

Transition: Bridge to Independence

Lions Connected

By Reneisha Singleton

Lions Connected (LC) is a Post-Secondary Program for students with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) at Southeastern Louisiana University.



While enrolled in the program, students are exposed to academic experiences, social experiences and vocational opportunities. Each of these experiences together make up the "College Experience." LC students audit two university courses, one academic course and one kinesiology course. Academic courses are chosen based on the

overall vocational goal of each of the students. Kinesiology courses are determined based on the courses that are offered during that particular semester and the interests of the students. In addition, students participate in a Life Skills course. The Life Skills Curriculum that is used is called "Life Centered Education," a program sponsored by the Council for Exceptional Children. This program is divided into three domains, Daily Living Skills, Self-Determination and Interpersonal Skills, and Employment Skills. LC students engage in a variety of lessons during Life Skills two to four times per week. LC students also participate in the Speech and Language Clinic offered on campus. Students attend the Speech Clinic 2 days per week for one hour. During this time, they work on a variety of skills based on individual needs. The students in the Lions Connected program attend almost all of the events held on campus. Students belong to on-campus organizations and participate in community service events. LC students are given the opportunity to participate in the Credit for Prior Learning Activity (internship). Through this internship, students are given the opportunity to participate in an unpaid, vocational interest internship. The Lions Connected program provides multiple opportunities for students with ID to help fulfill their desire to be independent, working members of society.

Dr. Gerlinde Beckers, Director
Mrs. Reneisha Singleton, Program Coordinator

LIFE Program

By Dr. Donna Wadsworth



The LIFE (Learning is for Everyone) Program at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette just completed its third year of existence and is transitioning from a pilot program to an integral part of the

College of Education. The enrollment for the fall semester 2017 will be 16 students. The LIFE program offers both a two year and four year curriculum. The philosophy of the program is "learn by doing" and promotes independence and self-advocacy. Students are provided individualized support as their learning styles and needs indicate.

LIFE Students participate in university selected courses based on their personal and career interests along with their ability. Students are accompanied to their university classes by academic mentors who are there to provide accommodations as needed and support the LIFE student in successful participation. Students audit these classes. All LIFE students also participate in university Geaux Workout classes and an Academic Support Lab. They are also involved in activities at the Recreation Center, Student Union, Dining Services, Athletics, and Library Services. At least 50% of their time is spent in inclusive settings.



LIFE students also participate in LIFE curriculum classes each semester such as Time and Schedule Management, Functional Academic Writing, Career Readiness, Personal Finance, Independent Living, Reading for a Purpose, Successful Employment, Communication and Social Skills. During the first three years we have had many successes including one student participating on a cheer squad, two students interning in university daycare, two students interning in the athletic department, one student interning as a library assistant in the Materials Center and another as a desk clerk in Rec Center. Our first class will complete their studies in May 2018.

For more information contact dwadsworth@louisiana.edu or cnjurisich@louisiana.edu

Caroline N. Jurisich, Program Coordinator
Dr. Donna Wadsworth, Program Advisor

Louisiana Educators Honor Diversity

By Maria Isolina Ruiz, Ph.D.

The mission of CEC- Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (DDEL) is to improve the education and quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic communities. Although, at times, this may sound like an unsurmountable goal to many, Louisiana special educators continue to make progress in this area. We asked attendees at LA-CEC Super Conference 36 to tell us how they honored CEC-DDEL's core values of diversity, social justice, equity, inclusiveness, and advocacy in their daily work with students. This is what they had to say.

I honor CEC's diversity core values when I...

- Work with a group of students who have various levels of communication and participation. We all blend.
- Teach all no matter the need.
- Read stories from different ethnic backgrounds. We have toys in our play centers that represent students with different disabilities.
- Teach the value of differences.
- Teach each student according to his or her needs.
- Incorporate study of different cultures around the world.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Value each student regardless of their background and abilities.
- Work with a wide range of diverse kids.
- Accept all people regardless of exceptionality.
- Teach to different learning styles.
- Am open to meeting students and families from different backgrounds.
- Teach each child their importance in the world and their extraordinary gifts.
- Accept ALL people.
- See the challenges our students face...
- Teach my students using their strengths and interests.
- Value the differences of others.
- Advocate for cultural competency in schools.
- Listen to a child and understand that his view of the world is different from mine.
- Teach intensive reading interventions as an act of social justice.
- Teach diverse students in many different ways.
- LOVE MY STUDENTS!
- Respect each student's culture.
- Show respect for those who believe different from me.
- Accept people for who they are.
- See and teach the "whole" child, not just his/her disability.
- Work with my students and include information about them, or that is relevant to them, in a question.
- Consider the needs of my students.

Highlights from 2017 CEC International Convention

By: Reneisha Singleton and Colleen Klein-Ezell

CEC Conference - 2017

What a great CEC conference held in Boston this year!!! We learned so much from the sessions we attended, and the vendors' booths we visited. We were pleased to see all of the many student members present and attending the sessions as well! We learned about innovative ideas in the field of special education: soft skills, strategies/methods, transition opportunities, early childhood initiatives, evidence-based/high leverage practices, and stress management, just to name a few. The conference provided a great opportunity to network with other professionals and learn from each other. Attending the conference each year validates the importance of maintaining a membership in CEC to stay current and learn practical information to take back to the classroom and implement and/or share with others.

