

# HEATH Resource Center at the National Youth Transitions Center Newsletter

National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities  
Summer Edition 2013



The HSC Foundation

## HEATH Resource Center at the National Youth Transitions Center

THE GEORGE  
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UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON, DC

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 Resources**. 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 site of **The HSC Foundation's National Youth Transitions Center**.  
<http://www.hscfoundation.org/aboutus/publications/NYTCbrochure.pdf>

### **Transition Planning for Students with Traumatic Brain Injury: What are the problems and how do we prevent them?**

**By: Jacqueline L. Smith and Theresa Sacchi Armstrong**

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is one of the leading causes of disability and death in children under the age of nineteen. Each year in the United States (U.S.), 186,089 young people between the ages of 15 and 19 sustain brain injuries requiring medical attention. As many as 4,000 die and another 25,000 are hospitalized for moderate to severe TBI (Faul, Xu, Wald & Coronado, 2010). While most youth with mild injuries will recover well from their injuries, at least one third of those with more severe injuries will experience persistent cognitive, social and behavioral difficulties that are likely to impact their ability to complete secondary school, to move on to post-secondary education, and to obtain and retain competitive employment (Glang, Dise-Lewis & Tyler, 2006). Unfortunately, few teachers have the knowledge, skills, and/or experience necessary to identify, assess, and design

instruction that adequately meets the unique needs of these students. The purpose of this article is to provide a brief overview of brain injury, its implication for youth in high school and beyond, and to provide recommendations for teachers and transition coordinators to use to support youth with TBI.

## **Definition of Brain Injury**

There are two primary types of brain injury: traumatic brain injury (TBI) and acquired brain injury (ABI). TBI is the term used most often to describe brain injuries but it is limited in definition. For example, traumatic injuries are caused by some sort of external force on the head and brain, and the subsequent axonal injury, brain swelling, and bleeding that cause secondary damage. ABI is more broadly defined: in addition to TBI, it also includes injury from strokes; aneurysms; tumors; lack of oxygen to the brain from drowning, strangulation, and cardiac arrest; and infection (Turner-Stokes, Nair, Sedki, Disler, & Wade, 2011). Youth are particularly vulnerable to brain injury: compared with younger children or adults, (a) they are more susceptible to peer pressure; (b) they are more impulsive; (c) they have a relatively poor recognition of the consequences of their behaviour; and (d) they are more likely to engage in risk taking behaviors (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council [IOM-NRC], 2011). All of these characteristics put youth at risk for incidents and accidents that often lead to brain injury. Most TBIs in the 15 to 19 year age range are caused by motor vehicle accidents, being struck by or against stationary or moving objects, falls, assaults, and other/unknown causes (Faul et al., 2010). Failed suicide attempts, near drowning, and drug overdose are important causes of non-traumatic brain injury in youth (Turner-Stokes et al., 2011).

The distinction between traumatic and acquired brain injury is important to note because the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) uses the narrow definition of TBI for eligibility purposes:

...an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psycho-social

behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma." [34 U.S.C §300.8(c)(12)]

This means that, with few exceptions, only youth with TBI will be eligible for services and supports under the TBI category.

### **Consequences of Brain Injury**

The consequences of brain injury are complex and difficult to understand for someone without the knowledge and experience with the condition. Most youth with mild injuries will experience full recovery within days, weeks or months of their injuries; however, this is not always the case. The public is hearing more and more in the media and in the research that sports related concussions, particularly repeated concussions common in football, hockey, soccer, and boxing cause significant issues for young athletes. Unfortunately, these youth often slip through the cracks. They are not taken seriously because they often look fine physically. However, they have difficulty with fatigue, concentration, memory, irritability, sensitivity to light and noise, sleep disturbances, depression and anxiety. Those who receive an accurate diagnosis by a doctor or psychiatrist seldom receive cognitive rehabilitation, but instead are prescribed medications for pain, depression or anxiety. Other young people may not even seek treatment assuming that they simply had a bump on the head. It may never occur to them to link the injury to the symptoms that develop afterward.

Injuries in individuals with moderate to severe injuries are often more apparent at first, but they often experience complete physical recovery and *appear* largely unaffected by their injuries. However, in addition to many of the symptoms seen with mild injury, many youth will have long term difficulties with:

- responding to and using language;
- mental processing speed;
- the capacity for new learning;
- executive skills required for organization, planning, attention and decision making;
- social development;
- emotional and behavioural self-regulation;

- secondary ADHD, mood and anxiety disorders;
- disruptive behaviour problems;
- personality changes.

*The challenge for families and educators is that the vast majority of youth with brain injury appear to be completely unaffected by their injuries and many perform within normal limits on standard tests of intelligence, but academically, emotionally, behaviourally, and socially, they are not the same.*

### **The Need for Transition Services**

More than half of all secondary students with brain injuries sustained their injuries during the high school years (Todis & Glang, 2008). Many of these students report having difficulty returning to school because of persistent cognitive difficulties, emotional changes, difficult peer relationships, and/or physical challenges (Stewart-Scott & Douglas, 1998). Services and supports that might help these students include (a) appropriate, ecological and functional assessment; (b) student focused planning; (c) family involvement; (d) case management services; (e) mentoring and coaching; and, (f) systems collaboration (Hayes, Sublette, Harwood, & Hood, n.d.).

Oregon researchers, Bonnie Todis and her colleagues (2008), have conducted one of the only longitudinal studies of high school students in transition services. They found that 94% of students with TBI who received appropriate services complete high school, and more than half attended post-secondary at some point before their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday. They also found that even students with severe injuries were employed directly after high school and most were employed at some point by age 26.

