

# Midwest Alliance

August 2008

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## PI's Corner

Thank you for joining us for the 4th issue of the Midwest Alliance newsletter.

Since the last newsletter, the National Workshop on Personal Assistant Services in Postsecondary Education was held June 5-6 at the University of Illinois. Over 30 individuals representing a broad range of interests and expertise attended the event and ensured its success. In general, the reviews of the workshop were very positive, and participants felt that this was a critical topic that needs additional attention at a national level. A brief summary of the workshop is provided in this newsletter.

We are also proud to announce a student team from the Mechanical Engineering Department at Madison participated in the Student Design Competition at RESNA. Their design for a sip-actuated leg bag valve was selected as one of the winning designs. The device was developed as a direct result of collaborations involving the Midwest Alliance staff. A report on their experience is included in this newsletter.

These are just two of the many items in this newsletter that we hope are of interest to you. Once again, if you have any comments about the newsletter, or items that you would like to see (and we might have something to contribute to), please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thanks again for taking the time to learn about the activities of the Midwest Alliance. We appreciate it.



Sincerely,  
Jay K. Martin  
Principal Investigator



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# Midwest Alliance Update

## PAS in PSE Workshop A Success!

Midwest held a day-and-a-half National Workshop on Personal Assistance Services in Postsecondary Education for Students with Severe Physical Disabilities on June 5 and 6, 2008 in Champaign, Illinois. About 30 individuals attended, representing Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Ohio, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa.



The first morning started with a welcome by Jay Martin and introductions and an opening session by Norma Stumbo on an Assessment of the State of the State for PA Services in STEM and Other Postsecondary Education. A student panel, with four students from Illinois and Wisconsin, then discussed their experiences with obtaining and managing PA services while in college. The next set of sessions focused on exemplary services provided at the University of Illinois, St. Andrews Presbyterian College, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Wright State University, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, and the University of California at Berkeley.



David Keer, of the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research, gave a lunchtime address.

For the afternoon of the first day, attendees then formed small groups and focused on the current state of affairs, identification of programmatic, policy, and fiscal barriers affecting current PAS services (and lack of services), and identification of strategic initiatives and actions needed to influence the barriers in a positive direction. The second half-day focused on developing specific recommendations at local/campus levels, state levels, and

the national level that would positively change current practice in PA services in postsecondary education.

Attendees were asked to complete a workshop evaluation and most indicated being highly satisfied with the outcomes of the workshop, for example, to identify barriers to providing better and more dispersed PA services at college campuses nationwide. Many commented they wish the workshop had been an additional half-day. The evaluation results are available on our web site.



The Midwest staff is working on a number of documents as a result of this workshop. The first is an overall Consensus Paper that will focus on the recommendations for initiatives needed to improve and proliferate PA service options on additional college campuses. The second is a Workshop Summary that will provide a complete overview of the workshop and its findings. The third is a manuscript outlining both national data and recommendations that will be submitted to a national, refereed journal.

Beyond these documents, which will hopefully instigate change, many new relationships and collaborations were formed that will benefit the ability of the Midwest Alliance to serve students with severe physical disabilities. Although the lack of PA services in postsecondary education is evident and problematic, prior to this workshop, little national attention was focused on this problem. By drawing attention to the problem, providing information about model programs, and developing resources, Midwest hopes to better the future of students with severe physical disabilities in STEM and non-STEM fields.



## Staff Spotlight

### Kim Collins

Kim Collins earned her baccalaureate degree in biology with a minor in psychology from Illinois Wesleyan University in 1989 and her master's degree in rehabilitation counseling psychology from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas in 1989. She earned her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1995. Dr. Collins interned at Hines VA Hospital and completed a postdoctoral fellowship with Professional Health Systems (a private practice of rehabilitation psychologists) both in Chicago, Illinois. She obtained licensure in Illinois as a licensed clinical psychologist in 1996 and is also a certified rehabilitation counselor (CRC). From 1996 until 1999, Dr. Collins served as Clinical Director of Rehab Psychology Associates, a private psychology practice in Chicago, Illinois that specialized in rehabilitation psychology issues.