Yes, I Can Awards

The ballroom was filled with great energy from the award winners, their family members, and all of the CEC attendees that were present to encourage and support the winners of the Yes, I Can! Awards. How wonderful it was to see each winner's personality as they made their entrance onto the stage for their moment in the spotlight. All the winners exuded personality and confidence and showcased their award-winning talents. We are proud to introduce Louisiana's award winners: Zachary Yang, a fifth grade student from Southside Elementary in Denham Springs and Gabriel "Blaise" Garland a middle school student from Albany Middle School in Albany.



From left: Zachary's mom, Zachary Yang, his teacher, Kristy Delvisco, Blaise's mom, Gabriel "Blaise" Garland, and his teacher, Christina McKay

Report from Representative Assembly (RA) - CEC, 2017

We had the pleasure of representing the state of Louisiana at the Council for Exceptional Children-Representative Assembly on April 21st. The major focus of this year's meeting was reviewing and commenting on work that had been accomplished

Continued on page 3

International Convention *Continued from page 2*
 by CEC's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Reauthorization Workgroup. A preliminary draft was developed by the workgroup and presented at RA for review. Although CEC is not calling on Congress to reauthorize IDEA, CEC leadership wanted to be prepared with principles and recommendations when the IDEA reauthorization is called on by Congress. Members of Representative Assembly were provided with the preliminary draft of principles and recommendations and a series of questions for discussion. CEC's IDEA Reauthorization Workgroup will reconvene and review the responses from members of RA and revise the document. We commend CEC for its due diligence as the largest special education professional organization to be prepared with principles and recommendations when Congress begins considering the reauthorization of IDEA



Left to right: Colleen Klein-Ezell, President of LA-CEC, Mikki Garcia, President of CEC (International), and Reneisha Singleton, Past-President of LA-CEC at the Leadership Breakfast at CEC Conference - 2017

**Our LACEC
 Executive Board Members:
 President, Vice President, and Secretary**



Melissa Chastant-Huval
President

It is both an honor and privilege to serve as your LA CEC president. The Louisiana Council for Exceptional Children (LA CEC) supports the efforts of CEC in advancing the education of children with exceptional learning needs. As your President-Elect, I received the 2016 Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities (GOLD) Award. As a special education teacher, it's my passion to help each student discover his/her hidden gifts and talents. Having the opportunity to assist many to reach their full potential is the humble legacy I strive to leave.



Reneisha Singleton
Vice President

Hello La-CEC!! Thank you for your support in electing me as your Vice-President! I look forward to serving you well as we move forward in this amazing organization! Please know that your dedication and participation in this organization is greatly appreciated! See you all at Super Conference!



Keita Rone Wilson
Secretary

Keita (Kay) has worked in the field special education for 21 years in various capacities including speech pathologist, special education teacher and most recently as an Assistant Professor of Special Education at the University of Louisiana Lafayette. Her educational background includes a BS in Communication Sciences and Disorders from Howard University, a MS in Special Education from Johns Hopkins University and a PhD in Special Education with a minor in Anthropology from Wayne State University.

Prior to joining the faculty at ULL Kay worked as an educational consultant for the Louisiana Department of Education in the Office of Special Education Policy where she worked primarily on transition services for youth with disabilities as well as dropout prevention.

Kay considers herself an advocate for equality in education and has a passion for working towards improving the lives of persons with disabilities. She was recently selected as a member of the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) for the state and is also looking forward to her new role with the Louisiana chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Kay is a native of Detroit, Michigan and in her spare time she enjoys attending festivals, creating community gardens and reading a good book.

Save the Dates

January 22-23, 2018

*Super Conference 37:
 Coming Together in 2018
 Supporting All Learners
 as a Team!*

Visit our website:
<http://www.louisianacec.com>

**CEC
 2018**

**SPECIAL
 EDUCATION
 CONVENTION
 & EXPO
 Tampa | February 7-10**

**All Educators. Every Child. No Limits.
 February 7-10, 2018**

La. Council for Exceptional Children

c/o P. O. Box 44904

Lafayette, LA 70504

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Lafayette, LA
Permit No. 176

ANY NEWS?

If you have division, chapter, or special education news you would like to submit for publications, please submit it to Newsletter Chair, Mandy Roy at roymep5@gmail.com

Member Spotlights



Jenny Fontenot

Years Teaching: 24 years

Grades: Head Start and Kindergarten through 4th grade

School/Parish: Mamou Elementary, Evangeline Parish

“My teaching philosophy is that all children grow. They grow in their own time and way, but they grow. It’s not important how fast we go to get there as long as we get there. There is nothing more beautiful than watching students finally achieve the skills they have been working toward.”

Tonette Celestine

Years Teaching: 3 years

Grades: 1st and 2nd grade

School/Parish: Evangeline Elementary, Lafayette Parish

“As a teacher, I believe in being a proactive listener, modeling expected and appropriate behaviors, and providing challenging and engaging activities for learning. Furthermore, I believe that open communication with parent(s)/guardian(s) fosters a relationship that benefits the student. My classroom motto is that students be responsible for their behaviors, safe in their actions, and respectful to others.”

For More Information . . .

If you would like more information on membership, please visit the CEC website at <http://www.cec.sped.org/Membership>. You may also contact the LACEC membership chair, Hilary Case Bordelon, at hcbordelon@me.com.

Check out our Website
<http://www.louisianacec.com>.

Look for Information on:

- Mini-Grants Applications
- CEC Business Award
- CEC Parent Advocate Award
- Special Education Leadership Professional of the Year Award
- Higher Education Professional of the Year Award
- Call for Papers