In spite of these positive results, few students with TBI receive appropriate special education and/or transition services. There are several possible reasons as to why students with TBI may not receive appropriate education and/or transition services. Some students, parents and teachers underestimate the impact of the injury and poor school performance, emotional difficulties, and/or behavioural changes are attributed to other factors. Alternately, others may not meet the eligibility criteria for special education services under the definition of TBI (i.e. in spite of significant cognitive difficulties, they still score at or above grade level on standardized tests). Some students are found eligible for services under another disability category (e.g. other health impairment, learning disability, emotional and

behaviour disorders, or intellectual impairment) but without specific interventions designed for brain injury, students may not receive appropriate supports or services (Smith & Tyler, 1997). In other cases, sympathetic teachers move students on to graduation (without requiring that students meet the learning standards) because they feel that "it is more important for students to graduate with his or her class than to master course content" (Todis & Glang, 2008, p. 257). Finally, the risk factors for brain injury including pre-injury psychological/behavioural problems, low socioeconomic status, family instability, alcohol and drug use/abuse, (Carroll et al., 2004) and delinquent/risk-taking behaviour (Luiselli et al., 2000) may bias school staff. Brain injury related problems might be mistaken for existing problems.

### **Long-term Implications of Inadequate Services**

Unfortunately, the long-term impact of brain injury in this age group has not been well explored. This is surprising given the importance of this time for these young people who are planning for their futures, deciding if and where they are going to go to college, what kind of career they are going to pursue; and when they are going to move out on their own (Aud, Kewalramani, & Frolich, 2011). If we assume that students with brain injuries share the fate of other students with disabilities, we can expect high rates of high school drop-out, unsuccessful attempts at post-secondary education, unemployment or underemployment/poor wages, slower transitions to independence, poor overall quality of life (Smith & Tyler, 1997), increased drug and alcohol use, and delinquency (Luiselli, et al., 2000). These poor outcomes are not inevitable. The findings of Todis and her colleagues highlight the importance of providing special education and transition services to students with TBI. To better illustrate the problems youth experience following even a mild injury, we present the case of Maddy.

#### **Maddy's Case**

Maddy stepped onto the Walnut Hills High School's athletic field for what she expected was her last game of the season. She looked forward to playing with her college team at William and Mary where she had been already been accepted for early admission on a full Field Hockey scholarship starting

in the fall. What she did not know was that this would not only be her last game at Walnut Hills, but the last hockey game of her life.

At the end of the second quarter, Maddy was struck and knocked down by the force of a puck hitting her forehead. She was immediately checked out by the high school athletic trainer who suggested she sit out for the rest of the game. Her injury did not alarm school staff: she had not lost consciousness; she walked off the field; and she answered their questions. She did appear to be startled, confused, and out of breath, but they took the usual precautions and did not let her return to play.

In the days following this incident, Maddy was overwhelmed with fatigue. She suffered from persistent chills, nausea, and pounding headaches. For weeks, Maddy was unable to get out of bed for school and when she did, she found that it was impossible to concentrate. Reading became impossible and the more she tried to focus on words on a page, she became more debilitated by the headache. When she was able to leave her house to see friends, she would lose track of conversations, which further caused her to become upset and angry with herself and with her friends.

The school and coaching staff were involved in a heated debate about her missing school, and the district referred her to their contracted sports medicine doctor. Maddy underwent the full battery of *physical* tests, and the doctor who found no reason for her not to return to play or school, signed a release to return to her normal activities.

Unfortunately, Maddy continued to experience academic and social difficulties. Several teachers assumed that she was just not motivated for high school academics anymore since she had already been accepted to college. As the weeks passed, Maddy would show up at school wearing the same clothes every day because, she said, "changing them means I have to match the colors over again." Previously an energetic and sociable teen, she now spent most of her time in bed, isolated from her friends, and teachers and school administrators questioned whether this straight-A student would even graduate from high school that year. People who knew Maddy well realized that her lack of concentration, constant fatigue, difficulty finding words, and slowed thinking processing was not normal for her, but no one knew what was wrong, and no one drew the link to the concussion.

Unfortunately, stories like Maddy's are too common. The difficulties students face following brain injury are often missed, misdiagnosed, or misattributed to other factors in the students' control. While there has been increased attention to sports related injuries in schools in the last few years,

there schools still have a long way to go. The remainder of this article will focus on providing recommendations that can be used with the student athlete with TBI as well as other students preparing to complete high school and move on to post secondary school and employment.

## **Recommendations**

### **Sports-Related Injuries.**

School professionals are beginning to realize that they play key roles in supporting the recovering student athlete. School-wide supports are becoming responsive and supportive to students with brain injuries: school nurses are involved in daily medical evaluations as well as providing a rest and recovery area for students; staff are communicating better with athletic coaches; guidance counselors realize that it is their responsibility to coordinate academic accommodations within Individual Education Plans (IEP's) and 504 plans. Social workers, counselors and school psychologists provide emotional support to students and as well as their families, and they may refer the student for neuropsychological testing as appropriate. Some schools with athletic programs have a review team made up of these specialists whose role is to assess sports concussions and subsequent support requirements.

Managing symptoms in the classroom is an important part of concussion management in athletes. The following is a list of accommodations recommended in Neal McGrath's article, *Supporting the Student-Athlete's Return to the Classroom After a Sports-Related Concussion* (McGrath, 2010). These strategies can be integrated into a student's 504 Plan or IEP:

- Several days of complete rest, graduating to limited attendance, as needed
- Rest periods during the school day
- When symptoms flare, brief rest and pain medication may allow student to return to class
- Extending assignment deadlines
- Postponing or staggering tests
- Waiving (or unweighting) specific tests and assignments
- Extending testing time
- Accommodation for light or noise sensitivity
- Exempting from team sport practice and gym activities

- No physical activity graduating to limited physical activity, as tolerated
- Monitoring backpack weight, stair use, playing of musical instruments
- Using a reader (or recorded books) for assignments and testing
- Using a note taker or scribe
- Using a smaller, quieter examination room
- Preferential classroom seating
- Assistance in organizing and prioritizing assignments
- Temporary assistance of a tutor

A school team knowledgeable in the long term consequences of mild traumatic brain injury and concussions will be able to guide special education and general education teachers to make appropriate accommodations for a student as he/she is healing from a mild brain injury. Working with youth, parents, doctors, teachers, and administrators to meet the student's needs during this extremely important time for healing will enable them to lessen the impact on lifelong impairment on memory, behavior, learning and emotional problems.