She came to the University of Illinois in 1999 as Coordinator of Cognitive and Psychological Disability Services and now serves as Assistant Director. Since coming to Illinois, she has expanded services to include neuropsychological evaluations, coaching, individual therapy, group therapy, summer transition program, and more intensive supports for students with learning disabilities, ADHD, acquired brain injury, Asperger's/Autism, and psychological disabilities so that they can succeed at the post-secondary level. Dr. Collins is also an adjunct faculty in Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois and is involved in training counseling and clinical psychology students to work effectively with people with disabilities.

She has made over 50 presentations at international, national, and regional professional conferences on topics of providing supports for college students with cognitive and psychological disabilities, including being an invited speaker at NAMI, USPRA, and the First Annual Depression in College Campuses Conference at the University of Michigan to discuss the innovative programs she has developed.

Dr. Collins presently serves as the Psychological Disabilities Coordinator for the Midwest Alliance. In that capacity, she supports Midwest Alliance initiatives directed at enhancing the access afforded students with

psychological disabilities to postsecondary education in STEM. In addition, her ongoing research interests include supported employment; the impact of being diagnosed with ADHD or a learning disability at the college level; outcomes and best practices in providing supports for students with psychological disabilities in post secondary education; and how exercise programs can help mitigate some of the symptoms of psychological disabilities.

### Amy Fruchtman

Amy Fruchtman attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Communicative Disorders/Education in 1981. She taught English to adults in Jerusalem, Israel during 1981-82, and returned to Madison to complete a Master of Science degree in Speech-Language Pathology in 1984.

After graduation, Amy worked for 4 years in the Sun Prairie, WI School District, providing speech and language services to early childhood, elementary, and middle school age children. From 1989 to 2006, Amy worked at the University of Wisconsin's Waisman Center, a center for research, teaching, service, and outreach. For 8 years Amy was the Senior Clinical Speech Pathologist on an interdisciplinary team of professionals serving children with a wide range of developmental disabilities, providing consultation to families and teachers/service providers, and supervising graduate students as they completed their clinical practica.



From 1997 to 2006 Amy coordinated several U.S. Department of Education interdisciplinary personnel preparation grants preparing qualified and appropriately trained professionals to provide family-centered services for young children with low-incidence disabilities, including traumatic brain injury, autism, severe physical disabilities, and sensory (vision or hearing) disabilities. In 2005-2006 Amy also worked as an assistant researcher and clinical reviewer for the Wisconsin Surveillance of Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities System (WISADDS), a project funded by CDC. Amy has worked with colleagues and collaborators to establish and teach university courses and seminars. She has presented on topics related to disabilities in early childhood, family-centered practices, autism spectrum disorders and communication strategies, and universal design for learning.

Amy has served as the Project Manager for the Midwest Alliance since January of 2006.

## Staff Spotlight (cont'd)

### Liam Martin

Liam Martin recently earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin in psychology on May 2008. He also attended the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Madison Area Technical College (MATC). He is planning on applying to graduate school in psychology and to eventually becoming a clinical psychologist. He has been working for the Midwest Alliance since the beginning of 2007 in several capacities.

He serves as the assistant to Dan Nordstrom, the Midwest Outreach Coordinator, and works with other Midwest Alliance staff on a number of research and service projects. He is currently working with other Midwest staff on a research study about the prepurchase process of assistive technology.



Liam works for Midwest approximately 30 hours a week and can be contacted for any information about the outreach programs of the Midwest Alliance or any other pertinent information at:  
liamgmartin@yahoo.com or  
(608) 239-0264.

### Kris Green

Kris Green has been working for the Midwest Alliance since around January of 2008. He graduated from Beloit College in 1998 where he majored in Physics with minor emphasis in Mathematics. After graduating, he spent a semester as a graduate student and teaching assistant at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee before leaving to pursue a job as a network administrator for a local Milwaukee company.

