

# Final Report

## Healthy Youth Development: Reaching California's Minority Youth with Disabilities

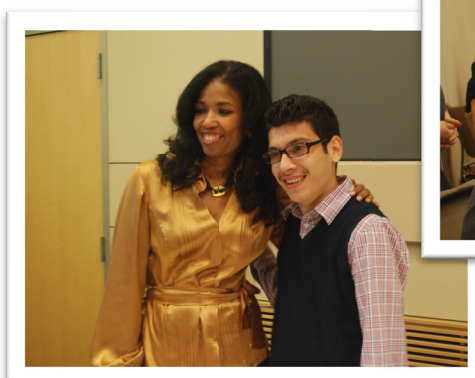
National Health Foundation  
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**The HSC Foundation**

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## INTRODUCTION

Minority youth with disabilities have traditionally been excluded from youth development opportunities due to program design and lack of access. This day-long convening focused on bringing together youth and experts in the field of youth development with providers, employers, researchers, funders and advocates who work to engage minority youth with disabilities in youth development efforts.

On September 27, 2012, National Health Foundation and The HSC Foundation, with funding from The California Endowment, hosted a day-long meeting to address these issues, bringing together several key stakeholder groups. The purpose of this meeting was to:

- Foster learning opportunities for a targeted pool of California service providers and advocates on how to target and reach minority youth with disabilities;
- Provide a venue to hear and learn from non-traditional entities working with minority youth with disabilities;
- Inspire and facilitate new partnerships and collaborations between groups working to address these issues;
- Focus on specific areas of youth development: employment and volunteerism; and
- Inform a white paper to be widely disseminated that presents innovative strategies to reach this target population and impart healthy youth development outcomes.

Meeting participants were asked to review a background paper and come prepared, based on personal experience and knowledge, to discuss best practices and opportunities for growth regarding efforts to engage minority youth with disabilities in employment and volunteerism. The background paper can be found in Attachment A. Furthermore, the hosts of this meeting hoped to encourage networking and collaboration amongst attendees. Some of the strategies used to encourage networking were: (1) not provide nametags so that participants were encouraged to speak with each other; (2) room setup included roundtables to facilitate interaction; and (3) lunchtime was set aside for networking. Participants were encouraged to meet new faces and brainstorm potential new partnerships.

The agenda for the day included welcome remarks and hosting by Sharon Lewis, Commissioner of the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities within the Administration for Community Living of the US Department of Health and Human Services. Three panels followed, made up of (1) youth and family, (2) service providers and researchers, and (3) employers. Each session was designed to include comments from the panelists and then questions from the audience.

At the close of the meeting, participants were asked to report on their perceptions of the meeting and what kind of new connections had been made. One month after the meeting, the hosts followed up with attendees to gauge the extended impact of the meeting.

This report provides a summary of the panelists' comments and questions posed during the meeting, insights, recommendations and potential next steps.

## SUMMARY OF THE MEETING

### WELCOME REMARKS BY SHARON LEWIS

Sharon Lewis, Commissioner of the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities within the Administration for Community Living (US Department of Health and Human Services), began the day with comments focusing on the importance of work for young people with disabilities. Highlighting her remarks was the story of a young man named Patrick. At age 16, Patrick was building his resume with volunteerism. During that experience he met his future boss, who approached Patrick to come work with him. Seven years later, Patrick was one of the best employees on the job. Commissioner Lewis' story highlighted some of the keys to successful transition into a young person's career: a support system of family and friends; high expectations for Patrick to finish school and become employed; and high expectations of his community that every person is capable of working and can contribute something to the community. These topics continued to emerge in the panel discussions throughout the day.

### PANEL 1: YOUNG ADULT AND FAMILY PERSPECTIVES

*Moderator:* Ryan Easterly, The HSC Foundation

*Panelists:* Mr. and Mrs. Alvarez, parents to Carlos, a young person with a disability  
Areva Martin, Executive Director, Special Needs Network  
Jonny Vallin, YO! Disabled & Proud Volunteer

Moderating this panel was Ryan Easterly, manager of The HSC Foundation's National Youth Transitions Initiative (NYTI). In this position, Mr. Easterly works to assist organizations in serving young adults with disabilities and young wounded veterans. He is involved in all aspects of the NYTI, including grantmaking and programmatic activities. Mr. Easterly started the day's discussion by introducing the panelists.

Areva Martin is the Executive Director for the Special Needs Network. In this role and using her law background, Ms. Martin works on policy to close the gaps for youth with disabilities. She also has an autistic 13 year old son and is looking towards and helping to shape his future. Ms. Martin addressed the meeting participants and initially described what is needed by minority youth with disabilities. Her comments focused on a supportive social network that includes family, friends, educators, employers and community members. Furthermore, she keyed into the importance of work-preparedness experiences. Specifically she touched on: developing IEPs that make sense; training of educators to work with minority youth with disabilities; community support; vocational training; tutoring; peer mentoring; support with transportation; assistance with government benefits; and employer training to hire youth w/disabilities. Ms. Martin also discussed causes of disparity when it came to employment for young people with disabilities. In particular she touched on discrimination in the workplace, the rights of disabled youth, availability of skills and job training, opportunities for peer mentoring, and the impact of work on an individual's government benefits. Furthermore, she indicated a need for tracking and reporting statistics on young people's transitions.

Jonny Vallin is a 20-year-old, full time student with Cerebral Palsy at Cal State LA who is working on his bachelor's degree to become a high school counselor. Jonny gave personal testimony about his experience as a young person in transition and as a YO! Disabled & Proud Volunteer. He began his involvement in the disability community after attending the Youth Leadership Forum for students with disabilities in July 2009 as a delegate. After YLF, he became a YO! Corps Volunteer, and he continued his efforts on the disability history campaign by outreaching to other youth to be a part of the movement. During this time Jonny was also placed at SCRS, his local independent living center, to continue his volunteer work assisting the youth services specialist in developing a youth program for youth with disabilities. Jonny spoke in particular about his work with different mentors, his experience transitioning into independent living, and as a youth advocate. Each of these experiences has helped shape who he is today. His work with different mentors highlighted the network of support that was necessary to him as he learned to access services and live independently. When he spoke about accessing these services, he indicated a strong resistance to asking for support. He feared being different and the idea that he needed support. But once he was able to grasp that accessing these resources would only support him in achieving his goals, he was able to move beyond his fears. Now, he participates in bi-weekly support groups to talk about his experiences, to encourage others to step out of their comfort zone, and to help young people build their own support and social networks. As a youth advocate he has been able to help make a difference for future generations. Specifically, his experience as a YO! Corp volunteer has given him the opportunity to share his experiences and to ensure young people have what they need to successfully transition. Some of those needs are peer support, understanding of public transportation and other community resources, support for independent living and a pathway to employment.

Mr. and Mrs. Alvarez were the final panelists and represented another family viewpoint as parents to Carlos, their 30-year old son with autism. Mrs. Alvarez began by telling the story of how Carlos was diagnosed with autism at age 8 after seeing several physicians. After the diagnosis, Mr. and Mrs. Alvarez wanted to ensure Carlos had a full life and were happy that at his school, he was integrated and involved in everything. As a result, Carlos was very independent, but still needed a great deal of support to achieve some of his long term goals. Four years ago, the Alvarez family connected with Tierra del Sol and found the support they had been looking for. While still living at home, Carlos has developed a very independent lifestyle, readying for his job each morning, taking public transportation, and working hard at his job. His parents describe Carlos' "happy day" as every Wednesday when he proudly receives his paycheck. Mr. and Mrs. Alvarez hope that Carlos can continue to build his independence with the help of his community. Up to this point, the support they have all received has enabled Carlos to live the life he does. They stressed – we need to come together to support one another and to assist our kids with disabilities.

## PANEL 1: QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q: One of the biggest factors in long-term success for youth is parental involvement. What additional factors do we need to take into account in order to successfully reach out and increase the involvement of parents from diverse backgrounds? [Submitted in advance by Gabriel Many, World Institute on Disability]**

Areva Martin answered this question by saying we need to have a system that provides a full array of services that families need. Social sources agencies are so fragmented and agencies work independently

or without coordination across agencies. Families need wrap around services: counseling, medical, and coaching, to name a few.