### **General Academic Interventions**

It is important to use evidence-based practices with all students, and while the interventions for students with TBI do not have a strong evidence base, several strategies supported in the research for students with other disabilities have been modified and are noted for their positive results. Sohlberg and Turkstra (2011), have suggested that we should focus on a team based approach to problem solving with students with TBI to help them to identify goals, strengths, barriers, and action plans which are workable within their own environments. They recommend the following problem solving approaches in three categories: instruction, organization, and assistive technology.

#### **Instruction:**

- Summarize information as it is taught and emphasize information to be remembered
- Couple new with previously learned information
- Create opportunities for repetition and practice
- Break complex skills down into component parts
- Pre-teach component skills in a simpler environment

- Include teaching examples that across all of the contexts where the student will utilize the strategy
- Repetitive practice is helpful to individuals with memory and learning problems
- Include a range of teaching examples that efficiently sample all of the contexts in which the student will need to utilize the strategy

### Organization

- Provide two sets of the same books - one set for home and one for school,
- Set up a notebook for the student to use for all subjects
- Use a notebook to organize schedules, maps, homework, and strategies
- Record lessons or provide lessons in writing
- Use a clock to enhance time management skills to help student stay on schedule

### Assistive Technology

- Electronic or computerized systems may help plan, track, and prompt behavior
- Provide written organizational systems to help manage school assignments and navigate the school environment
- Use calendars and assignment lists
- Help devise individually tailored systems that address specific needs such as a classroom schedule, color coded locker which categorized materials needed for each class

Teachers and school staff should use a team based approach to identify the goals, strengths, barriers, and action plans with students and families. Pacing instruction to the student's needs, providing ongoing guidance and support, and reducing stress through error free learning are all universal approaches that will benefit students with brain injuries. Transition coordinators should also keep these strategies in mind when conducting vocational assessments or transition planning interviews, considering internship environments, and natural supports for these students. Good teaching methods through scaffolding information and planning, whether in the classroom, on a field trip, internship, or job site are central in to helping all students achieve success and should especially be foremost in a teachers mind when a student has been identified with a brain injury.

## Transition Planning

Appropriate transition planning is amongst the most important interventions that can be provided to a student with TBI. While this article is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of interventions and strategies for working with these students, the following evidence-based recommendations adapted from the *Transition Toolkit for Students with Traumatic Brain Injury* (Hayes, Sublette, Harwood, & Hood, n.d.) provide a starting point for teachers, transition coordinators, and families to begin their planning.

Student-Focused Planning: Students with TBI are faced with a different way of being in the world. This often requires that they rediscover or reinvent themselves, recognize and accept their areas of strength and challenges. Students will need to learn skills that focus on:

- Self-advocacy and self-determination
- Decision making
- Planning
- Setting realistic expectations
- Understanding the consequences of choices

Student Development. Many students with brain injuries receive academic supports to help them to graduate from high school, but there is little focus on practical skills development, an area that requires attention for many of these youth. Students need to have the foundations for education and employment success as well as the ability to independently navigate the adult world if they are to be successful. This includes the development of:

- Academic skills and strategies (particularly for students aiming to pursue post-secondary education)
- Life skills (personal care, home management, safety)
- Pre-employment/employment skills
- Communication skills

Interagency Collaboration. Collaboration is an important practice that school professionals and staff need to consider. School professionals and staff are not always trained in TBI, they are not trained in the resources, services and supports available for young adults with TBI. Inviting community

providers that specialize in brain injury to transition planning meetings, networking, sharing knowledge and information with other stakeholders, and/or connecting students and families to external resources is necessary for successful transitions.

Family Involvement. It is critical for transition coordinators and other school professionals to work closely with families. By working closely with the family in the transition process, students may be better prepared for the future. Families can help students by

- Facilitating self-determination
- Helping students navigate through the various agencies and systems (health, education, vocational, housing, financial)
- Making guardianship decisions before the student turns 18 (if necessary)
- Connecting students to community resources
- Helping students stay focused on current skills rather than on pre-injury goals and expectations.

Program Structure. This set of recommendations relates to school and community strategies that lead to successful transitions. Students with TBI have difficulty generalizing skills from one environment to another. As such, it is best practice to teach them skills in the contexts in which they will be used and where they can be practiced. These naturalistic environments may include job sites, public transportation, the home, and in the community.

Motivation and Initiation, TBI and Transition. This final area of focus recommended by Hayes and her colleagues (n.d.) relates to consequences of TBI that are often mistaken for laziness, lack of cooperation, or depressions are in fact problems with motivation and initiation. These are important functional deficits that are critical when working with students through their transition plans.

*Initiation problems* result in the inability to start a task and therefore affect their ability to accomplish goals. (It is important to note that this is not volitional.) Strategies that may be used to address problems with initiation are similar to those mentioned above and include:

- Incorporate routines into the students day

- Have student use technology (iPADs, smartphones) or graphic organizers to provide structure when beginning an activity
- Provide cuing
- Use organizational supports including advance organizers, checklists, written schedules, series of photos etc.

*Motivation* is another frequently misunderstood consequence of TBI. Students may not be moved to do any work towards their transition goals. The possible strategies to address motivation are:

- Use motivational interviewing to help students identify meaningful and achievable goals
- Identify intrinsic motivators for students and incorporate them into their activities and plans
- Use students' own words when writing goals
- Have students break goals into small, manageable steps
- Help students develop self-monitoring systems that relate efforts to outcomes
- Put the student in the expert role

### **Conclusion**

Transition outcomes for youth with brain injuries are often poor, but not inevitable. Advocacy for better transition practices is critical for the future of students with brain injuries. Teachers, transition coordinators, families, and school districts all play a critical role in helping students develop the skills they require to make the connection with the postsecondary setting whether that be college, work, postsecondary training, and/or independent living setting. These young people have their whole lives ahead of them and the right amount and type of support at the right time can help them to achieve a better quality of life.

