

# Press Release

*For immediate release*

*August 30, 2005*

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## **IHDI and It's Sister Agencies Form Kentucky Developmental Disabilities Network**

The Interdisciplinary Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky, the Kentucky Council on Developmental Disabilities and Protection and Advocacy have joined together to form the Kentucky Developmental Disabilities Network. The Network's goal is to bring about positive change on issues relating to individuals with disabilities and their families in the state of Kentucky.

For the first time in the state's history, the Advisory Boards or Councils for each of the state's three Developmental Disability Agencies - the Kentucky Council on Developmental Disabilities, Protection and Advocacy, and the University Center for Excellence- met to develop a joint action plan to address the needs of persons with developmental disabilities and their families in our state. This historic all-day meeting took place on August 18, 2005 at the Embassy Suites in Lexington.

Faith McCormick and Debbie Powell from the U.S. Administration on Developmental Disabilities were on hand to witness this event, with McCormick providing the opening address entitled, "Strategic Collaboration."

Each advisory board and/or council member was assigned to a specific workgroup that represented the Developmental Disabilities Act areas of emphasis – Quality Assurance, Education and Early Intervention, Child Care, Health, Employment, Transportation, Housing, Recreation, and Informal and Formal Community Supports. Each workgroup was asked to consider the needs assessment data that pertained to the group's specific area of emphasis and design a joint project that the three agencies can implement together to address that need.

After discussion and two rounds of voting, the final project and plan decided upon was quality assurance and self determination. Members of the workgroup proposed the development of a Self-Determination Mentor Program which would benefit individuals in the target age of 11 to 17 years old, family members, professionals and service providers. This mentoring program would increase self-esteem, independence, self-care and raise the awareness and expectations for individuals with disabilities. Details of the program

are in development, however each agency is committed to strategically work together to complete this project over the course of the next three years, thus improving the life opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in Kentucky.

*The Interdisciplinary Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky works to improve life opportunities for persons with disabilities and their families through interdisciplinary training, research, technical assistance, community education and information dissemination.*