One of the meeting participants indicated that parent support groups geared specifically toward different ethnic backgrounds can be very useful.

**Q: Are there plans for, or if they exist where can one find, videos that address attitudes of employers and videos to educate and advocate for youth? What can organizations do to help plan for the future?**

Mr. Alvarez encouraged those interested in making a difference to contact local community agencies like Tierra del Sol. These agencies are sources of real support and change.

Jonny Vallin indicated that there were some videos currently online for employers, teaching them how to work with people with disabilities. Some of these resources can be found on the website for the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

**Q: Does Carlos talk about moving out?**

Ms. Alvarez responded saying that he is independent within the home but does not speak about moving out. She and Mr. Alvarez know that he can and eventually will live on his own.

**Q: As a parent of a child with disability, I never realized the fear of asking for accommodations. How did you [Jonny] get beyond the fear to ask for accommodations?**

Jonny Vallin responded that the more he learned about the disability community, the more comfortable he felt asking for accommodations and support.

**Q: Are there resources out there for a Job Corp graduate who is on the verge of homelessness?**

Areva Martin discussed the challenges this population faces, particularly given the paucity of resources for teens that become emancipated or do not have families with whom they can reside.

Steve Miller with Tierra del Sol responded that this is a problem of poverty and not disability. More local and regional resources are needed to deal with the complex issue of poverty.

**Q: Where do parents of youth with disabilities go to get support that they need?**

Mrs. Alvarez pointed to their local regional center and Tierra del Sol as places of support. Unfortunately, she does not have one place where she is able to get answers for all her questions (Dental, Education, and Medical).

Areva Martin applauded Mr. and Ms. Alvarez as a model couple, noting that most parents of youth with disabilities are usually single parents. Typically these parents are disconnected from other family and their communities, they suffer from stress and depression. Support groups are critical to parents of youth with disabilities. Ms. Martin went on to say that *as under resourced as the child with disability is the parents are even more under resourced*. Furthermore, there needs to be preparation for people with disabilities for when caretaker relatives will no longer be able to support them.

Several panelists and audience members pointed to Fiesta Educativa as a wonderful parent resource. This organization is based in Los Angeles and focuses on serving Latino parents with children with disabilities.

**Q: In what areas can the organizations that provide resources get better?**

Areva Martin answered that organizations need to reach children where they are at, using social media strategies, employers education and youth education.

Jonny Vallin encouraged these organizations to collaborate with each other, to go into the schools and community colleges and work with organizations that are not currently integrated with the disability community.

Mr. and Mrs. Alvarez suggested that organizations try to get everyone involved – friends, families and neighbors. They emphasized the importance of good and open communication.

## PANEL 2: INNOVATIONS IN RESEARCH AND SERVICE PROVISION

*Moderator:* Richard Luecking, TransCen

*Panelists:* Steve Miller, Tierra del Sol Foundation

Maria Nicolacoudis, Trans Access

Tad Asbury, Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities

Curtis Richards, Center for Workforce Development, Institute for Educational Leadership

Moderating the panel on research and service provision was Richard Luecking, Executive Director of TransCen, a leader in improving the educational and employment outcomes of people with disabilities. Dr. Luecking opened the panel by speaking to challenges youth face in being empowered to become educated and employed. He stressed that their needs include supportive families, independence and resources and benefits support. He also pointed to existing research that indicates we know what young people need to succeed; we just have to ensure that they have access to those supports.

Steve Miller has been Executive Director of the Tierra del Sol Foundation since 1990. He has been working for and with people with developmental disabilities since 1977. His experience includes some of California's earliest initiatives toward integrated community employment, independent living services, and development of community based options for individuals. Mr. Miller began his comments by talking about Tierra del Sol, which was founded by eight parents whose children were written off by society. Contrary to their experience, Tierra operates with a vision that every single human being is special and has a purpose. Tierra accepts all people into their program and has a strong focus on volunteerism and employment. People with disabilities choose their own paths and lead the way while Tierra supports them on their journey.

Maria Nicolacoudis joined TransAccess in 1997 as Executive Director and has worked with persons with disabilities for over twenty-five years. She frequently provides consulting and advice to employers and other community organizations regarding effective inclusion of persons with disabilities. Ms.



Nicolacoudis began her presentation by speaking about her personal experience having a brother with Down Syndrome. His life transitions, and the work she does through TransAccess, highlights that there are very few resources for young people in transition, but that lack of support begins at birth. Programs at TransAccess work directly with teachers in the classroom and are always geared toward thinking about the future. They endeavor to address housing, finances, transportation, and working with the Department of Rehabilitation. But TransAccess, and these other programs highlighted today, cannot accomplish it all. Ms. Nicolacoudis points out that advocates must continue working on a local and national level.

Curtis Richards is a nationally recognized leader in the disability community. He served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education from 1998 to 2001. In that capacity, Mr. Richards administered more than \$10 billion of national programs in special education, disability research and vocational rehabilitation for youth and adults with disabilities. After leaving government, Mr. Richards joined the Institute for Educational Leadership as a Senior Policy Fellow dedicated to the National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth. Mr. Richards addressed the meeting attendees by stressing that the transition process is key: and transition from foster care and healthcare are particularly crucial. He spoke to the concept that state and local policies include federal policy, so advocates must continue their efforts. He confirmed the need for family friendly resources and also addressed the positive impact Youth Leadership Forums have had on young people with disabilities.

Tad Asbury is Vice President & Executive Director of the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities. With more than two decades of experience in the public and private sector, Mr. Asbury oversees and directs all programmatic and financial aspects of Foundation operations to ensure long term organizational stability and growth. Mr. Asbury leads the Foundation's award winning Bridges...from School to Work program which is dedicated to helping facilitate employment opportunities for young adults with disabilities in major cities across the country. Since its founding in 1989, the Foundation has helped facilitate employment for more than 12,000 young people with disabilities with over 3,500 employers. Mr. Asbury has particularly relevant experience to the meeting topic, as the majority of youth served by the Bridges program are of minority backgrounds. In his comments to the audience, he described the Bridges program's focus on identifying the employers' needs, understanding people's abilities, and creating a match between the two. He pointed out that youth with disabilities have a desire to go to work and employers are looking for driven employees; the right match can last a very long time and can make an enormous difference in someone's life.

## PANEL #2: INNOVATIONS IN RESEARCH AND SERVICE PROVISION Q&A

**Q: Over the long-term, there is a very strong correlation between higher education degrees and higher-paying jobs. How can we better integrate our messaging and support for education and jobs for both youth and their families? [Submitted in advance by Gabriel Many, World Institute on Disability]**

Curtis Richards responded that there is no system of what is supposed to happen during a youth's transition. There is no clear emphasis on career preparation or readiness. This is where the Youth Leadership Forum can have significant value: it's where disabled youth can learn and grow together.



Tad Asbury discussed Bridges from School to Work, a Marriott Foundation program, and how it fosters employer opportunities for youth with disability. Early employment experiences, just like higher education degrees, can make a difference in a person's lifetime wages. That is why Bridges helps people find competitive employment on a career path of their interest. Most of these youth are between 17 and 22 years of age and are successfully placed in jobs using an "employer-driven" model that works to find the right connection for both employers and employees.

**Q: What are characteristics of successful transitioning youth vs. not successful? For example, having a high degree of cultural competency? And how are you addressing cultural disabilities?**

Maria Nicolacoudis responded that not many people are doing this work. There is a great need for organizations to hire staff that reflect the people they are serving. It's more of a community issue and needs to be solved by each community. Success can be achieved through representative community advisory boards, diverse community events, and partnerships between organizations where the goal is to train all people on diversity and disability-related issues.

Steve Miller also stressed the need to serve the local community. People work in and navigate their own communities and so focus should be on creating connections between those people. Mentorships between staff and the people they serve, volunteerism opportunities for people with disabilities, and opportunities to become employed by the organizations they interact with will go a long way in creating successful transitions for people with disabilities.