## Online Resources

### **Websites Focused On Pediatric TBI for Educators**

*The Center on Brain Injury Research and Training*

<http://www.cbirt.org/>

*BrainSteps - Strategies Teaching Educators Parents and Students*

[http://www.brainsteps.net/\\_orbs/about/index.aspx](http://www.brainsteps.net/_orbs/about/index.aspx)

*Colorado Traumatic Brain Injury Networking Team*

<http://cokidswithbraininjury.com/>

*Transition Toolkit for Students with Traumatic Brain Injury.*

[http://media.cbirt.org/uploads/2012/10/Transition\\_Toolkit\\_October\\_2012.pdf](http://media.cbirt.org/uploads/2012/10/Transition_Toolkit_October_2012.pdf)

### **Online TBI Training for Educators**

*Heads Up to Clinicians: Addressing Concussion in Sports in Kids and Teens*

<http://preventingconcussions.org/>

*Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports*

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/Training/HeadsUpConcussion.html>

*Special Education Evaluation and Services for Students with Traumatic Brain Injury:  
A Manual for Minnesota Educators*

<http://specialed.spps.org/uploads/TraumaticBrainInjuryMnl.pdf>

*Disability in Disguise*

<http://www.byyourside.org/educate/professionals/biaf-courses/disability-in-disguise-educators.html>

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**Theresa Sacchi Armstrong** currently works as Research Associate to GSEHD, Coordinator of the Building Schools' Capacity to Serve Students with Brain Injuries Project, and a Doctoral student in the Applied Research in Special Education Program at GW. Her special education experiences span from pre-school community programs through college teaching. She has developed several school-to-work transition programs in inner city school districts, worked as transition coordinator and intervention specialist at Deer Valley Unified School District, in Phoenix, Arizona, and also as the State Transition Specialist for the Arizona Department of Education. [tjsacchi@gwu.edu](mailto:tjsacchi@gwu.edu)

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## **HEATH Resource Center at the National Youth Transitions Center (NYTC) Website Update!!**

### **Do You Need Money for College? Federal Student Aid at a Glance 2013-2014**

The Federal Student Aid at a Glance 2013-14 is a two-page publication that highlights the following information:

1. What is federal student aid?
2. Who gets federal student aid?
3. How do you apply for federal student aid?
4. What are the current federal student aid programs for 2013-14?

If you want to find more information and resource on scholarships, please go to [studentaid.gov/scholarships](http://studentaid.gov/scholarships). For all other information regarding eligibility on financial aid, please go to [studentaid.gov/eligibility](http://studentaid.gov/eligibility).

(<http://www.heath.gwu.edu/publications/do-you-need-money-for-college-federal-student-aid-at-a-glance-2013-14/>)

## **2013-2014 HEATH Financial Aid Information Publication!!!**

To all families and youth with disabilities looking for information on financial aid, please check out the different options in grants, loans, work-study, and scholarship opportunities. This is a resource guide that explains financial aid as well as highlights various scholarship resources for youth with disabilities listed in the back of the publication!! Please go to our website to obtain your own copy of the publication!! (<http://www.heath.gwu.edu/publications/2013-2014-heath-financial-aid-information/>)

## **Apply to be a part of the 2013-2014 Maryland Youth Advisory Council!!**

The Maryland Governor's Office for Children is now accepting applications for the 2013-2014 Maryland Youth Advisory Council. If you know any youth who may be interested in applying, please share the HEATH website link to the application with them (<http://www.heath.gwu.edu/news/apply-for-the-2013-2014-maryland-youth-advisory-council/>). To deadline to apply is **July 1, 2013!**

## **2013 ADVOCATES IN DISABILITY AWARD (ADA) goes to: Mr. Henry "Hoby" Wedler**

The Foundation's **Advocates in Disability Award (ADA) program** recognizes and supports a young person with a disability between the ages of 14 and 26, who has dedicated himself/herself to positively affecting the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. The program also supports an innovative project developed by the ADA recipient that serves and empowers individuals with disabilities. We are pleased to present this year's award to **Mr. Henry "Hoby" Wedler** of Davis, California. Through the chemistry camp he founded in 2011, Hoby enhances STEM education. The camp enriches teenage campers who are blind and visually impaired and leaves them with a strong feeling of empowerment. The camp assists in teaching young people independence and provides them with valuable skills to use in science applications in high school and college.

**Save The Date: LEAP Awards Evening**  
**November 13, 2013**  
**John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

The Life Enrichment Awards Grant Program is part of the HSCF National Youth Transitions Initiative. The purpose of the Life Enrichment Awards Program or LEAP is to enrich the lives of youth and young adults with disabilities and chronic illnesses in the expanded Washington, DC metropolitan area by providing goods and services that are directly linked to youth transitions through a network of community partners. LEAP is a program of the HSC Health Care System and is administered by The HSC Foundation.

**New National Youth Transitions Center Facebook and  
Twitter Page!**

The National Youth Transitions Center officially has a Facebook page (at [www.facebook.com/thenytc](http://www.facebook.com/thenytc))! If you or your organization has a Facebook account, please "Like" the NYTC page. The NYTC has a Twitter account (at [https://twitter.com/The\\_NYTC](https://twitter.com/The_NYTC)). Please check out their information and resources for youth and veterans with disabilities!! Please "Like" and "Follow" their Facebook and Twitter pages!!

**HEATH Resource Center at the  
National Youth Transitions Center  
Social Media Sites!**

The HEATH Resource Center at the National Youth Transitions Center has a Facebook page (at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Heath-Resource-Center>). We have a Twitter account (at <https://twitter.com/#!/heathcenter>). Please check out both of our social media sites for the latest updates, resources, and scholarship information for students with disabilities!! Please "Like" our Facebook page and "Follow" us on Twitter!!