His introduction to the Midwest Alliance came while he was working as a personal assistant to Liam Martin. Currently he splits his time between assisting Liam and working on various Midwest projects. He has been helping develop the Midwest website and collate data from the various presentations given over the first 3 years of the program.



Kris can be reached at: [k9green@gmail.com](mailto:k9green@gmail.com)

## Programs and Activities Highlights

### National AHEAD Conference in Reno

Jay Martin and Norma Stumbo attended the Association of Higher Education and Disability conference in July 2008 in Reno. The five-day conference welcomed over 1,100 attendees at the Grand Sierra Resort.

Jay presented a paper, co-authored by Thea McSweeney, titled "Analysis and Discussion of National Survey Results: Students with Disabilities in Higher Education" that outlined how students with disabilities are faring in the postsecondary system. National survey data was provided on participation rates, choice of majors/degrees, persistence rates, and risk factors. Audience interest and interaction was high during the session.

Jay and Norma also presented two poster sessions, "Systemic Change: Systems Engineering Applied to Students with Disabilities in Higher Education" and "Impact of Assistive Technology on the Independence, Education, and Employment of Individuals with Physical Disabilities." Nearly 50 individuals signed up during the poster sessions to be included on Midwest's mailing list.

All three sessions were well received by audience members and led to lots of hallway discussions. Midwest Alliance staff hopes to be well represented at next year's AHEAD conference July 20-25 in Louisville as well as in their research journal, *The Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*.

## Programs and Activities Highlights (cont'd)

### Midwest Matters...

Midwest staff is often asked "So how do you know that Midwest is a good investment of taxpayer dollars? How do you know you make a difference?" We thought we'd periodically provide in our newsletter different people's perspectives on the answers to these questions.

This month we feature a 'testimonial' from Linda Carter-McCartney, a member of the Curriculum and Instruction Faculty at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls.

*The activities, trainings and textbook information that I have received as a result of Dr. Stefanich's grant work have greatly impacted my practices as a classroom teacher. I have shared the ideas with my pre-service teachers on a daily basis as well as at a national conference with conservation educators. I also work with elementary school age children at various summer camps and environmental education fairs where upon occasion I have utilized some of the strategies Dr. Stefanich has shared with me.*

*My pre-service teachers are extremely ill prepared for the diverse learners they will encounter in real world classroom settings. Indeed, during a recent outside review of our university curriculum it was duly noted that we were in extreme neglect of addressing diverse learners. As a result, I began to require all my students to adapt all lesson plans they create to include diversity adaptations specific to the disability and the science experiment. They are required to utilize the resources and workshops provided by the Midwest Grant. My students often note that they are amazed at how obvious some of the adaptations are and yet they never thought of using them! My students also note that they are amazed at how the adaptations cross all curricular areas and can be applied in multiple situations.*

*I also recently made a presentation at the National Water Educators Conference in New Orleans. During the presentation I shared with the educators the resources funded by NSF and how they can be applied to all learning situations. Most of these educators are non-traditional educators and they have never had any training focusing on special learners yet they encounter these children all the time. They were grateful to know that there are resources available to them.*

### 2008 Joint Annual Meeting at NSF

Jay Martin, Amy Fruchtman, and Greg Stefanich represented the Midwest Alliance at the 2008 Joint Annual Meeting, held in June in Washington, D.C.

James Wyche, a division director at NSF, opened the program and introduced the first general speaker, Isiah Warner. Dr. Warner gave an enlightening presentation about his work in Analytical and Environmental Chemistry investigating complex chemical systems.

The audience then broke into groups and we attended the session on Research in Disabilities Education (RDE) where information about program and updates were shared by Mark Leddy and Jolene Jesse.