Curtis Richards addressed this question by pointing to the need for addressing the holistic needs of young people and not those of the system. He pointed to: education, career, youth development, family engagement, access to information, family friendly systems and youth development that goes beyond mentoring. He also indicated a need for understanding and improving how the system works to address these needs: culturally-friendly systems that have advocates and leadership reflective of the people they serve.

**Q: Many of the fields with the largest job-growth that also pay good salaries are in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math, the so-called "STEM" fields. Minorities and people with disabilities are underrepresented in these jobs. What strategies can increase representation in these fields? [Submitted in advance by Gabriel Many, World Institute on Disability]**

Maria Nicolacoudis responded to this question with recommendations for developing better STEM internship opportunities, hosting job fairs that are inclusive and build bridges for young people with disabilities, and encouragement of employers to stop recruiting based on GPA. Furthermore, she pinpointed a need for assistance in navigating through the employment system, possibly with outreach and dedicated tool kits.

**Q: How are the design of "tool kits" and other resources reaching youth today?**

Curtis Richards responded that groups are working together to create cross-systems of young people that can connect with each other. There are many local and regional training opportunities and community-centered approaches that help youth connect with resources.

It was also pointed out that the Yo! Disabled and Proud program provides videos of young people with disabilities talking to other people with disabilities about school, resources and work. These are available on the web.

### PANEL 3: EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEERISM SECTORS

*Moderator:* Martha Artilles, C5 Consulting / United States Business Leadership Network

*Panelists:* Rodney Hill, AMC Entertainment Inc.

Byron Bravo, UPS

Teresa Favuzzi, California Foundation for Independent Living Centers

Tari Hartman Squire, EIN SOF Communications, Inc.

Moderating the third panel was Martha Artilles, partner at C5 Consulting and board member for the United States Business Leadership Network. Ms. Artilles brought to the discussion a unique combination of human resources, engineering and community experience from her 30-year career that includes Global Corporations such as ManpowerGroup where she developed and executed their global strategic diversity vision and strategy. In addition, she developed Project Ability, a client focused project that connects talent that happens to have a disability with business needs across the United States. Her expertise spans many areas including diversity/inclusion, disability, organizational change, recruitment, quality management and mechanical engineering.

Rodney Hill is a member of the talent management team for AMC Entertainment Inc. (AMC), where he oversees AMC's diversity, recruitment, and development initiatives for the West Region. Mr. Hill began his comments to the audience by describing AMC's Sensory Friendly Films for disabled children. He then discussed how AMC is growing their program of hiring people with disabilities, which started with an autistic youth. Mr. Hill discussed the interview process and how that has changed based on their recent experiences:

- AMC now does group interviews;
- they have casual/low key interviews;
- families are welcome to participate in the interview;
- tours of theaters are included to see where the person best "fit" in the job; and
- they have incorporated commitment agreements and informal performance evaluations.

Overall, the interviews and management of employees are more sensitive to assisting, recruiting, hiring and maintaining youth with disabilities.

Byron Bravo is currently a Human Resources Supervisor for UPS Central California. He began his career with UPS in 1991 as a part-time Package Handler in Boyle Heights, California. Shortly after, Mr. Bravo was promoted to a full-time Operations Supervisor. Throughout his career at UPS, Mr. Bravo has worked in a variety of capacities including Human Resources, Health & Safety and Operations. Mr. Bravo has worked closely with the Bridges from School to Work program during his last seven years in the Human Resources department at UPS. Mr. Bravo discussed how UPS is working to recruit and hire young people with disabilities. A few steps they have taken to improve their process include:

- tours are set up to see the facilities at various times throughout the day, so that the potential employee can get a feel for the job;
- mock interviews are conducted to help with getting comfortable with others (one on one);

- getting to know all of the applicants is a priority; and
- there is no special treatment, or changes to the criteria, but there is a good support system for the applicants to assist them in making UPS a career.

Mr. Bravo also commented that follow-up after the hiring process is key to the long-term success of UPS employees. He stressed that relationships are key and that young people need to get to know their employer.

As Executive Director of the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC), Teresa Favuzzi has established herself as a leader in the disability rights movement. Over the last 15 years Ms. Favuzzi has worked to organize and mobilize California's Disability Communities to eliminate access barriers to education, employment, assistive technology, healthcare, emergency preparedness, housing, transportation and voting. Ms. Favuzzi discussed with the audience the critical role of Independent Living Centers and how they are for youths with all types of disabilities. Within these centers, there is always someone there to relate to and youth have an opportunity to be a part of a community that teaches disability culture. Further, the programs at CFILC help youth organize campaigns to create social change, which in turn helps them develop workplace responsibilities. Finally, Ms. Favuzzi pointed to the program: Youth Organizing: Disabled and Proud! and how it provides critical volunteerism opportunities that prepare youth for future employment.

Tari Hartman Squire is Founding CEO of EIN SOF Communications, Inc. a leading woman-owned strategic marketing, accessible events and employment consultation firm specializing in disability-inclusive diversity and public policy. Ms. Hartman Squire has a long history of advocating for young people with disabilities. In particular, she has engaged with Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD), which focuses on connecting employers and youth with disabilities on college campuses. In particular, COSD works with the students on what they need to do to make them more marketable, helps with their resumes, finds employers that know what they want and really accept disabled youths for who they are, and brings together the employers and the students.

### PANEL 3 Q & A: EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEERISM SECTORS

#### **Q: What is your process for hiring people with disabilities?**

Mr. Hill discussed AMC's Traveling Interview and how there are opportunities for group and one-on-one interaction. Job coaches and parents are welcome on the interview and the interview consists of a walk-through for each position. In addition, AMC tries to manage expectations ahead of time for the family. Furthermore, if a young person is offered a job, their job coach is asked to sign an agreement because they are critical to the process. Finally, Mr. Hill described the pleasure of giving a young person with a disability their first paycheck and seeing the sense of personal satisfaction.

Martha Artiles noted that most employers are looking for the same criteria in a successful candidate. The real effort needs to be in changing the interview process so that it accommodates people with disabilities.

Byron Bravo talked about the critical relationship between UPS and the Bridges from School to Work program. This relationship helps UPS understand where the applicant is coming from and to know they are prepared. Through this relationship, UPS has the opportunity to show a Bridges student what a job

place looks like (tours), help them learn how to talk to an employer, and assist in mock interviews. Mr. Bravo indicated that UPS has not had to make changes to their application or interview process, but rather they have just spent additional time with candidates who need assistance or explanation. Another key to successfully employing people with disabilities has been maintaining a strong relationship with the job coach to ensure the employee is getting necessary support and accomplishing all goals/tasks. Finally, Mr. Bravo commented that while full time jobs are ideal, part time jobs can be a great opportunity to start a career.

Tari Hartman Squire discussed COSD's opportunities to connect employers with disabled graduates at college campuses. She indicated that these opportunities to meet helped to break down barriers between the groups. She also spoke directly to the need to encourage young people to move into STEM jobs, which are currently in high demand.

Teresa Favuzzi touched on the volunteerism aspect of youth transition. She described how years ago and still today, youth did not know that there was a youth disability rights movement. The program her organization operates, YO! Disabled and Proud gives these young people a meaningful volunteer opportunity that helps them to understand and identify with the disability culture.

**Q: Is there real value in internships, volunteerism or other types of work-preparedness experiences? How highly are these experiences valued by employers?**

Rodney Hill indicated that yes, there is real value in these opportunities to develop the necessary people skills for obtaining a job. Those include eye contact, interaction and socializing. These opportunities provide a foundation for young people to build on as they move along their career path.

Martha Artiles highlighted the value of teamwork obtained through these experiences and how being able to work with people that are different (diversity) and being able to demonstrate leadership are keys to becoming employed.

Byron Bravo agreed with the other speakers that volunteering is a big plus for a job candidate. These experiences demonstrate that young people have learned how to interact with others and understand some of the social nuances present in a workplace.

