Our mission is to promote social justice and create systems change that benefits persons with all types of disabilities.

Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition

2009 Annual Report
Surviving the recession, fighting budget cuts, creating new ideas and getting ready for our twentieth year as Colorado’s premier disability rights organization.
Executive Summary

From the Executive Director:

2009 was a tough year for everyone, including CCDC. However as always we emerged with many victories to add to our repertoire. CCDC was instrumental in mitigating budget cuts so that our most vulnerable took fewer cuts and that some key programs like the Aid to Needy Disabled interim assistance program was saved. Out of the threats came new and improved motivation, coalitions, and a stronger commitment than ever to fix longstanding problems—for example despite years of “knowing” that we needed an application assistance program for people with disabilities struggling with social security and Medicaid applications, the threat to AND created a robust and active coalition of organizations to get to work on developing this coalition. 2009 saw some long awaited projects come to light—such as the opening of the Colorado Alliance of Health and Independence (CAHI)—a program that is now providing care to people with disabilities that fit certain criteria in the Medicaid program. CAHI, once just an idea, is now it’s own organization and is serving clients. CCDC remains the organization that with Family Voices has responsibility to appoint board members (and remove them if necessary) so our values will remain an essential part of this project that we were instrumental in creating. The importance of our work can sometimes get lost in the day to day nature of all of the activity—but at the end of the year the need for an organization like CCDC became crystal clear. The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) our Medicaid agency failed to properly notify CDASS clients of cuts and also bargained away client funds to pay a new fiscal agent. The transition to the new fiscal agent was a disaster—CCDC was there to act in a variety of ways to fix the problems—everything from filing a lawsuit about the due process violations to demanding that employees be paid properly and on time. We demanded that a small group be convened to fix the numerous problems caused by the transition including but not limited to un usable time sheets, unclear guidance to family member attendants and much more. We heard from so many of you that you were grateful that CCDC was there. As we go into our 20th year as an organization we take on new challenges and new ideas, which coupled with our old values—will serve us as we embark on organizational adulthood.

Julie Reiskin
From the Board President:

I am proud to be the President that gets to bring CCDC into our twentieth year and look forward to working with the Board of Directors, and you, our members and supporters. I look back to what life was like “pre-CCDC” and realize that our organization is vitally important for people with disabilities. Many of you know me as a political junkie—the year I joined CCDC I was not even welcomed at my own caucus because due to late effects of Post Polio Syndrome I was now using a wheelchair. I had to fight for access to something that is a right of every citizen and I turned to CCDC then—we won that battle but continue to fight the war. Fast forward a decade and not only was I able to attend my local caucus meeting but I was actually a delegate and got to help choose our current President. When we say “nothing about us without us” we mean it. Without CCDC forcing access—both physical and programmatic access at every step this would not have happened. CCDC has made thing much better over the years—for individuals and on a systemic basis. However we still have a long way to go—we are relying on our membership to take an even stronger role in our amazing organization that is already member driven. We need to recruit more young folks. We need to raise enough money to support our important work. I am confident that we have the skills, determination and wisdom to make this happen and look forward to being an integral part of this process.

William “Joe” Beaver

2009 Accomplishments

The Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition continued to promote our mission through legal advocacy, policy work (including legislative work) individual advocacy, grassroots organizing, youth development and community education.

Legal

Our Legal Program continued bringing and resolving accessibility, housing and other discrimination complaints. At the end of 2009, the Legal Program became involved with cases addressing Medicaid issues, including filing two lawsuits against HCPF. One of the Legal Program’s clients, David Abeyta, had this to say, “It is very helpful to have CCDC to bring cases on behalf of people with disabilities. Without them, we would not have an opportunity for justice.”

The Center for the Rights of Parents with Disabilities (CRPD) In 2009 the CRPD began contracting with the Denver Juvenile Court to represent parents in dependency and neglect (child protection) cases. Of clients represented in 2009, as a direct result of CRPD representation, the children remained home, returned
home, or visitation was maintained or expanded in 80% of our cases.¹ In 2009, the CRPD represented 40 families. One client said, after helping her win full custody of her children in a hotly contested proceeding where the father claimed that mom’s disability prevented her from parenting, “You are my children’s angel. My kids thrive in my care, and they are no longer at risk of having that disrupted.”

**ADVOCACY**

We provided direct advocacy to more than 200 clients and informal advocacy to more than 500 more individuals. We provided information and referral and educating more than 1000 individuals about their rights, particularly their rights to due process when seeking or receiving public benefits. We stopped the state and counties from illegally terminating benefits, and forced them to restore said benefits in dozens of cases. We forced the state to pay for medically necessary durable medical equipment for adults and children. We made sure that clients of the Consumer Directed Attendant Support Services Program (CDASS) did not lose benefits during a poorly managed transition. We did this work with a cadre of dedicated trained volunteers and provided intensive training to more than 30 individuals throughout the year.

“As both an advocate and a person with disabilities who needs advocacy all I know is that CCDC is essential to our survival as people with disabilities.” Leslie Taylor

When our efforts at individual advocacy were not successful our legal program became involved. We filed two lawsuits against the state during the last two weeks of the year to make sure that cuts to CDASS clients were administered appropriately and to force them to follow their own rules and providing appropriate services to people getting out of the hospital.

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¹ Our percentages are skewed by the number of court appointments involving absent and or incarcerated parents.
Community Organizing

Our statewide organizing – supporting local groups-kept activity going throughout Colorado; making communities more accessible by improving transportation, local agency accountability, ADA enforcement and much more.

We hosted a youth program in cooperation with VSA Colorado. Among other projects the youth created posters to educate others on disability rights.