## **Transition Special Education Distance Education Certificate Program George Washington University**

There is still time for candidates to enroll in the Fall '13 cohort for our 12-credit Transition Special Education Certificate Program. Students who have enrolled in this program will be given priority when being considered for admission to the Master's program and all credits earned will be easily transferred. Candidates who decide to apply to this program using ApplyYourself, the on-line application system, can use the link: <https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/ApplicantConnectLogin.asp?id=GWUGRAD>. Please list only official degree transcripts that indicate completion of a Bachelors and/or Masters. Listing all colleges attended may delay approval of your application. This will allow sufficient time for your application to be reviewed and approved, which must take place before they can register for class. **Deadline: Rolling Admissions.** For further information or additional questions, please contact Dr. Michael Ward, Program Coordinator, by e-mailing [mjward@gwu.edu](mailto:mjward@gwu.edu).

### **Secondary Special Education and Transition Services: Distance Education, Master's of Arts (Non-teacher Licensure)**

This 39 credit, on-line Youth Transition, Career, and Vocational Services Master's degree program prepares professionals as change agents in teaching, leadership and support roles that assist youth with disabilities and youth at-risk to make successful transitions through high school to post-secondary education, employment and independent adulthood. Students will build knowledge and skills for performing the roles and functions of transition specialists through assessment, interdisciplinary planning, collaboration, and implementation of services for individuals with disabilities. The program encourages student involvement in research, scholarship, publishing and leadership activities as adjuncts to their program of study. Candidates who decide to apply to this program using ApplyYourself, the on-line application system, can use the link: <https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/ApplicantConnectLogin.asp?id=GWUGRAD>. For more information about the program, please email Dr. Michael Ward at [mjward@gwu.edu](mailto:mjward@gwu.edu) or Bridget Green at [greenb@gwmail.gwu.edu](mailto:greenb@gwmail.gwu.edu).

**Deadline: August 1, 2013**

# Transition Headliners!!

## **Two Profiles Highlight How States Use the Guideposts for Success to Improve Youth Transition Services**

Two new publications by NCWD/Youth illustrate how state agencies can use the *Guideposts for Success* as a strategic organizational framework to increase coordination across agencies, departments, and service providers responsible for youth transition outcomes. In Maryland, the Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), in partnership with TransCen, Inc., has used the *Guideposts* to develop and pilot a seamless transition services model called the Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative (MSTC). The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) uses the *Guideposts* as a framework for defining, developing, and tracking its youth transition services and programs throughout the state. Read the *State Perspectives on Using the Guideposts for Success Innovative Strategies* profiles of [Maryland](#) and [South Carolina](#) online.

## ***Youth in Action!* Tip Sheets for Youth in Transition Available from NCWD/Youth**

As part of their individual development, today's youth need to learn and understand how to take action for themselves as they transition into adulthood. In conjunction with the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor, NCWD/Youth has developed a series of *Youth in Action! Tip Sheets* aimed at helping youth learn and think about important transition issues including: [Becoming a Stronger Self-Advocate](#); [Leading Your Transition](#)

[Planning](#); [Learning Disability History](#); [Getting Involved in Volunteering](#); [Serving on Decision-Making Boards](#); and [Participating in Internships and Work-Based Experiences](#).

While these tip sheets are designed for youth to read and use, they are also helpful tools for family members, educators, and youth service professionals to use in discussions with youth. See a list of all the *Youth in Action! Tip Sheets* on NCWD/Youth's [Youth Development](#) webpage under [Publications](#).

## **National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Publishes Brief on Universal Design for Learning**

NASSP released a research brief co-written by NCWD/Youth and featuring NCWD/Youth research. The brief, entitled [Universal Design for Learning: Strategies Principals Can Employ in Their Schools](#), recommends implementing the inclusive learning strategy known as universal design for learning (UDL) to reach a broader diversity of students. UDL promotes a framework that makes course instruction, materials, and content accessible and engaging for students of all learning styles by offering multiple, flexible ways for students to receive information and demonstrate their skills. The brief details the UDL model, recommendations to assist all students, and additional strategies that can benefit students with disabilities.

## **NCES Releases "The Condition of Education 2013"**

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES),

released "The Condition of Education 2013(<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/>),(<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/%29>)" a Congressionally mandated report to the country on education in America today. The report presents 42 indicators grouped under four areas: population characteristics, participation in education, elementary and secondary education, and postsecondary education. The report also spotlights some areas of interest: trends in employment rates by educational attainment, kindergarten entry status (on-time, delayed-entry, and repeating kindergartners), the status of rural education, and financing higher education.

Also, a new NCES report on postsecondary institutions (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2013289>)(<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2013289%29>) presents key data on price of attendance in 2012-13 and enrollment and degrees and other awards conferred in 2011-12.

### **College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education**

The Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) strives improve education standards in Adult Education to help young adults transition into college and career. The College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education Report provides information the applicability of the Common Core to Adult Education, process of selecting college and career readiness for Adult Education, and presents the college and career readiness standards for English Language and Mathematics.

<https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/CRStandardsAdultEd.pdf>

### **National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2013 Theme Announced**

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) has announced the National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) theme and it is "Because We Are EQUAL to the Task". Youth with disabilities have an opportunity to learn about National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Teachers can plan activities and awareness to support NDEAM in and outside of the classroom.

<http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/odep/ODEP20131020.htm>

### **Oregon's Traumatic Brain Injury Manual**

The transition strategies presented in this manual address the challenges that children, families, educators, and community providers face when working with students who have sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Research on transition has shown a variety of practices to be effective for students with a range of disabilities. This manual describes many of those practices and recommends strategies to adapt practices for students with TBI.