**Q: How can we approach managers of local AMC Theatres or UPS to get our constituents employed there?**

Bryon Bravo pointed to relationship building. Utilize the online application and provide assistance to applicants in using those web-based systems.

Rodney Hill suggested communicating expectations from administration to management. Building relationships is critical.

**Q: More generally, how can we approach employers to hire youth with disabilities?**

Rodney Hill responded that it's always easier to work from the top down. Online tools that employers use that are difficult for people with disabilities to utilize should be brought to the employer's attention. If necessary, look into getting the attention of the Department of Labor; they can provide support.

**Q: What message can the audience take back to youth with disabilities to help get them employed?**

Teresa Favuzzi simply stated, "volunteering is good."

Tari Hartman Squire encouraged youth to surround themselves with a community of support and to find employers that believe in who they are and want them for who they are.

Byron Bravo responded that youth should get to know your employer, do not get discouraged if you do not get hired right away, work on building your experience, and never give up.

Rodney Hill stressed the importance of youth feeling empowered and how employers can help make that happen.

## SURVEY FEEDBACK FROM THE MEETING

At the conclusion of the meeting, attendees were asked to complete the following evaluation form. Each question was asked on a scale of one to five, one being “not at all” and 5 being “very much.”

**1. Was the background paper emailed in advance of the meeting helpful in preparing you for today's convening?**

86% of respondents indicated it was helpful (4) or very helpful (5).

**2. Did the “youth and family perspectives” panel add substance to the meeting?**

93% of respondents indicated the panel added substance with either a ranking of 4 or a 5.

**3. Did the “innovations in research and service provision” panel add to your knowledge of engaging young people with disabilities for employment-related opportunities?**

83% of respondents indicated the panel added to personal knowledge with either a ranking of 4 or a 5.

**4. Did the “employment and volunteerism sectors” panel add to your knowledge of engaging young people with disabilities for employment-related opportunities?**

93% of respondents indicated the panel added to personal knowledge with either a ranking of 4 or a 5.

**5. How effective was the agenda and flow of the meeting in presenting these topics and sharing lessons learned and best practices?**

79% of respondents indicated it was effective (4) or very effective (5).

**6. How well did this meeting facilitate networking among attendees?**

86% of respondents indicated it was successful (4) or very successful (5) in facilitating networking.

**7. Of the new people you met or were introduced to, do you feel there is potential for new partnerships?**

83% of respondents indicated there was potential (4) or very much potential (5).

**8. Would you be interested in follow-up meetings or webinars on this topic?**

93% of respondents indicated they would be interested (4) or very interested (5).

**9. Do you have any other comments regarding this meeting?**

- Fewer presenters and even more interaction, more people with disabilities present
- Provide a list of resources that were discussed
- Thank you for organizing this event, need more of this
- More speakers on diversity would be good
- Excellent information
- Since the background paper was sent out and people were asked to pre-submit questions, not enough time for question and answer
- Would like to bring Project Search in
- This was great and thank you for facilitating this panel
- It would have been helpful to hear from more youth
- More youth
- Perhaps representation from Regional Centers and Departments of Rehabilitation to discuss how they address employment opportunities for their clients



## FEEDBACK ONE MONTH AFTER THE MEETING

1. In the past month, have you been in touch with anyone you met at the September meeting?

**58% (7/12) had been in contact with someone they met at the meeting and 42% (5/12) had not been in contact with anyone, but two of those five indicated an intention to make connections in the future.**

2. Has the meeting had any immediate impact for you? (e.g. on your professional network, hot topics you are working on, new resources you have connected to, etc.)

**75% (9/12) reported an immediate impact. Substantive responses included:**

- It provided additional insights and perspectives for an interview that I gave that was published. Here is the link to the online version:  
<http://www.ahrq.gov/research/nov12/1112RA.pdf>
- We used the meeting agenda to gain a meeting with a California Endowment Program Manager to discuss issues impacting minority youth with disabilities, and have discussed collaboration and funding opportunities as a result.
- It provided great perspective for me in assisting students with disabilities entering the work force.
- It was good to hear local service providers taking a more holistic approach to serving youth. This is important for my organization's reporting back to ODEP. We are working on an innovative practices brief, and these examples will be helpful.
- The meeting reaffirmed my organization's approach to workforce development for youth with disabilities and underscored our desire to do more.
- Due to the meeting, our program is considering collaboration with Marriott's Bridges Program.

3. If there were to be follow-up events or webinars, in which topics would you be most interested?
  - a. Hearing personal experiences from more youth and families
  - b. Hearing from employers
  - c. Setting high expectations among young people, families and communities for young people to become employed
  - d. Implications of employment, e.g. impact on benefits, ability to obtain healthcare
  - e. Other

**Responses to this question were evenly spread. Three to five respondents selected each one of the topics. Many provided recommendations for other webinar topics such as:**

- Questions that can and cannot be asked by employers of a person with a disability; questions that verge on being illegal
- Research on social support services integrated with health care delivery for youth with disabilities and/or multiple chronic conditions.
- Ways to assist teens with the online questionnaire portion of current job applications
- How to teach entrepreneurship and run a profitable micro-enterprise for students with disabilities
- Grant opportunities and opportunities for collaboration with agencies to create outreach programs at all our high schools for youth with disabilities.

**A few respondents recommended getting deeper into the issues facing minority youth. Topics they recommended were: overview on the disparities faced by minority youth, specific issues they face, and how to better serve various minority populations (e.g. Hmong, Filipino, Latino, African American, etc). These groups need to be broken out separately, since the communities often have different needs, values and issues.**

4. Other than a final report (which is in progress) and follow up meetings or webinars, what else would you like to see result from this meeting? Please be as specific and detailed as possible.

**Responses focused on hearing directly from employers, focusing more deeply on minority-related issues and addressing the topic of healthcare transitions. Specific responses included:**

- I would like to hear from more employers that have hired young people with a disability and what suggestions they may have when trying to place a client.
- A more concerted effort to discuss specific issues faced by different minority groups.
- I would like researchers to submit research proposals to funding organizations for interventions that improve care, reduce disparities and address gaps in health care research for youth with disabilities and their families.
- A concentrated effort to collect information from youth, families, and health care professionals related specifically to health care transition issues. We really didn't scratch the surface on that topic, and it is critical to a successful transition and the maintenance of a job.
- Plan of action on how to address top three issues impacting minority youth with disabilities.
- The HSC Foundation and The California Endowment collaborate on funding organizations to address key issues affecting minority youth with disabilities.
- Expanding the work program. Perhaps working with school districts etc.
- Substantive employment training opportunities for young people.

## REVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The following topics represent highlights from the discussion during the day-long meeting and conversations that were held in conjunction with the session.

### ***Need to identify and address specific issues within unique minority communities.***

While the aim of this meeting was to address the issues faced by minority youth with disabilities in accessing “youth development” programs (understood as volunteerism and employment), it was challenging to focus on those specific issues without first reviewing the broader issues that face all youth with disabilities. Multiple participants indicated that there remain unique issues for young people within a variety of ethnic communities and more time and effort should go into bringing these groups together to identify, understand and develop solutions to address those unique needs.

### ***Establishing high expectations within the community for young people with disabilities when it comes to educational and career goals.***

Consistently throughout the meeting, panelists and audience members indicated that one of the primary keys to success is establishing high expectations within the community –and within young people themselves– that people with disabilities can and should become employed. This is consistent with what leaders in the transition community have identified as a factor in preventing successful transition: not supporting self-determination as a key element in this person-centered process. It should be the obvious expectation of young people, families, employers, and the community at large that young people with disabilities can and should contribute to the economy through gainful employment. Service providers, advocates, researchers and all other stakeholder groups can and should do more to ensure this expectation is second nature and that young people with disabilities feel supported in living up to these expectations.

