

# Country Roads

May 1st, 2014

## **KARRN Mission:**

A collaborative team including individuals impacted by neurological conditions, providers who serve them, members of communities in which they live, advocates, and researchers who investigate these impairments will identify, develop and disseminate information and strategies, and maximize resources to improve outcomes and quality of life.

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[www.karrn.org](http://www.karrn.org)



## **2nd Annual Kentucky Congress on Spinal Cord Injury — June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014, - Sasha Rabchevsky**

The Kentucky Congress on Spinal Cord Injury (KCSCI) was assembled last year to provide a platform for individuals living with SCI in the Commonwealth of Kentucky to have their concerns heard and to discuss potential legislation while becoming organized with a common mission, notably to establish an outreach network for those in more urban areas. We envisioned a congress of participants, sponsors, healthcare providers and care givers all exchanging information about programs available to those in need throughout the commonwealth. The mission of the KCSCI has been to gather individuals with SCI from around the commonwealth to join in the discussion of critical issues that are important to them and to help draft agendas to be used to legislate changes for people with SCI. During our inaugural KCSCI meeting last May 11, 2013, over fifty folks with SCI gathered and helped to identify the top principal concerns of the SCI community related to 1) Healthcare, 2) Accessibility, 3) Equipment and 4) Employment, after which we formed subcommittees charged with certain goals. First and foremost, since then we continue striving to increase awareness of our KCSCI network of people with SCI and their advocates into a unified SCI community in Kentucky through contacts and networks like our recently established Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/KCSCI>. Secondly, we have held periodic group meetings since last year and managed to meet with several disability advocates and state politicians in our Commonwealth to help us enact two initial legislative changes for people with SCI. First, increase parking violation fines and provide adequate handicapped parking spaces and, second, require that accredited doctor's

## Kentucky Congress on SCI Update

— Sasha Rabchevsky, PhD

offices must provide accessible exam tables. While our accomplishments have been incremental, we are now prepared to hold our second annual meeting of the KCSCI on June 18, 2014 at the Clarion hotel here in Lexington, KY. We have disseminated our save-the-date and call-for-sponsors fliers, and our on line registration for this FREE meeting will be open in early May, 2014 <http://tinyurl.com/nf6lwgb>. The agenda for this year's annual meeting has far more structure and organization as KCSCI has solidified during its first year.



Notably, we have met with and since invited our local state Representative Susan Westrom who is empathetic about our mission, as well as Tennessee Congressman Darren Jernigan, who has a SCI, to speak in the morning sessions to provide us guidance on how best to move KCSCI forward. After lunch, there will be a brief presentation on “how to enact legislative change” in the SCI community. This will be followed by a “breakout” session allowing participants to assess the accessibility of various vehicles, to be provided by the accompanying Assistive Technology meeting at the Clarion hotel. Finally, we will end the second annual KCSCI with open discussions and active KCSCI membership enrollment, particularly engaging folks to enthusiastically help with the logistics of moving our agenda forward. The current members of the KCSCI hope to see many new faces on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014, both riding on wheels or pushing those in need to join our gathering!!!

## Evaluating the Impact of the Kentucky Rural Rehabilitation Network—Chithra Adams

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the interpersonal relationships that have developed among individuals as a result of the formation of the Kentucky Appalachian Rural Rehabilitation Network (KARRN). The data obtained in this research will be used to see how these connections help agencies and providers improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, particularly in more

geographically remote areas. The evaluation will use an interview protocol. The interviews will be conducted naturalistically in order to allow for deeper probing of trends and promising practices. It is expected that interviews will last approximately 30-45 minutes. Interviews will be analyzed thematically to develop a deeper and more complete understanding of the social network that has developed among members of KARRN. An email describing the objectives of the evaluation and a request for interview participation was sent out last week. This week, the HDI Evaluation Unit started initial interviews with the KARRN members who responded to the interview request.

## 2014 AgrAbility National Training Workshop - Linda Bokros



The 2014 National Training Workshop for the AgrAbility Project was held in Lexington, KY on March 31<sup>st</sup> through April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The weather cooperated for the first 3 days of the conference and those attending were treated to warm, sunny days, green grass and flowers in bloom. Triangle Park and the downtown Lexington area allowed for some evening walks and a place to leave the harsh winter behind for a while.

One of the highlights of the opening day of the conference was a tour of Lexington's Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital. The tour of the facility brought back rave reviews for the technology available at CHRH as well as the level of care and the staff. The conference normally offers tours of rehabilitation facilities in the host city and this time so many had requested to go that a tour bus was called in for transport to Cardinal Hill.

## 2014 AgrAbility National Training Workshop (cont)



More than 220 attendees came from 32 states, Ireland, Sweden and Brazil, more than at any previous conference. Participants included state and regional AgrAbility projects, National AgrAbility Project leaders, allied health care professionals and presenters for over 50 sessions along with vendors and displays.

58 farmers attended the workshop and the committee was able to set up a separate track of sessions that were of interest to them. Sessions included beekeeping, sheep and goat breeding and marketing, aquaculture, agritourism and care giving all with the handicapped farmer in mind.

