



Happenings Fall 2017

News for and about RTC/CL
Partners, Advisors and Stakeholders

Message from Glen White, Director



The five-year Research and Training Center on Community Living (RTC/CL) at the University of Kansas, funded by NIDILRR (grant number 90RT5015-02-01), has now completed its work and deliverables. We started out in 2011 with 11 different projects. Six of these were secondary data analysis projects which were designed to serve as a foundation and link to further develop and enhance our five intervention projects.

The capstone to this process was our Community Living Summit held in September 2016, which included RTC/CL staff members, Administration for Community Living staff members, Scientist and Consumer Advisory Panel members and other stakeholders. Our [website](#) contains many of the research and training outcomes and products that we developed over the past six years.

There are many factors which go into a successful RTC. These include outstanding researchers, knowledge translation (KT) staff, advisory board members, graduate students, support staff and outstanding assistance from our Federal Funding Agency, NIDILRR. We are especially thankful for the guidance from our NIDILRR Project Officer, Pimjai Sudsawad.

While this is our final update on RTC/CL activities, we will continue KT activities to reach out to those who could benefit from our work. It is also worth noting that we will continue to use much of our research and training outcomes to help guide our new [Research and Training Center on Promoting Interventions in Community Living](#) (RTC/PICL). We prefer to think of this process as more of a transition versus an ending of the RTC/CL.

Speaking of transitions...

Summers Retires!



Jean Ann Summers, research director for the Center, retired in September after some 40 years of working to improve the lives of people with disabilities through a number of KU centers and programs.

At a reception in her honor, colleagues and friends praised her keen intelligence, enduring dedication, and superb grant-writing skills. The light is dimmer at the RTC without her daily presence.

For photos from Jean Ann's retirement reception, see our [Facebook album](#).

Advisors Visit to Share Ideas

One of the keys to success for the RTC on Community Living has been its Scientific and Consumer Advisory Panel (SCAP). This group has helped us make sure our research is rigorous and relevant to the lives of people with disabilities. Over the lifetime of the Center, they have met with the entire team and interacted with us individually to provide feedback, insight and advice for conducting the Center's interventions.



In recent months, two members of the SCAP visited the research team on the KU campus to discuss dissemination of the knowledge we have gained. [Stan Holbrook](#) (left) and [Phil Rumrill](#) (right) met with staff members to offer their ideas about how to move the research into the next stage of utilization.

Their visits followed one last year by [Ron Garcia](#). In addition, advisor [Catherine Graham](#) has provided valuable feedback on a variety of Center products, including the video described below.

New Video: Disability Advocates Improve Their Community for All

[“Stoplights Don't Stop Us!”](#) tells the story of people with disabilities in Emporia, Kansas, who advocated for change in their community that enhanced their ability to participate.



As a result of their work, more time was added to the crosswalk timer at a busy downtown intersection, making it safer for all residents of the community to cross the street. The video is also available [with audio description](#).

The consumers carried out their work through the RTC/CL's intervention titled [Building Capacity for Full Community Participation](#). The research team partnered with nine centers for independent living around the country to provide CIL consumers with tools for making community change.

You can learn more about this process for making change in our free publication: [“Your Action Planning Guide for Promoting Full Community Participation Among People with Disabilities: A Resource for Independent Living Centers and Other Community-based Initiatives”](#) (PDF).

Center Completes Work – But Resources Always Available



As of September 30, 2017, the RTC on Community Living has completed its NIDILRR-funded work, but the resources developed through this center remain online. Technical assistance is also still available through our parent center, the RTC on Independent Living.

Watch our video [“Always Available: Community Living Resources”](#) for an overview of the resources

we offer. In addition, two of the interventions from this center are being further developed through our new center, the [RTC on Promoting Interventions for Community Living](#).

Seekins Honored ... and Honored Again

Tom Seekins received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Public Health Association in November in recognition of his major contributions to the improvement of health and quality of life for people with disabilities through research and teaching.

In October, he was honored at the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) conference for his contributions to rural independent living over four decades. Seekins was instrumental in developing APRIL as an organization, writing the Rural Transportation Demonstration grant through the Department of Education along with Devva Kasnitz and Linda Gonzales. Seekins retired earlier this year from his position as Director of the RTC on Disability in Rural Communities at the University of Montana. [Read more](#) about both honors.

Presentations

Martha Hodgesmith was a panelist for “Women in Leadership,” a forum and networking event sponsored by the KU School of Law career services office in November.

The Center co-sponsored Haben Girma’s visit to the KU campus in October as part of National Disability Awareness month. She spoke on “Embracing Inclusion and Innovation.” As the first deaf-blind person to graduate from Harvard Law School, Haben Girma advocates for equal opportunities for people with disabilities. President Obama named her a White House Champion of Change, and Forbes recognized her in Forbes 30 Under 30. See our [Facebook album](#) for photos.

Glen White, Craig Ravesloot, Lillie Greiman and Hayley Burghart presented “Home Alone or Out and About: Enhancing Usability & Community Participation for All” at the APRIL conference in October. This current research project for the RTC on Promoting Interventions for Community Living builds upon two interventions completed for the RTC on Community Living: [Developing a Health Promotion Assistance Tool](#) and [Home Usability for People with Disabilities](#).

Alice Zhang presented a poster at the Kansas Public Health Association conference in October. The poster was titled “Health Access for Independent Living (HAIL): How CIL Staff Can Assist People with Physical Disabilities to Promote Their Health.”

Dot Nary and Catherine Graham spoke about living with a disability on the podcast [“The Measure of Everyday Life,”](#) which is streamed by WNCU in Raleigh-Durham, NC. In the July 12 program, several people with disabilities discussed their diverse experiences of life.

RTC on Community Living Team

Research Partners

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Phillip Rumrill

Consumer Representatives

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Gwen Gillenwater
Ron Garcia
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