### ***Improving communication with employers.***

Communication with employers is critical to helping young people with disabilities get and retain jobs. Particularly in communities where people are from varying ethnic backgrounds, the culture of a company can be a unifying characteristic. However, young people need support in accessing these employment opportunities. Organizations like the Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities is meeting a clear need, but we must ensure that young people from all ethnic backgrounds have access to these types of successful programs. Hearing directly from employers on how to access those jobs was a common theme throughout these discussions and will continue to be well into the future. Furthermore, communication between employers is critical, confirming the need for organizations like the United States Business Leadership Network.

### ***Must consider impact of healthcare on employment issues because they are critically linked.***

At several points within the discussion, evaluation and follow up the issue of healthcare did arise. Healthcare is inextricably linked to obtaining and retaining employment. Healthcare transitions and implications of employment on health/healthcare are substantial and complex issues that must be given additional consideration; particularly from the viewpoints of different ethnic groups.

***The concept of benefits and supportive services.***

While this is an incredibly large topic, it was one that permeated the conversation and the entire field of disability. Young people with disabilities are entitled to benefits and supportive services. However, stigmas and myths about disabilities are barriers for young people when they consider accessing these supports. Even when young people open themselves up to receiving support, understanding the complex benefits systems and knowing what and where services are available create additional barriers within the transition process. Furthermore, once young people with disabilities obtain employment, the availability of benefits and supports changes, leaving young people once again without critical information and services that could help them succeed.

Based on the topics of conversation during and surrounding this meeting, the following recommendations emerged:

1. Convene a series of smaller meetings focused on individual ethnic populations that strike deep at the heart of issues facing those unique populations.
2. Create more opportunities to hear directly from employers of young people, service providers and fellow employers.
3. Broaden the conversation to address tangential issues such as healthcare by linking with other organizations currently engaging in those discussions.

It is critical for young people, families, service providers, employers and all other stakeholder groups to remain connected around these topics. Meetings such as this create opportunities for creating and rekindling these networks. It also helps to continue discussions around youth transitions, refine the needs of unique communities, understand successful solutions, and make plans to address outstanding issues. Thank you to The California Endowment for making this meeting a possibility and for identifying youth development as a critical component to healthy communities.

## APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND PAPER

### **A Background Paper, in preparation for a convening on Healthy Youth Development: Reaching California's Minority Youth with Disabilities**

Hosted by: National Health Foundation and The HSC Foundation  
Date: Thursday, September 27, 2012; 8:30am – 3:30pm  
Location: The California Endowment Center for Healthy Communities  
1000 N. Alameda Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Funding for this meeting was provided by The California Endowment.

**Abstract:** Minority youth with disabilities have traditionally been excluded from youth development opportunities due to program design and lack of access. The upcoming day-long convening will bring together youth and experts in the field of youth development with providers, employers, researchers, funders and advocates who are working to engage minority youth with disabilities in youth development efforts. This background paper discusses the concept of “youth development,” specific examples of employment and volunteerism, and the unique circumstances that impact minority youth with disabilities in accessing these opportunities. The paper concludes with snapshots of current research and activities taking place in the areas of the corresponding panel discussions.

## INTRODUCTION

Youth with disabilities is a group that have traditionally been excluded from youth development (YD) activities.<sup>1</sup> In addition, minority youth often live in communities that have fewer youth development opportunities.<sup>2</sup> California is a majority-minority state, with 60.3% of the population identifying as other than non-Hispanic white.<sup>3</sup> These data and other research indicate an acute need for youth development opportunities for minority youth with disabilities, which have traditionally been designed with white, native English speaking students without disabilities in mind.<sup>4-6</sup> The existence of disparate services for minority youth with disabilities was highlighted recently in the Los Angeles Times:<sup>7</sup>

*In its December series, The Times found that for autistic children ages 3 to 6 – a critical period for treating the [condition] – the [California] Developmental Services department spent an average of \$11,723 per child on whites in 2010, compared with \$11,063 on Asians, \$7,634 on Latinos and \$6,593 on blacks.*

This background paper describes the context in which we will discuss YD, as well as the current status and needs of minority youth with disabilities. In preparing this background paper, no literature was found that specifically addresses youth development activities in minorities with disabilities, indicating additional need for focus in this area.

In September 2012, National Health Foundation and The HSC Foundation, with funding from The California Endowment, will host a meeting to address these issues, bringing together several key stakeholder groups. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Foster learning opportunities for a targeted pool of California service providers and advocates on how to target and reach minority youth with disabilities;
- Provide a venue to hear and learn from non-traditional entities working with minority youth with disabilities;
- Inspire and facilitate new partnerships and collaborations between groups working to address these issues;<sup>2</sup>
- Focus on specific areas of youth development: employment and volunteerism; and
- Inform a white paper to be widely disseminated that presents innovative strategies to reach this target population and impart healthy youth development outcomes.

Meeting participants are asked to review this background paper and come prepared, based on personal experience and knowledge, to discuss best practices and opportunities for growth regarding efforts to engage minority youth with disabilities in employment and volunteerism. Furthermore, the hosts of this meeting hope to encourage networking and collaboration amongst attendees. Participants are encouraged to meet new faces and brainstorm potential new partnerships. At the close of the meeting, participants will be asked to report on their perceptions of the meeting and what kind of new connections have been made. In particular, the hosts will be following up with attendees after the event in an effort to support those new partnerships.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

### What is Youth Development?

According to a definition developed by The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Y), youth development is, “a process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent.”<sup>1</sup> YD activities are wide-ranging and may include, but are not limited to: employment and training, continuing education, community service, economic development, and health and human services.<sup>2</sup> YD typically occurs during adolescent years, and for youth with disabilities, preparation for transition should begin by age 14.<sup>8</sup> YD activities encompass five developmental areas: working, learning, thriving, connecting, and leading.<sup>1,9</sup> These areas are explored further in a paper by NCWD/Y which classifies YD activities and outcomes by developmental area.<sup>1</sup>

The September meeting focuses only on employment and volunteerism opportunities, which encompass all of the described developmental areas.

### Why is Youth Development Important?

Youth development is an important precursor to making positive adolescent and young adult behavior choices.<sup>1</sup> YD sets the stage for school achievement, community involvement, and successful transition into adulthood.<sup>1,10</sup> YD programs prevent negative behaviors and promote positive development of, “social, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive,” elements.<sup>11</sup> Beyond individual impact, YD activities are an investment in families, communities, and economic health.<sup>2</sup> Given the meeting’s focus on employment and volunteer YD opportunities, the following sections explore the specific benefits of such activities.

#### Employment as Youth Development

Opportunities for employment are inclusive of all activities leading up to gainful employment; including: internships, networking opportunities, mock interviews, career planning, job searches, career based workshops or fairs, vocational training, and mentoring.<sup>1</sup> Youth employment is often used as a measure of YD success because of the connection between work experience early in life and continued employment.<sup>2,12</sup> Knowing this, the disparity in youth employment between those with and without disabilities, 10.5% versus 25.9%, is troubling.<sup>13</sup> The disparity widens as youth transition, where 20.3% of adults with disabilities are currently employed compared to 69.4% of those without disabilities.<sup>14</sup> These statistics indicate that people with disabilities experience barriers to employment.<sup>8</sup> Removing these barriers is a key issue because a robust labor market, inclusive of people with disabilities, is vital to a healthy economy and reduced usage of government programs.<sup>6</sup> The benefits of increased employment opportunities for minority youth with disabilities include:

- *Economic outcomes.* Being gainfully employed creates financial independence, which in turn reduces an individual’s need for government programs.<sup>6</sup>
- *Employment outcomes.* A review of 22 studies on predictors of post-school success among youth with disabilities found that work experience in high school is a strong predictor of success after graduation. Those who were employed in high school were more likely to continue their education, be employed, and live independently.<sup>12</sup>
- *Social outcomes.* Having a job in high school increases the social networks of youth with disabilities, improving potential future work opportunities.<sup>6</sup>



- *Health outcomes.* Having a job is a known social determinant of health and decreases the likelihood of poor health outcomes.<sup>15,16</sup>