[http://www.cbirt.org/resources/transition\\_toolkit/](http://www.cbirt.org/resources/transition_toolkit/)

### **Survey on Perceptions on Youth with Disabilities returning to Schools from the Juvenile Justice System**

The University of Oregon and Arizona State University are conducting a study to explore perceptions of youth with disabilities and their outcomes from the juvenile justice system and their performance in the

classroom. Special & General education teachers, transition specialists, and school staff who work with transition age youth with disabilities are invited to complete our 15-25 minute online survey.

By following the link below, you will be redirected to our survey, and upon completion will have the opportunity to be entered into a drawing to win an iPad Mini or one of eight (\$25.00) [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) gift cards.

Please complete this survey by Friday, June 17, 2013.

Link:

[https://oregon.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_80JbnUegDdFhhf7](https://oregon.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_80JbnUegDdFhhf7)

### **The Great Leap Forward: Transitioning into the Adult World**

Ronald Savage wrote, *The Great Leap Forward: Transition into the Adult World*, as an article to help educators and families prepare students with TBI to transition into the postsecondary setting. The article includes a family checklist and professional staff checklist tailored towards a student with TBI, planning for living independently, planning for education after high school, and suggestions on who can be a part of the student's transition team. The appendices provide educators and families with a list of appropriate work skills and behaviors as well as suggested resources.

<http://www.brainline.org/content/2008/10/great-leap-forward-transitioning-adult-world.html>

## **Conference, Webinar, and Forum Opportunities!**

### **NCWD/Youth Policy Brief & Webinar on Individualized Learning Plans Available Online**

NCWD/Youth has released the policy brief, *Using Individualized Learning Plans to Produce College and Career Ready High School Graduates*, which summarizes findings and recommendations from a multi-year individualized learning plans (ILP) research and demonstration project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. Individualized learning plans (ILPs) are increasingly used by states and school districts to support youth in becoming college and career ready. An ILP is both a document and a process that students use - with support from school counselors, teachers, and parents - to define their career goals and postsecondary plans in order to inform the student's decisions about their courses and activities throughout high school. Thirty-five states currently engage middle and/or high school students in ILPs.

The policy brief highlights key findings from the ILP studies, which examined: whether and how ILPs may be considered a promising strategy for developing college and career readiness; and whether and how students with disabilities are participating in ILPs. The policy brief also recommends actions for a diversity of stakeholders including state officials, district/school officials, educators, organizations interested in supporting family engagement in schools, special education administrators and support organizations, national organizations, disability organizations, and Federal officials. Read or download the policy brief online.

On May 16, NCWD/Youth and the [Institute for Educational Leadership](#) hosted a webinar that highlighted the ILP research finding, lessons from Connecticut Department of Education's experience implementing ILPs statewide for all students, and policy recommendations. [The webinar recording is available online.](#)

**June 3-6, 2013**  
**American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)**  
**Pittsburgh, PA**

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) conference theme is Race to Catch the Future. The conference will provide the latest research and best practices in the field to researchers, clinicians, practitioners, educators, and policymakers. Participants can see the final program on the AAIDD website. For more information about registration and conference sessions, please go to: [http://aidd.org/content\\_6546.cfm?navID=75](http://aidd.org/content_6546.cfm?navID=75)

**June 25-28, 2013**  
**Maryland Youth Leadership Forum**  
**Bowie State University**

MD-YLF will be held June 25 - 28<sup>th</sup> at Bowie State University. This 4 day, 3-night forum is a great opportunity for students with disabilities, who are juniors or seniors in High School, to learn about self-advocacy, independent living, leadership, and accommodations, etc. If you know of students (in Maryland) who have leadership qualities or potential, please share the attached application with them. <http://www.heath.gwu.edu/news/maryland-students-apply-for-the-maryland-youth-leadership-forum-md-ylf/>

**June 30-July 3, 2013**  
**American School Counselor Association Conference**  
**Philadelphia, PA**

The American School Counselor Association Conference, "Liberty and Learning for All", will be held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. The conference will be conducting a live webcast for those who cannot attend the conference in person. Participants interested in the webcast must register for it. The conference will host special Sunday sessions. One of the sessions, Careers Your Students Need to Know About, will highlight new careers that students may have not considered in their planning for life after high school. To learn about registration and details about the conference sessions, please go to: <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?pl=325&sl=129&contentid=182>

**July 8-10, 2013**  
**National Career Development Association Celebrating 100 Years of Career Development: Creating Hope, Social Justice, and Legacy**  
**Boston, MA**

Conference attendees will be able to choose over a 100 presentations, 12 Centennial Luncheon Series, over 110 Roundtable Sessions, and 6 Tech Labs! The conference is celebrating a 100 years of Career Development. Pre-conference discount rates will end on May 1, 2013. To learn more about the conference and see the agenda, please go to [http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/p1/sp/conference\\_agenda2](http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/p1/sp/conference_agenda2)

**July 8-12, 2013**  
**Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) Conference**  
**Baltimore, MD**

The AHEAD conference will focus on "Challenging and Changing Disability Perspectives" in higher education. The conference will present on the current research and best practices in delivering services to young adults with disabilities in higher education settings. The topics presented at the conference range from assistive technology, self-determination, disability services, and experiences from college students with disabilities. For more information about registration and the program for the conference, please go to: <http://www.ahead.org/conferences/2013>

**July 10-13, 2013**  
**Autism Society's 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorders**  
**Pittsburgh, PA**

The Autism Society's National Conference and Exhibition is the only event to consistently bring together professionals, individuals on the autism spectrum, family members and advocates in energetic forums for in-depth presentations that cover what's new in the field of autism and explore how to improve existing services and supports. Presentation content areas include early intervention, education, employment, quality of life, behavior, communication, social skills, biomedical interventions, mental health and others. The varied expertise and experiences of presenters enables attendees to learn how to more effectively advocate and obtain needed services and supports. The ultimate goal of the Autism Society's Conference is to empower family members, individuals on the spectrum and professionals to make informed decisions. Overall conference content addresses the full range

of the autism spectrum and encompasses lifespan issues. Questions? Please email [conference@autism-society.org](mailto:conference@autism-society.org)