The luncheon speaker was Julianne Malvaeux, the president of Bennett College for Women. She shared a wealth of information on issues relating to race, gender, and culture and the resulting impacts on participation in STEM among marginalized populations. The afternoon included a number of interesting breakout sessions.

The day concluded with a session featuring over 140 posters presented faculty and students who received NSF awards shared information on their projects. All four RADs (EAST, AccessSTEM, RASEM<sup>2</sup> and Midwest) collaborated on a poster about their respective mentorship programs. Special focus areas noted on the poster were participation rates, choice of majors/degrees, persistence rates, and risk factors. In addition we were able to distribute information about Midwest and the other Regional Alliances to those in attendance. Following the poster session project staff from all four RADs enjoyed a lively time of conversation and exchange.

Wednesday morning sessions addressed funding opportunities from NSF, funding opportunities with other agencies and foundations, communicating science broadly, and project evaluation. The luncheon speaker was Eloy Rodriuez, a Perkins Professor of Natural Biology and Environmental Toxicology at Cornell University, who shared his research on chemical ecology and self-medication by wild animals.

Wednesday afternoon included cross program table topic conversations on a variety of topics. The day concluded in a breakout session on RDE Program Evaluation, presenters included staff from the Divisions of Human Resource Development, Directorate for Education and Human Resources, and SRI International. A summary paper was shared titled, *RDE Program Pilot Evaluation, What We Know To Date*.

Thursday morning was a technical session on post-award management. Several program officers from the National Science Foundation shared information relating to reporting requirements, sub-awards, participant support, cost-sharing, consultants, overloads, and preparing for an audit. Participants were invited to ask questions and these were address by program staff.

# *Assistive Technology Research*

## Students Win RESNA Competition With Sip-Actuated Leg Bag Valve



Robert Bradford, Timothy Ponshock, Chris Esser at RESNA; Matthew Heidt is pictured below

Robert Bradford, Chris Esser, Matthew Heidt, and Tim Ponshock, students of Dr. Martin's rehabilitation engineering class, presented their design for a Sip-Actuated Leg Bag Valve at RESNA's (Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America) annual conference in Washington, D.C. as part of the National Student Design Competition. The four students submitted a paper to RESNA in May and were selected as finalists in June. On June 27<sup>th</sup>, they presented their project and were selected as one of the winning groups for best design



out of 62 papers that were submitted. The students also presented the design as a pre-conference workshop at the ILLOWA AHEAD Conference in Davenport, Iowa in April 2008. (See the article in the April 2008 Midwest Alliance Newsletter available on our web site.)

While in Washington DC, the students presented for judging early in the week and then during a special winners' platform session. They also had a chance to showcase their design to interested RESNA members and manufacturers as part of a larger exhibition of new assistive and rehabilitative products. Along with presenting, the students were given the opportunity to network with RESNA members, attend assistive technology courses, speak with manufacturers, and explore other state of the art assistive technology. The students left the conference very optimistic about the project's potential to help people with disabilities in the future.

The valve, which opens and closes to drain a leg bag, designed for catheter users with very limited hand dexterity. It was a user-focused design, mimicking a "sip-n-puff" system, but at much lower cost and without requiring a battery. A user may drain his or her leg bag by sipping on a separate tube, then blocking with his or her tongue. When the bag is fully drained, the user may release the tongue to seal the leg bag shut. The students also developed three different methods of fabrication, providing plans to build it at home using off the shelf parts, plans for a machinist to construct, or plans for production by any interested company.

The student team may be reached through Robert Bradford at [rbradford@wisc.edu](mailto:rbradford@wisc.edu) or Jay Martin at [martin@enr.wisc.edu](mailto:martin@enr.wisc.edu).