The group was welcomed to Kentucky by the UK Dean of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Dr. Nancy Cox, UK Assistant Director of Ag and Natural Resources, Dr. Gary Palmer, KSU Dean for the College of Agriculture, Dr. Tsegaye, and Ben Shaffar from the KY Department of Agriculture Office of Business Development. The keynote speaker at Tuesday's luncheon was Janet LaBreck, Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration and Josh Bleill, Community Spokesperson for the Indianapolis Colts, was the speaker for dinner on Wednesday evening.



On Thursday, unfortunately the weather did not cooperate, the group had a choice of two tours. One tour went to a central Kentucky farm owned by a KY AgrAbility client where people could see firsthand the adapted equipment he uses on his farm. This was followed by a tour of Buffalo Trace Distillery and then to the Lexington urban garden, The Food chain, in downtown Lexington. The second tour started at the Riding for Hope program at the KY Horse Park and then to Berea for lunch and a tour of the horticulture farm at Berea College.

Thanks to all that helped plan the event and made sure it ran smoothly. 2015 will move the national conference to Rochester, NY and will be hosted by Goodwill of the Finger Lakes.

## Talking Transition at the Appalachian Unconference - Kathy Sheppard-Jones

Transition from high school to the adult world can be particularly challenging for youth with disabilities. During this stage of life, individuals with disabilities must learn skills for independence and cope with the changing structure of their daily lives and there are many common struggles that these young adults face every day. Young adults with disabilities in Appalachia may have additional barriers when it comes to employment, health care, and independent living. In order to hear their voices, on Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, the Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky is hosting the Kentucky Appalachian Twentysomething Unconference in Richmond.

Never heard of an Unconference? It's very different from a typical conference. In fact, it could be considered the opposite of a traditional conference. There is no agenda. The discussions are determined by the people who attend. The Unconference format style is well-suited for issues that require input from a variety of impacted people and it allows the participants to set the agenda of the discussion and prioritize the discussion topics. This discussion format also democratizes the information gathering process for it allows the researchers to truly 'listen to the voices' of those individuals participating in the conversation. As such, it is anticipated that a Call to Action will result from bringing young adults together to share their ideas and problem solve solutions for some of the difficulties facing transitioning youths in the Appalachian region. The call to Action will be shared with all organizations and stakeholders committed to improving the

outcomes of people with disabilities in the Appalachian region.

Want more information or know a Twentysomething who might like to participate? Contact Kathy Sheppard-Jones at [kjone@uky.edu](mailto:kjone@uky.edu) or call 859.257.8104.



## Project CARAT Update — Walt Bower

Project CARAT is continuing to make exciting progress as we complete the second year of a three year federal grant improving the health and quality of life of individuals with disabilities who may not be able to afford the medical equipment they need to become independent. We are continuing to get the word out about Project CARAT in our Appalachian service area of Eastern Kentucky by developing community partnerships with the White House Clinics in Richmond and Berea, the Northeast Kentucky Area Health Education Center in Morehead, and the Daniel Boone Community Action Council in Mount Vernon.

To date, we have provided over 145 individuals with disabilities with medical equipment they otherwise could not afford. One of our most recent success stories involves a partnership with the Nandine Brock Medical Clinic in London. A nurse at the clinic referred Project CARAT to Patrick Bennett, who is 67 years old and has suffered nine strokes. Delilah Sweet, the daughter of Patrick Bennett, contacted Project CARAT requesting a power chair to assist her father with everyday activities and the next day we provided him with this item. I followed up to see how they were doing with the power chair and Delilah commented, "Dad is very satisfied and happier than a hog in slop."



## Project CARAT Continued

Carol Cox, who lives in Richmond, received a \$4,000 pair of donated hearing aids free of charge from Project CARAT. The case manager at the White House Clinic in Richmond referred Project CARAT to her. Carol's health insurance did not cover the purchase of hearing aids and she had a long history of hearing loss in her family. After the initial hearing exam and fitting, Carol was able to hear voices and sounds much more clearly and succinctly. The hearing aids improved her quality of life so much she cried "tears of joy" after the appointment.

Project CARAT uses a unique service learning approach which involves Appalachian students performing much of the sanitizing and refurbishing of the equipment. The students, including Physical Therapy students, learn about assistive technology and durable medical equipment, acquire a skill set with evaluating and repairing equipment, and are better able to serve their patients within the community by making recommendations for equipment.

Patrick Kitzman has recently met with the first and second year Physical Therapy students in Hazard and there are a number in each class who want to be a part of Project CARAT. LeeAnn Helton, Student Services Director at the University of Kentucky's Center of Excellence in Rural Health, has offered to assist with the project and will serve as a second advisor in Hazard. The Center of Excellence in Rural Health has also found additional space for Project CARAT to store medical equipment.

The students at the Carl D. Perkins Center in Thelma continue to do an outstanding job refurbishing, cleaning, and sanitizing donated medical equipment.

High quality donations continue to arrive on a daily basis from medical practitioners and community members as a result of the Project CARAT initiative. While traveling throughout Eastern Kentucky, we have taken in over 1,600 donated medical items, including bariatric power wheelchairs, manual wheel walkers, hospital beds, walkers, crutches, and shower chairs.

Please feel free to contact me by telephone (859-246-2185, extension 275) or by email ([walter.bower@ky.gov](mailto:walter.bower@ky.gov)) anytime if you have input about the project, other agencies to contact, speaking opportunities, or just would like to make a donation to Project CARAT.



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