**July 22-26, 2013**  
**8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Higher Education and Disability**  
**Innsbruck, Austria**

The 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Higher Education and Disability is hosted by the University of Innsbruck in Austria. The international conference strives to create dialogue between countries in serving young adults with disabilities at institutes of higher education. To learn more about registration and conference program, please go to: <http://trac.uno.edu/conf/about.cfm>

**July 24-26, 2013**  
**2013 Pennsylvania Community on Transition Conference**  
**State College, PA**

The primary purpose of this conference is to expand the capacity of local education agencies and communities, in partnership with youth, young adults and families, in promoting the successful transition of youth/young adults with disabilities to post-school outcomes of employment, post-secondary education and training, community participation and healthy lifestyles. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about effective practices to assist youth/young adults with disabilities to explore possibilities, take advantage of their opportunities, and actively advocate for their future. Online registration will be set up on May 1, 2013 at <http://www.pattan.net>.

**September 26-28, 2013  
CEC Council for Children with  
Behavioral Disorders Conference  
Chicago, Illinois**

The conference is entitled, "A Brighter Future: Prevention and Intervention on Behalf of Students with Challenging Behaviors"! The conference registration is now open! For more information, please go to:

<http://www.ccbd.net/?q=node/139>

**October 24-25, 2013  
Council for Learning Disabilities, 35<sup>th</sup>  
Annual Conference on Learning  
Disabilities  
Austin, TX**

The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities will be held at the Omni Austin Hotel. Dr. Sharon Vaughn, University of Texas at Austin, will be the keynote speaker at the conference. Registration is open! To learn more about the Council for Learning Disabilities, please go to:

<http://www.cldinternational.org/About/AboutCLD.asp>. For information about the conference, please go to:  
<http://www.cldinternational.org/Conference/Conference2013.asp>

**November 3-6, 2013  
25<sup>th</sup> Annual National Dropout  
Prevention Network Conference  
Atlanta, GA**

The 25th Annual National Dropout Prevention Network Conference will conduct seminars and workshops on the following topics: literacy; school climate; data assessment; curriculum and instruction; college and career pathways; leadership, policy, and governance; and student support

services and interventions. Call for proposals deadline is May 5, 2013. For more information about this conference, please go to  
[www.dropoutprevention.org](http://www.dropoutprevention.org).

**November 6-9, 2013  
International Dyslexia Association,  
64<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
New Orleans, LA**

The IDA Annual Reading, Literacy & Learning Conference for professionals and families will consist of sharing the latest research and best practices in working with children and youth with dyslexia. The keynote speakers will be Dr. Laura Cassidy and Congressman Bill Cassidy, M.D. They will share their personal story and their advocacy work on behalf of individuals with dyslexia. To learn more registration and the conference, please go to:

<http://www.interdys.org/nolaconf.htm>

**November 14-16, 2013  
Division on Career Development and  
Transition (CEC), 17<sup>th</sup> International  
Conference. Leaders for Life No  
Limits...No Boundaries.  
Williamsburg, VA**

The Division on Career Development and Transition (CEC) will host the 17<sup>th</sup> DCDT International Conference in Williamsburg, VA. The conference will present the latest research and best practices in delivering career development and transition services for youth with disabilities. For more information about this conference, please go to:

<http://www.dcdt.org/2013/01/dcdt-2013-conference-williamsburg-info/>

**November 20-22, 2013  
OCALICON 2013 Conference  
Columbus, OH**

The OCALICON 2013 Conference is the premier Autism and Disabilities conference. The conference will focus issues related to autism, assistive technology, and low-incidence disabilities (including visual impairments, hearing impairments, TBI). For more information on the conference and registration, please go to:  
[http://conference.ocali.org/view.php?nav\\_id=1](http://conference.ocali.org/view.php?nav_id=1)

**Money, Money, Money!  
Who's Got the Money?**

**Kevin Child Scholarship  
Deadline: June 3, 2013**

The Kevin Child Scholarship is awarded through the National Hemophilia Foundation. To qualify, applicants must have a hemophilia A or B diagnosis. High schools students interested in college or vocational-technical school are encouraged to apply for the scholarship. All materials for the application must be postmarked by the Monday, June 3, 2013. For more information about this scholarship opportunity, please go to:  
<http://www.hemophilia.org/NHFWeb/MainPgs/MainNHF.aspx?menuid=53&contentid=35>

**Autism Society Award and  
Scholarship  
Deadline: June 8, 2013**

The Autism Society Award is presented each year at the Autism Society's 44<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Autism Society members must do all nominations for the awards. Each applicant is required to submit the following materials: cover page, essay (500 words), and additional materials. For more information regarding the awards, please go to: <http://www.autism-society.org/about-us/awards-scholarships/>

**ABBVIE CF Scholarship  
Deadline: June 14, 2013**

The ABBVIE CF Scholarship opportunity is available to 40 young adults with cystic fibrosis to obtain \$2,500 towards their college education. The scholarship is open to undergraduate and graduate students for the 2013/2014 academic school year. For more information regarding this scholarship opportunity and eligibility requirements, please go to:  
<http://www.abbviecfscholarship.com>

**Brain Injury Association of  
Washington Academic Scholarships  
Deadline: June 30, 2013**

The Brain Injury Association of Washington Academic Scholarships provide high school with students with brain injury with an opportunity to receive \$1,000 towards their postsecondary education. The scholarship is only available to residents that live in the state of Washington. Applicant must submit all of their application materials postmarked by the June 30, 2013 deadline. For more information regarding this scholarship opportunity, please go to:  
<http://www.braininjurywa.org/scholarship.php>

## **Federal Funding Opportunity: Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income**

### [Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income](#)

[\(PROMISE\)](#) is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Social Security Administration, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Labor. Under PROMISE, the Department of Education will fund States to develop and implement model demonstration projects that promote positive outcomes for children who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and their families. Specifically, PROMISE is intended to improve the provision and coordination of services and supports for child SSI recipients and their families to enable them to achieve improved outcomes. These outcomes include graduating from high school ready for college and a career, completing postsecondary education and job training, and obtaining competitive employment in an integrated setting and, as a result, achieving long-term reductions in the child recipients' reliance on SSI. [Eligible applicants](#) are the 50 States and the District of Columbia. A consortium of States may also apply.

