to vote, subject to such exceptions as the Legislature may make." Further, the Texas Election Code states, "a person who has been determined mentally incompetent by a final judgment of a court is not a qualified voter." On the other hand, Texas statutes also state that, "persons with mental retardation have the rights, benefits, and privileges guaranteed by the constitution and laws of the United States and this state."

<i>Point</i>	<i>Counterpoint</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. People with IDD do not have enough mental ability or intelligence to be able to vote. Further, there is research indicating that assessment tools of competency for voting are effective and meaningful predictors of ability to vote. (Appelbaum et al., 2005)2. People with IDD do not have enough knowledge to make informed choices among political candidates and could be manipulated.3. People with IDD often have appointed guardians or conservators because they are not competent to manage their affairs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Blanket prohibitions against voting by people with mental disabilities have been over-turned in many court cases. Accommodations, including assistance in the voting process, are required by law. The American Bar Association has suggested the following standard: "Any person who is able to provide the information [name, age, address & proof of citizenship] ... which is reasonably required of all persons seeking to register to vote, shall be considered a qualified voter." (Appelbaum, 2000)2. Many people with IDD can learn the steps necessary to make informed choices. Furthermore, there is no support for the assumption that people without IDD necessarily have adequate knowledge to make informed choices. Research has indicated that voters with mental disabilities vote in patterns similar to other voters in their geographic area. (Ochs et al., 2008)3. In the year 2000, only 11 states (Texas included) disallowed voting by persons who had been placed under guardianship or conservatorship. 39 states have no such prohibition. Guardianship is assigned when a person is assessed to be incapable of specific skills or making certain decisions. Any guardianship determination should address the ability to vote. Unless the person's voting skills are assessed, it cannot be assumed that they are unable to do so. (Watkins, 2006)

As we approach a historic presidential election, we are thankful for a free society that allows each of us to state our choice; however, a society cannot be truly free until its members with IDD can also exercise their basic right to vote. AAIDD supports the right to vote of persons with IDD, "Throughout history and continuing today, the human rights of our constituents have been limited and denied. These rights are generally recognized to include the right to life, liberty, property, access to voting, and equality of opportunity and others recognized by law. The right of people with disabilities to be free from discrimination is a basic human right that should be recognized as part of the fundamental law of the land."(The Arc Congress of Delegates, 2002).

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