## *Important Upcoming Dates*

September 4-7	Nat'l Self Advocacy Conference <a href="http://www.sabe2008.org">www.sabe2008.org</a> (Indianapolis, IN)
September 10-11	WI Special Education Council Meeting (Madison, WI)
September 23	Disability Forum (Madison, WI)
September 25	Morgridge Center Volunteer Fair (Madison, WI)
October 2	Assistive Technology Expo (Madison, WI)
October 3	Midwest Alliance National Advisory Board Meeting (Madison, WI and via teleconference)
October 6-8	WI-APSE (Association for Persons in Supported Employment) Conference <a href="http://www.wiapse.org">www.wiapse.org</a> (Elkhart Lake, WI)
October 15	Disability Mentoring Day (Nationwide)
October 16-17	Division on Career Development & Transition Conference (Milwaukee, WI)
October 27-29	Statewide Transition Conference (Peoria, IL)
November 20	LaGrange Area Department of Special Education: 8 <sup>th</sup> Annual College Fair and Post-High School Options for Students with Special Needs (LaGrange, IL)

# Student Outreach & Opportunities

## Recruitment

The Midwest Alliance currently has thirty-one individuals actively participating as mentees, mentors, and interns. Our participants continue to be from all over Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin, and are at various levels in their educational and professional journeys – from high school to postsecondary education and beyond.

Nine individuals are currently participants in our internship program, with 9 others in the process of getting help from Midwest to secure an internship. Sixteen students are participating as mentees, and 9 students are currently mentors. A number of students participate simultaneously in our mentorship and internship programs.

In July, Midwest sent out an email announcement to more than 2,000 teachers, faculty, parents and others in our 3-state region, to share information about Midwest opportunities for students and alumni interested in, working towards degrees in, or newly employed in STEM fields and careers. We will continue to share information via new mailings, email announcements, newsletters, and our website. If you know of anyone who should be included in these recruitment efforts, please let us know.

## Online STEM Internship Database

The Midwest Alliance's Online STEM Internship Database has been launched as a piloted case study through the University of Illinois. The database will give students with disabilities the option to view lists of businesses and organizations that may have open internships. These businesses and organizations have expressed their interest in encouraging diversity with regard to people with disabilities. We are excited about this new endeavor and hope to expand the availability of this database tool to a wider audience after the pilot stage.

## Events and Other Activities

Midwest Alliance Outreach Coordinator, Dan Nordstrom, and Outreach Assistant, Liam Martin, put together a recent program that provided over 30 high school students with disabilities a demonstration on DNA extraction from wheat germ and an overview of Midwest Alliance opportunities. The June 23<sup>rd</sup> event was in collaboration with the BioPharmaceutical Technology Center Institute and the Wisconsin Statewide Transition Initiative's Youth Leadership Forum at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual 2008 Illinois Youth with Disabilities Leadership Summit took place on July 27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus. Midwest Outreach Coordinator, Tina Lam, presented on

Transitioning to College and Careers. Midwest's collaborations with the Champaign County Transition Planning committee, a group comprised of state and local service providers. Tina's membership on that committee and on the board of ILLOWA AHEAD, which is a collaboration of postsecondary educators and disability service providers in Illinois and Iowa, will provide wider access to the resources Midwest offers, and another way for us to share information with others.

## Student Success Stories

*Examples of Midwest participants' summer placements:*

Three high school students are taking part in science/engineering Summer Camp activities; three others are taking part in research laboratory placements; two students are taking part in internships with businesses. Our success in finding these opportunities continues to grow, and we are looking forward to seeing how the aforementioned internship database can help to expand the number of successful placements we're able to achieve.

Stay tuned for the personal stories of these interns (and mentors and mentees) in the next issues of our newsletter. As always, we look forward to hearing from you if you or someone you know might like to become involved in our programs! Please contact Dan at [dnordstrom@wisc.edu](mailto:dnordstrom@wisc.edu) and Tina at [tinalam@illinois.edu](mailto:tinalam@illinois.edu), or sign up on our web site and we'll get in contact with you.

## NSF's ILAB at Workshop In Madison

ILAB, an NSF supported project based at Penn State University, hosted a workshop in August 2008 on Teaching, Learning, and Practicing Science for Students with Visual Impairments. The event was held in the Chemistry Building on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus, and included workshops and demonstrations on the latest adaptive technologies and teaching methods in the areas of chemistry, physics, and astronomy.