### Volunteerism (or Service) as Youth Development

Volunteerism and service involve connecting individuals to the community.<sup>5</sup> The Tarjan Center at UCLA is dedicated to supporting young people with disabilities as community volunteers.<sup>17</sup> Partner organizations have engaged youth with disabilities through disaster relief, community revitalization, and hospice care for the elderly.<sup>17</sup> Some opportunities may expose young people to a career path. The majority of literature on volunteerism focuses on service learning (SL) opportunities. Service learning is an integrative approach to education that combines classroom instruction with community service projects.<sup>18</sup> SL improves youth understanding of community needs while validating the classroom lesson as authentic in the community.<sup>5</sup> The benefits of increased SL opportunities for minority youth with disabilities include:

- *Employment outcomes.* SL is known to improve career awareness and vocational skills.<sup>5,18</sup>
- *Academic outcomes.* Participating in SL improves academic outcomes for students of all racial, ethnic, and disability statuses.<sup>18,19</sup> SL projects for students with disabilities have included academic skills such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.<sup>5</sup>
- *Social outcomes.* Students with and without disabilities exposed to SL opportunities experience enhanced self-esteem, leadership and communication skills, cultural awareness, socializing skills, motivation, teamwork, sense of independence, and personal and social responsibility.<sup>5,18</sup>

### **Recommended Youth Development Strategies**

This meeting will explore current, successful YD programs and strategies for engagement, and develop ideas for future opportunities. Following are elements of a comprehensive youth development strategy recommended by the National Youth Employment Coalition that meeting attendees should be mindful of throughout discussions:<sup>2</sup>

- Multi-year investment that starts early and is tailored to the individual;
- Individualized YD plan that responds to the youth's needs and goals;
- Opportunities for youth to engage with both peers and adults in work settings;
- Workforce training and preparation;
- Educational opportunities that utilize critical thinking and higher-order skills;
- Higher education adapted to our changing world;
- Options to move through different careers; and
- Community support for youth to become engaged citizens through work.

## MINORITY YOUTH AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

### **Minority Youth**

The minority population in the United States and California have increased over time.<sup>3,20</sup> California has the second largest majority-minority population in the country with 60.3% of the state population identifying as other than non-Hispanic white.<sup>3</sup> Nationwide, minorities experience a higher rate of disability than non-Hispanic whites.<sup>4,20</sup> The following explores select racial/ethnic group make-up in California.

### Latinos

Nationwide and in California, the Latino population is younger than other racial and ethnic groups and is the fastest growing.<sup>3,20,21</sup> Over time, it can be expected that the number of youth with disabilities of Latino origin will increase. California has the largest Latino population of any state with 14.4 million residents who represent 38.1% of the state-wide population.<sup>3</sup> In California, for every white child living in poverty, there are three Latino children living in poverty as well.<sup>22</sup>

### Asian Americans

California has the largest Asian population of any state with 5.8 million residents who represent 15.5% of the state-wide population.<sup>3</sup> Twelve percent of Asian children in California live in poverty, compared to 10% of white children.<sup>22</sup>

### American Indian and Alaska Natives

California has the largest American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) population in the United States.<sup>3</sup> There are more than 1 million AIAN residents in California who represent 2.8% of the state-wide population.<sup>3</sup>

### African Americans

African Americans are the second largest minority in the United States.<sup>3</sup> In California, there are 2.9 million African Americans who represent 7.7% of the state-wide population.<sup>3</sup> African American children in California experience poverty at a similar rate as Latino children, with 31% currently living in poverty.<sup>22</sup>

### **Youth with Disabilities**

In California, 1 out of every 20 children has a disability.<sup>23</sup> Among all people with disabilities in the state, half identify with at least one minority group.<sup>24</sup> It can be assumed that the racial/ethnic distribution is approximately equal among youth; exact data is not readily accessible. Having a disability as a young person creates an obstacle to being employed, continuing education, living independently, participating in the community, and accessing public services such as healthcare.<sup>8</sup> In addition, youth with disabilities have typically been excluded from mainstream YD programs whose purpose is to build competencies so youth may be successful in achieving these outcomes.<sup>1,2</sup> These young people bring diverse life experiences to the table and including them in youth development activities creates added benefit to all.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FOR MINORITY YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

### **Minorities with Disabilities**

Literature indicates that Latino and African American children in California are more likely to experience poverty than their white peers.<sup>22</sup> In addition, minorities with disabilities experience higher levels of poverty than their non-minority peers.<sup>4</sup> Complementary research has shown that poor families with a child with a disability experience poverty more severely than poor families with a non-disabled child.<sup>25</sup> These statistics indicate that minority youth with disabilities experience a “double jeopardy” when it comes to being at risk for poverty. Compounding the problem, current literature establishes poverty as a determinant of poorer health.<sup>15</sup>

People with disabilities from all racial/ethnic groups are at risk for not completing high school, not continuing postsecondary education, being unemployed, and having low wages.<sup>4</sup> It is likely that minority youth experience these risks at a higher level than non-minority youth.<sup>4</sup> Knowing that minority youth with disabilities are at a higher risk for these outcomes indicates an immediate need for youth development efforts to mitigate these effects.

### **Access to Youth Development Opportunities**

The majority of human services are created for the, “dominant values, beliefs, and biases of the larger society.”<sup>20</sup> Until recently, this meant an English-speaking, Anglo group without disabilities.<sup>4,20</sup> Thus, youth with disabilities have traditionally been excluded from youth development opportunities.<sup>1</sup> Even more, these programs are not optimized to serve minority youth, who face additional social, cultural, and language barriers.<sup>4</sup> Cultural differences result in different desires and expectations for services.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, differences in language use and proficiency create barriers to access and perception of cooperativeness when receiving services.<sup>20</sup>

Organizations should be aware of how differences within cultures may impact program delivery within the same ethnic group. For example, there is an outstanding amount of internal diversity within the American category of Latino/Hispanic race/ethnicity, due to the numerous countries of origin which make up this category. This results in differences in beliefs, practices, and understanding around disability and expectations of service.<sup>20</sup> Regardless of cultural background and other characteristics, it is important to recognize that any classification does not negate the need to treat each person as an individual with unique needs.<sup>20</sup>

High school service learning programs are often segregated between students with and without disabilities.<sup>5</sup> This practice limits students with disabilities' exposure to diverse service learning opportunities and is contradictory to the emphasis on inclusion found in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004.<sup>5</sup>

As previously noted, youth with disabilities are underemployed. This is due in part to difficulty in finding appropriate opportunities, inadequate preparation and support from school leadership, and uncertainty from employers on how to find support for employing a person with a disability.<sup>6</sup> Intangibles, such as low expectations of people with disabilities, may also impact a young person's success in obtaining a job.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, minority communities, which are more likely to be poor, have fewer access to organizations and resources that support youth development activities.<sup>2</sup>

## **BACKGROUND FOR PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

This meeting includes participation from individuals representing all levels of influence on youth development activities. At each level, minority youth with disabilities should be regarded and utilized as stakeholders, decision makers, and informants in all activities.<sup>4</sup> Following are recommendations and current practices by key organizations. This information provides some context for current activities in the field of youth development for all youth with disabilities. The activities described are not meant to be a comprehensive listing, but to provide a current snapshot of the field.

### Young Adult and Family

Young adults and their families are a key part to successful YD efforts. In a paper developed by participants at the *Blazing the Trail: A New Direction in Youth Development & Leadership* meeting organized by NCWD/Y, ten action items that young people with disabilities can do to improve outcomes for YD were identified<sup>10</sup>. Among these outcomes are: connecting to the community, and participating in internships and other work experiences.

These recommendations are supported by a paper authored by Dr. Richard Luecking, President of TransCen.<sup>26</sup> In his paper, Dr. Luecking advocates for families of children with Down Syndrome to support their child's development by bringing them to their own jobs, assisting their child in finding volunteer opportunities, and encouraging discussion about future dreams to encourage fields of interest for a future career.<sup>26</sup>

### Innovations in Research and Service

To improve access to YD activities for minority youth with disabilities, Stodden, Stodden, Kim-Rubnow, Thai, and Galloway<sup>4</sup> developed the following recommendations for future research:

- Expand the knowledge base about minority people with disabilities;
- Improve research skills and methodologies to be culturally responsive;
- Understand and prevent researcher bias to avoid misleading findings; and
- Enhance capacity for dissemination of information about and to underserved populations with disabilities.