Award-Community Education

CCDC also held our COMMUNITY AWARDS CEREMONY on July 16, 2009 at the Colorado History Museum. We honored State Senate President Brandon Shaffer, State Representative Diane Primavera, Rite Aid Pharmacy in Glenwood Springs, Behavioral Healthcare Incorporated, Shirley McFerran, a Social Worker at the Colorado State Hospital at Pueblo, the Physically Handicapped Amateur Actors League PHAMALY and the Colorado Health Foundation.

At our MEMORIAL AWARDS in November held following our statewide meeting we gave the following memorial awards: Patrick Zimmerman award for outstanding youth to Julian Johnson Jerry Urban “David and Goliath” award to Arthur Powers as an individual and to the Colorado Coalition and to the Coalition for the Homeless as an Organization.
The Juli Stewart Caregiver Award to Pam Moir

George Roberts and Jeanette Klimach “Foot Soldier” of the year award to Pamela Carter

Lucile Weiss Educational Advocacy Award to Wendy Schultz
MAJOR POLICY RELATED ACCOMPLISHMENTS: CCDC works tirelessly with our allies and friends on many public policy issues throughout the year. We claim sole credit on nothing and are proud to be part of the following victories:

- No cuts to direct care workers or primary care physicians during first round of budget cuts in July 2009
- Assurance that direct care workers will be first group restored when budget cuts of 2.5% were made during the last quarter of 2009
- No limits on amount, duration and scope of Medicaid benefits in community based long term care
- Removal of prior authorization for repair of durable medical equipment in the Medicaid system
- Stopping the proposed elimination of state funding for Aid to the Needy Disabled Program
- Creation of a coalition that is creating an application assistance program for persons with disabilities
- Held several public forums connecting more than 200 individuals on Medicaid with policymakers

As a primary care physician I find it difficult to understand the complexities of Medicaid and Medicare and their annual changes. CCDC helps me to be sure I am giving my patients the best care possible and acts as an advocate for my patients when the system is not working for them. CCDC has been a great resource for me. Irene Aguilar, MD

CCDC continued our legislative advocacy, monitoring more than 150 bills, reporting and engaging our membership in the legislative process. Senator Morgan Carroll says "CCDC has been critical to passage of necessary reforms and to help defeat or amend legislation with negative consequences for people with disabilities and their families." We worked in coalition with other groups to defeat damaging budget cuts and mitigate others.

**Board of Directors**

As an organization we continued our growth –we welcomed five new members to our Board of Directors

- Laura Gilbert, PASCO
- Devoe Mack, Member of the “Tennessee Underground” and Realtor
- Kristina Sawyckyj, Local group member and volunteer
- Lydia Stofka, Principle of Gateway Management
- James Tucker, Editor of the African American Voice

We remain grateful to the returning board members for their service:

- Joe Beaver, President
- Sheryle Hutter, Vice President
- Gayanne Ison, Treasurer
- Gary Van Dorn, Secretary
- Robin Bolduc
- Henry Grater
- Sheila Hicks
- Christina Johnson
- JC Lodge

And thank the following outgoing board members for their service:

- Mike McCarty
- Chanda Hinton
- Barry Rosenberg
- Donna Sablan
We also held two successful fundraising events in addition to the Community Awards Ceremony at Jazz at the D’ Note in Arvada.

Like everyone else 2009 was a difficult financial year. Our expenses exceeded our income. We are forever grateful to our foundation partners and donors that continued to support us. We are currently in the process of retiring our debt and developing a sustainability plan. We owe a big thank you to the following foundations:

- Caring for Colorado Foundation
- Colorado Bar Foundation
- Colorado Health Foundation
- Denver Foundation
- Rose Community Foundation

And to all of our generous donors.

Total Income for 2009: $536,997.00

- Advocacy: $313,372.00
- Legal: $155,141.00
- Center for Rights of Parents with Disabilities: $60,906.00
- Youth: $3,173.00

Program Services Total: $532,592.00

- Management and general: $46,562.00
- Fundraising: $60,732.00

Supporting Services Total: $107,294.00

Total Expenses for 2009: $639,886.00

Total Ending Net Assets: $ (89,157.00)
CCDC functions with both paid and volunteer staff. They all go above and beyond the call of duty

- Julie Reiskin, Executive Director
- Kevin Williams, Legal Director
- Tom Carter Receptionist
- Kristin Castor, Organizer
- Rolf Kotar, Mental Health Policy Liaison
- Hope Krause, NE Colorado Lead Advocate
- Jaime Lewis, Operations Manager
- Dick Lodmell, Lead Organizer
- Carrie Lucas, Director CPRD and Staff attorney
- Ann Marie Martin, Lead Housing Advocate
- Briana McCarten, Legal Assistant
- Kelly Parker, Advocacy Coordinator
- Rob Sirowitz, Receptionist
- Leslie Taylor, Lead Rural Advocate
- Emily vonSwearingen, Development Director
- Christina Worner, Executive Assistant

Notable volunteers include but are not limited to

- Louise Apodaca
- Andrea Archer
- Barbara Barker
- Terencia Beauvais-Nikl
- Anita and David Bray
- Sheri Casper
- Lori Cheavront
- Pat DeAtley
- Elizabeth Pelnar-Ehrmann
- Stacy Hudgins
- Don Hutter Jr.
- Ron Hutter
- Diane Inscoe
- Linda Ivy
- Carol Jenkins
- Julian Johnson
- Devorah Kappers
- Rochelle Larson
- Clara Lomeland
Passing: We will miss the following members of CCDC who passed away during 2009—your works will live on in our hearts and your families and friends will be in our prayers
- Brady Goguen
- Charles Holmes (aka Flaii)
- Lorraine Johnson
- Kay McCandless
- Kyle Stubbs