This conference was designed for students with visual impairments, their teachers and parents, and anyone interested in learning about novel adaptive technologies and science teaching methods.

Amy Fruchtman presented a brief information session on the Midwest Alliance and Greg Stefanich presented a session on practical tips for teaching science to students with visual impairments.

We would like to thank the conference chairs, Dr. Andrew Greenberg: Coordinator of Education and Outreach for Institute for Chemical Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Cary Supalo, from Penn State for collaborating with Midwest on this exciting event.

## Spotlight on Research

### Midwest Staff Collaborates on Research Publications

In addition to student services and other outreach activities, the Midwest staff has been busy with a number of research projects and is working on a number of manuscripts for research journals. We've received word that four articles have been published or are accepted/in press. These include:

Stumbo, N.J., Martin, J.K., & Hedrick, B.N. (accepted for publication - in press). Personal assistance for students with severe physical disabilities in postsecondary education: Is it the deal breaker? *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*.

Stumbo, N.J., Lindahl-Lewis, P., & Blegen, A. (accepted for publication - in press). Two mentorship case studies of high school and university students with disabilities: Milestones and lessons, *Journal of Rehabilitation*.

Stumbo, N.J., Martin, J.K., & Hedrick, B.N. (accepted for publication - in press). Assistive technology: Impact on education, employment, and independence of individuals with physical disabilities, *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*.

Burke, M., Hedrick, B., Ouelette, S., & Thompson, T. (2008). Developing accountability metrics for students with disabilities in higher education: Determining critical questions. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 21(1), 42-54.

One is currently in review:

Brockelman, K. Faculty members' ratings of the effectiveness of academic strategies for university students with psychiatric disabilities

Several other manuscripts are in development and will be submitted by the end of October 2008. These include:

Stumbo, N.J., Martin, J.K., Nordstrom, D., Lam, T., Burgstahler, S., McCarthy, W., Misquez, E., Langley-Turnbaugh, S., & Lovewell, L. Case studies in mentorship programs for students with disabilities.

Stumbo, N.J., Weisman, C., Martin, J.K., & Hedrick, B.N. Barriers and facilitators in education and employment of persons with severe physical disabilities.

Martin, J.K., McSweeney, T., & Stumbo, N.J. National survey data about enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates of students with disabilities in STEM and non-STEM fields.

Martin, J.K., Martin, L.G., & Stumbo, N.J. Assistive technology pre-purchase decisions and their effect on device abandonment.

Nordstrom, D.L., Martin, J.K., Stumbo, N.J., & Hedrick, B.N. Personal assistance services in postsecondary institutions: A national survey.

Martin, J.K., & Stumbo, N.J. Personal assistance, assistive technology, and functional limitations: A formula for calculating gains and trade-offs.

Martin, J.K., & Stumbo, N.J. Applying systems engineering to disability service provision in postsecondary education.

Martin, J.K., Stumbo, N.J., & Hedrick, B.N. Status of personal assistance services in postsecondary education: Preferred futures.

We'll keep you updated on the progress of these manuscripts as they go through the review process.

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### Collaborations of RAD Mentorship Programs

The four regional alliances (AccessSTEM, RASEM<sup>2</sup>, EAST, and Midwest) have been actively collaborating on getting the word out about successful their mentorship practices. Each mentorship program has a unique structure yet all positively impact both mentors and mentees. The first collaboration was a poster presentation at the NSF JAM meeting in June 2008. The poster highlighted all four programs, noting their structure, participants, and outcomes. The second collaboration is a manuscript, again, describing the structure, recruitment strategies, types of students involved, impacts, results, and findings; and implications for other mentorship programs. We will be submitting the manuscript in October 2008 to the *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, the nationally refereed journal of AHEAD.