## **AIAA Foundation: Grants for Excellence in Math, Science, Technology and Engineering**

American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Foundation Classroom Grants encourage excellence in educating students about math, science, technology, and engineering. Eligibility: current AIAA Educator Associate or

AIAA Professional members actively engaged as K-12 classroom educators. Maximum award: \$200. Deadline: rolling. <https://www.aiaa.org/Secondary.aspx?id=3199>

## **Possibilities: A Financial Resource for Parents of Children and Youth with Disabilities**

"Possibilities: A Financial Resource for Parents of Children with Disabilities," first published in 2004 by the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) and PACER, updates this financial planning guide to an online format, and includes more content relevant to parenting transition-age youth with disabilities. The guide offers tips and information on many financial issues and concerns of families raising children with disabilities from infancy to young adulthood. Topics include organizing financial records, managing money, preparing income taxes, health insurance options, dealing with debt, saving for college, preparing youth for adult employment, etc. <http://www.pacer.org/publications/possibilities/>

## **2013-2014 HEATH Resource Center Financial Aid Information Publication**

While education beyond high school in the United States is optional, it has become a necessary investment in future employment and life satisfaction for many people. Most, however, cannot afford to make this investment without some outside monetary assistance. Over the years, public and private sources of money have been developed specifically

to meet this need. As increasing, but limited, amounts of money have become available, a standardized method of determining eligibility has evolved to promote equitable distribution of student financial aid.

<http://www.heath.gwu.edu/publications/2013-2014-heath-financial-aid-information/>

### **2013-14 Federal Student Aid at a Glance**

Federal Student Aid has created a fact sheet that provides an overview of the major federal student aid loan and grant programs. The federal government provides federal funds for students attending colleges, including career colleges and universities. Students can find more information about federal student aid programs at [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov). To receive a copy of the fact sheet, please go to: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2013-14-do-you-need-money.pdf>

### **NASFAA and Casey Family programs: Guide to Financial Aid Assistance to Students from Foster Care and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth**

This guide provides information for those who help youth from foster care and unaccompanied homeless youth to secure financial aid for postsecondary education or training programs. It describes how to respond to new FAFSA questions 55-60 that will determine federal financial aid status for these students. A section on sensitive communications is also included. This guide will be useful for financial aid

professionals, independent living coordinators, guidance counselors, financial aid counselors, social workers and advocates who are helping youth to secure the maximum allowable financial aid.

[www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/ProvidingEffectiveFinancialAid.htm](http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/ProvidingEffectiveFinancialAid.htm)

### **Scholarships and Internships for Latino Students with Disabilities**

The World Institute on Disability (WID) has a five-year grant to establish the National Technical Assistance Center for Latinos with Disabilities living in the United States, through Proyecto Vision. Proyecto Vision's website has a list of scholarship opportunities for college students who are Latino and who are living with disability.

<http://www.proyectovision.net/english/opportunities/scholarships.html>

### **The Washington Center Scholarship**

The Washington Center Scholarship for Students with Disabilities funded by the AT&T Foundation and HSC Foundation, these awards provide housing assistance in varying amounts (up to a full housing scholarship) to competitively selected students who self-identify as having a disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Priority consideration is given to undergraduate students; however, Postgraduate Program applicants may be considered.

<http://www.twc.edu/node/8142#disabilities-scholarships>

## Add to your Favorites! (websites)

### **O\*Net Resource Center**

O\*Net Resource Center is sponsored by the Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration. O\*Net has the largest database for information regarding occupational information. O\*Net has several products that would be beneficial for youth with disabilities, educators, and professionals who work with youth with disabilities. For example, O\*Net has career assessment tools, Spanish-language version of My Next Move, My Next Move for Veterans, and O\*Net Questionnaires. <http://www.onetcenter.org/>

### **Pathways for Students & Recent Graduates to Federal Careers**

The federal government provides employment opportunities for students and recent graduates. There are three pathways that young adults can enroll in: internship program, recent graduate program, and presidential management fellows program. The federal government offers thousands of job opportunities in all different types of careers and occupations. Young adults with disabilities have the opportunity to be eligible to be hired by the federal government under a special [Schedule A hiring authority](https://www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads). <https://www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads>

### **AAPD Congressional Summer Internship Program**

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is an organization that encourages access, self-determination, competitive employment, and independent living for individual with disabilities. The AAPD Congressional Summer Internship Program provides 10-week internship opportunities for young adults with disabilities in federal agencies, congressional agencies, and nonprofit/for-profit organizations. <http://www.aapd.com/what-we-do/employment/internship-program/>

### **AmeriCorps**

AmeriCorps provides opportunities for young adults to volunteer and to give back in their respective communities in America. There are three programs within AmeriCorp that young adults can enroll in: AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps Vista, and AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps. Young adults can volunteer in the any of the following areas: community development, community outreach, children/youth, disaster relief, economic development, education, entrepreneur/business, elder care, ex-offender reentry, environment, health, hunger, homelessness, housing, homeland security, neighborhood revitalization, public safety, and technology. <http://www.americorps.gov>

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- Ed O'Leary Listserv, Mountain Plains Regional Center (MPRRC), U.S. Department of Education;
- National Center on Secondary Education and Transition E-News, which can be found at <http://www.ncset.org/enews>;

**Submissions:** We welcome submissions from transition-related organizations and entities to post resources and information in our quarterly newsletter. Please email us at [askheath@gwu.edu](mailto:askheath@gwu.edu) to include your submission in our next newsletter.