The Institute for Educational Leadership has a library of publications to inform education policy and programs. Among their subject areas is workforce and disabilities. In this area they have developed a portfolio of informative papers that serve as a resource for youth, employers, and policy makers on engaging youth with disabilities in the workforce. Among these publications is a paper titled, *The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities* which provides information to youth on how to decide to disclose their disability to their employer.<sup>27</sup> Another publication for employers is titled, *Tunnels and Cliffs: A Guide for Workforce Development Professionals and Policymakers serving Youth with Mental Health Needs* which provides guidance on how to assist youth with mental health needs into the workforce.<sup>28</sup>

### Post-Secondary Education Perspective

Post-secondary education institutions have an important role in increasing work and volunteer opportunities for minority youth with disabilities. Among research recommendations, Stodden et al.<sup>4</sup> have prioritized the need to determine the effectiveness of programs at this level aimed at enhancing the self-determination of minority youth with disabilities.

Among programmatic efforts, a number of activities are currently taking place at post-secondary education institutions within California and nationally. In California, a partnership between Los Angeles area employers and universities increased job placement and school dropout among minority high school students in California.<sup>29</sup> In the Bay Area, UC Berkeley and the World Institute on Disability (WID) partnered to create the New Leaders Internship Program. The Program provides young adults with disabilities from underserved areas the opportunity to participate in internship programs with WID.<sup>30</sup> On the national front, The Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities (WRP) is an opportunity for college students and recent graduates with disabilities to connect with federal and private employers for permanent or summer work.<sup>31</sup> The program is managed by the Department of

Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the Department of Defense's Office of Diversity Management & Equal Opportunity (ODMEO).<sup>31</sup>

The private sector has also made recruiting youth with disabilities a priority. Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) is a professional association of over 600 colleges and universities and more than 500 employers to create internship opportunities and recruiting programs specifically for college students with disabilities.<sup>32</sup>

### Employment and Volunteerism Sectors

Many of the previously discussed opportunities involve partnership with organizations in the employment and volunteerism sectors.<sup>29,31,32</sup> Business leaders have also taken it upon themselves to develop initiatives to enhance opportunities for youth with disabilities. Among them is the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN®) which developed the TOWER™ Initiative.<sup>33</sup> The purpose of the TOWER™ Initiative is to create tools that expand work, mentoring, and internship opportunities for youth with disabilities by collaborating with businesses and youth.<sup>33</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This background paper is intended to spark discussion and future employment and volunteer opportunities for minority youth with disabilities. As noted, there is a serious lack of literature available on this topic leaving room for future research. Knowing the minority population is expected to grow; the diversity within it must also be acknowledged and catered to. The organizations highlighted are leaders in the field and should be encouraged to continue their excellent work and innovative ideas. Partnership and communication with these organizations, and new ones, will foster additional youth development opportunities for minority youth with disabilities.

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## APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT LIST

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Final Report: Healthy Youth Development, Reaching California's Minority Youth with Disabilities  
National Health Foundation & The HSC Foundation

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## APPENDIX C: ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES

**Listed below are organizations that participated in the Healthy Youth Development meeting or were identified in the meeting/background paper as helpful resources for youth in transition.**

### AUTISTIC SELF ADVOCACY NETWORK

The Autistic Self Advocacy Network is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization run by and for Autistic people. ASAN's supporters include Autistic adults and youth, cross-disability advocates, and non-autistic family members, professionals, educators and friends. ASAN was created to provide support and services to individuals on the autism spectrum while working to educate communities and improve public perceptions of autism. Our activities include public policy advocacy, community engagement to encourage inclusion and respect for neurodiversity, quality of life oriented research, and the development of Autistic cultural activities. We provide information about autism to the public through a number of different educational, outreach and systems change related projects.

### BRIDGES FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Bridges from School to Work was established in 1989 by the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities to enhance employment opportunities for young people with disabilities by effectively matching them to employers' entry-level workforce needs. The Bridges staff works one-on-one with enthusiastic and capable young people upon exiting high school, helping them to successfully enter the workforce in a job that fits their interests and ability, while planning for long term vocational growth.

### CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS

The mission of the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers is to advocate for barrier-free access and equal opportunity for people with disabilities to participate in community life by increasing the capacity of Independent Living Centers to achieve their missions. YO! Disabled and Proud enables this mission by giving youth the resources and skills, plus a community of support, to live independently. YO! connects, organizes and educates youth with disabilities by giving them the opportunity to lead and work on issues youth care about, like Disability History and the Freedom from Bullying Campaign. YO! also includes a Volunteer Corps that allows youth with disabilities to get on the job experience while building their confidence and employment skills for the future.

### CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (COSD)

Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) is a unique and dynamic national professional association comprised of more than 600 colleges and universities and over 500 major national employers. COSD's mission is to improve the employment rate of college students and recent graduates with disabilities on a national basis. COSD works with higher education institutions and assists them in developing collaborative relationships between the Disability Services and Career Services offices on campuses. The result is students with disabilities are better prepared and more competitive in the career search. COSD closely works with employers to identify innovative methods of recruiting and hiring college graduates with disabilities, including creation of internship opportunities or encouraging participation of employers in specialized internship and recruiting programs that focus on college students with disabilities.

#### CHINESE PARENTS ASSOCIATION FOR THE DISABLED

Chinese Parents Association for the Disabled is a 501c3 nonprofit organization established in 1990. We serve parents of young people with disabilities. This organization is headquartered in San Gabriel Valley with another office in Orange County.

#### COMMUNITY PARENTS RESOURCE CENTER

Community Parents Resource Center is funded by the US Department of Education's Office of Special Education. This group serves Chinese families and works in collaboration with Fiesta Educativa.

#### EDUCATIVA FESTIVA

TransAccess, a Bay Area nonprofit organization, helps youth and adults with disabilities to achieve their goals. In partnership with local schools, government agencies, and businesses, we provide individualized

#### EIN SOF COMMUNICATIONS

Tari Hartman Squire's EIN SOF Communications, leading strategic marketing/PR firm specializing in disability, diversity and public policy, utilizes a customized sector approach. Clients include AT&T; Bank of America; Microsoft; AOL; Macy's; Universal Home Entertainment (Ray DVD with DVS®); Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation; Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities; World Institute on Disability; NDI's Real Economic Impact Tour; Nickelodeon; Smithsonian Institution; Kennedy Center; US Holocaust Memorial Museum; Mattel/Toys 'R' Us Becky® (Barbie's wheelchair-user friend); and UCLA Anderson's Leadership Institute for Managers with Disabilities. With strategic partner Nielsen NRGi, its "Disability Community Market Research Initiative" builds business cases for employment/marketing with the disability community. Her My Left Foot promotion launched disability niche marketing. She assists AP Stylebook with disability semantics and serves on the TV Academy's Diversity Committee.

#### FRANK D. LANTERMAN RESOURCE CENTER

Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center is a private, non-profit corporation that operates under contract with California's Department of Developmental Services. The Center serves over 7,000 children and adults with developmental disabilities, who have or are at risk for a developmental delay or disability, and who are at high-risk of parenting an infant with a disability. Lanterman is one of 21 regional centers in the state of California, which together serve over 225,000 individuals with, or at risk for, developmental disabilities and their families. Lanterman serves residents in the following geographic areas: Hollywood-Wilshire; Central Los Angeles; Pasadena; Glendale; Burbank; La Cañada-Flintridge; and La Crescenta.

#### HEATH.GWU.ORG

Since 2000, the HEATH Resource Center has served as a national clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities, managed by The George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development. Now, The HSC Foundation has partnered with the George Washington University to expand the content of this resource and to designate it as the official resource website of The HSC Foundation's National Youth Transitions Center. The HEATH Resource Center is a web-based clearinghouse that serves as an information exchange of educational resources, support services and opportunities. The HEATH Resource Center gathers, develops and disseminates information in the form of resource papers, fact sheets, website directories, newsletters, and resource materials. HEATH Resource Center is a collaborative effort among a network of professionals in the areas of disability, counseling, transition and postsecondary education.