### Web Site Update

Our resident web experts, Kris and Liam (see accompanying article), are busy keeping the web site updated and operational. We hope to create a web site that is interesting, accessible, easy-to-navigate, and resource-rich. If you have any feedback or have additional information you'd like to see posted, please let us know [there is a contact form right on the web site!] and we'll respond right away. Be sure to bookmark our site for easy access: [www.stemmidwest.org](http://www.stemmidwest.org).

# Spotlight on People

## Jackie Wenkman

### Midwest Alliance Local Advisory Board

Dr. Jacquelyn Wenkman holds a Ph.D. in rehabilitation psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has worked in the field of employment of people with disabilities for thirty-two years. Twenty of those years were direct service years and placement of college graduates with disabilities. While working for the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, the Office for Disability Services experienced a 95% placement rate for college graduates with disabilities. She is currently the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) director for Wisconsin. MIG is a grant from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) intended to improve the infrastructure in each eligible state, in the full inclusion and competitive employment of people with disabilities.



Jackie is a parent and advocate for people with disabilities and has extensive experience in educational and vocational accommodations appropriate for the full inclusion of students and employees with disabilities. Her personal mission is the full integration of all people into their communities for work and leisure.

### Midwest Alliance Participant Experiences the University of Illinois

*This summer a high school student submitted an application to the Midwest Alliance. He was interested in several fields of study, including mathematics and engineering. After interacting with the student, one of our Midwest Outreach Coordinators gave him information about a camp called Worldwide Youth in Science and Engineering (WYSE) at the University of Illinois. This camp gives students a glimpse into all the different aspects of engineering and its practicality. With Midwest's assistance this student was able to go to this camp and gain more exposure to engineering. The student is currently participating in the Midwest Alliance mentorship program and has just finished his internship program. Below is an essay the student wrote about his experience.*

[Editor's Note: The participant's name is withheld pursuant to confidentiality provisions under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990]

### My WYSE Experience

During my time at the U of I engineering program, I did a great number of things. On the first day, I checked into the program, unpacked my belongings in my dorm, and met my roommate. Next, we went down to the cafeteria, and the counselors had everybody introduce themselves so everybody would get to know each other. Then we went down to an arcade that was rented out and we were able to go bowling, play pool, DDR, and do a number of other activities. Afterward, we went back to the dorm building for dinner. When it was over, a group of people and I played cards together, and then we went to bed.

On Monday, we got up and had breakfast, and then went and had our group photo taken. Next we went and watched several demonstrations in the physics lab, which was quite interesting. Then, we previewed bioengineering and had a chance to see and use some of the equipment that is used by the bioengineers. After that we had lunch, and then had an introduction to nanotechnology, where we did several activities, including isolating gold and silver nanoparticles and keeping samples. Then we had an introduction to Computer Science, and had a real life look at AND, OR and NOT gates. Afterwards, we saw the Games Department and were able to play some of the games developed by students at the U of I on the computer. Following the games, we had dinner, and after that we had our first introduction to Lego programming. Then we watched a movie at the dorm building and went to bed.

Over the next several days, we participated in a vast number of activities and viewed many demonstrations. The area that was the most interesting to me was the Material Sciences and Engineering Department, where we did some fascinating things with liquid nitrogen and also learned what an materials science engineer actually does. We did things with Civil Engineering, and did a lot with Lego programming as well, which led to a final competition.

We had introductions to Industrial, Mechanical, Aerospace, Chemical, Electrical, Nuclear and Agricultural Engineering as well. Each engineering field was of great interest to me and unfortunately I don't have enough room to go into great detail on all of them.

Overall, I found this to be a wonderful experience and I would highly recommend people who are looking into potential engineering futures to participate in this program, as it is extremely hands on and informative, and all the professors and students were very enthusiastic about it.

The Midwest Alliance program helped me in many ways, including (but not limited to) providing me with information about the camp and other internships, financial assistance, and being available to answer any questions I had.