## THE HSC FOUNDATION

The HSC Foundation is dedicated to improving access to services for individuals who face social and health care barriers due to disability, chronic illness, or other circumstances that present unique needs. The HSC Health Care System is a multi-faceted organization that weaves together a pediatric specialty hospital(The HSC Pediatric Center), a health care management plan (Health Services for Children with Special Needs), a home health agency (HSC Home Care, LLC and a for-profit consulting company (Special Needs Consulting Services). Health Services for Children with Special Needs, Inc., The HSC Pediatric Center, HSC Home Care, LLC and Special Needs Consulting Services are subsidiary organizations of the Foundation, and together, they comprise The HSC Health Care System. The HSC Health Care System offers a comprehensive approach to caring, serving, and empowering individuals with disabilities.

## IEL'S CENTER FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Established in 1991, IEL's Center for Workforce Development's (CWD) mission is to strengthen ties among workers, learning institutions and the workplace. CWD focuses on helping leaders in both the public and private sectors build bridges that connect individuals with both learning institutions and the workplace. The focus is on the ties that link the worker, the school or training institutions, and the workplace -- ties that promote the types of learning organizations needed to increase the overall productivity of the nation's workforce.

## LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT TPP

The Transition Partnership Program (TPP) is a collaborative program with Department of Rehabilitation, whose primary function is to serve high school juniors, seniors and graduates from the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) make a successful transition from school to the business environment. We serve seven high schools in the district. The services provided to our students will result in them obtaining and maintaining employment in the private sector. Our program's main purpose is to help our students find and retain competitive employment.

## NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE ON WORKFORCE AND DISABILITY FOR YOUTH (NCWD/YOUTH)

The mission of NCWD/Youth is to ensure that youth with disabilities are provided full access to high quality services in integrated settings in order to maximize their opportunities for employment and independent living. To accomplish the mission, NCWD/Youth has established three distinct goals: (1) Supporting state and local policies that promote full access to high quality services for youth with disabilities; (2) Strengthening the services provided by organizations responsible for delivery of workforce development services; and, (3) Improving the awareness, knowledge, and skills of individuals responsible for providing direct services to youth.

## NATIONAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

National Health Foundation is an independent, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) public charity dedicated to improving and enhancing the healthcare of the underserved by developing and supporting innovative programs that (1) can become independently viable, (2) provide systemic solutions to gaps in healthcare access and delivery, and (3) have the potential to be replicated nationally.

## NATIONAL YOUTH TRANSITIONS CENTER

Located in Washington, DC and developed by The HSC Foundation, The National Youth Transitions Center and National Veterans Center bring together the resources of multiple organizations to provide transitions-related services, research, public policy, best practices, pilot projects, and evaluation so that youth and young veterans with disabilities can achieve their greatest level of independence. The Center

enhances the ability of young people and veterans with disabilities to enter and re-enter the workforce, participate in and contribute to community life, and become productive members of society.

#### SPECIAL NEEDS NETWORK

Special Needs Network's mission is to raise public awareness of developmental disabilities and to impact public policy, while providing education and resources to families, children and adults. SNN serves as a link between under-served communities and mainstream developmental disability organizations and governmental institutions, which often fail to address issues specific to these communities. SNN firmly believes that dignity, hope and opportunity are the birthright of all children.

#### STUDENTS FOR ADVANCEMENT OF GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Students for Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship (SAGE) supports approximately 40 SAGE teams at U.S. based high schools and hundreds more internationally. SAGE students, with the help of dedicated teachers, develop and run businesses as part of their studies. Businesses must be profitable and create social impact. At the end of each academic year, using an interscholastic competitive model similar to athletics, SAGE teams showcase their businesses at national and international tournaments.

#### TRANSACCESS

TransAccess, a Bay Area nonprofit organization, helps youth and adults with disabilities to achieve their goals. In partnership with local schools, government agencies, and businesses, we provide individualized assessments, career and job placement assistance, adaptive technology, and more. Since 1997, TransAccess has served over 11,000 youth and adults with disabilities through direct services. Our programs include the Access Technology Center, giving persons with disabilities the opportunity to identify, evaluate, and train on the latest computer adaptive technologies; the School-to-Future Program providing tools and support for students to further their education and prepare for employment and Access-to-Jobs, an employment service for persons with disabilities.

#### TRANSCEN, INC.

TransCen, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that since 1986 has been developing creative and innovative projects in school to work transition, education systems change, and employment for people with disabilities. We were founded and named to be a "Transition Center", convening parties involved in promoting the successful transition of youth with disabilities from school to work and adult life. Chief areas of pursuit include: (1) School to Work Transition: TransCen collaborates with several local, state, and national initiatives in order to expand opportunities for youth with disabilities as they prepare for the move into employment and adult life. (2) Employment Services: A variety of TransCen's programs connect jobseekers and employers through specific programs and partnerships. Over 10,000 people with disabilities have secured, maintained and enhanced career opportunities through an array of employment services offered by TransCen since its inception. (3) Professional Development: TransCen is involved in several local, regional, and national training and technical assistance initiatives designed to broaden the expertise and effectiveness of practitioners. Each year more than 3,000 education, rehabilitation, workforce development professionals, and employers participate in training offered through TransCen.

#### UCLA TARJAN CENTER

The Tarjan Center is part of a national network of University Centers for Excellence (UCEs). The Tarjan Center is a bridge connecting the knowledge, expertise and resources of the university to persons with disabilities and the service delivery systems of the community. The Tarjan Center is a catalyst for



collaboration, innovation, and systems change to advance the self-determination and inclusion of people with disabilities. We do this through university and community education, technical assistance, program evaluation, research and demonstration of exemplary programs and information dissemination.

## UPS

Founded in 1907 as a messenger company in the United States, UPS has grown into a multibillion-dollar corporation by clearly focusing on the goal of enabling commerce around the globe. Today, UPS is a global company with one of the most recognized and admired brands in the world. UPS has become the world's largest package delivery company and a leading global provider of specialized transportation and logistics services. Every day, we manage the flow of goods, funds, and information in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.

## THE US BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK

The US Business Leadership Network (USBLN®) is a national non-profit, non-partisan business to business network promoting workplaces, marketplaces, and supply chains where people with disabilities are included. The USBLN® serves as the collective voice of over 60 Business Leadership Network affiliates across the United States, representing over 5,000 businesses. Additionally, the USBLN® Disability Supplier Diversity Program® (DSDP) is the nation's leading third party certification program for disability-owned businesses, including service-disabled veterans.

## USC UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The USC University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (USC UCEDD) is a renowned leader in the identification and support of cutting-edge services for individuals with, or at risk for, behavioral and/or development disabilities and their families. The USC UCEDD is headquartered at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and is composed of three divisions: (1) The Center for Disability Studies and Community; (2) The Leadership Education in Neuro-Developmental Disorders (LEND); and (3) The Center for Community Mental Health (CMH).

## WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) is a recruitment and referral program that connects federal sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to prove their abilities in the workplace through summer or permanent jobs. The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Diversity Management & Equal Opportunity (ODMEO) manage the program, which continues to be successful with the participation of many other federal agencies and sub-agencies. Since the program's expansion in 1995, over 6,000 students and recent graduates have received temporary and permanent employment opportunities through the WRP.

## WORLD INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY

The mission of the World Institute on Disability (WID) in communities and nations worldwide is to eliminate barriers to full social integration and increase employment, economic security and health care for persons with disabilities. WID creates innovative programs and tools; conducts research, training, public education and advocacy campaigns; and provides technical assistance. An internationally recognized public policy center founded in 1983 by leaders of the Independent Living Movement, WID's program work focuses on issues and problems that directly affect people's ability to live full and independent lives. A majority of the Board and staff are persons with disabilities.