

*GCDD Sparks Conversation to Get the Disability Community Involved in Civic Engagement and Says Goodbye to Deputy Director, Pat Nobbie, in the Winter 2013 Making a Difference Magazine*

*Online PR News* â€“ 30-January-2013â€“ The winter edition of Making a Difference, the quarterly news magazine published by the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD), was released this week. This issue covers a variety of compelling topics including insight on the importance of civic engagement for people with disabilities, highlights of the top issues on the table for the 2013 legislative session and GCDD Deputy Director Pat Nobbies departure as she leaves Georgia to work on policy on the national level.

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Its Time to Get People Involved in Our Communities

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Millions of Americans went to the polls and voted in Novembers election, and among those expressing their say in our countrys future was a group of people who have rarely been effectively engaged in the civic processes that many Americans take for granted people with developmental disabilities.

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Because it is so important for people with disabilities to be involved in public policy processes that determine their rights and access to services, it is critical for political leaders to consider them as group that needs to be heard. GCDD, in collaboration with the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), hosted a nationwide conference call for all of the Developmental Disabilities Councils and Protection and Advocacy organizations to come together and share their ideas about civic engagement for people with disabilities, accessibility issues and post Election Day feedback.

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Facilitated by GCDD Executive Director, Eric Jacobson, the call featured a presentation from Curt Decker, executive director of the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), on their recent findings about pre and post Election Day. This was followed by a series of questions from GCDD to allow participants to share input on innovative ideas that promote the inclusion and integration of people with disabilities in all aspects of communities.

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We all have to realize that this is not a problem that gets solved and then goes away. Its an ongoing conversation. Polling places change; poll workers change all of the time; political parties change, said Decker. This is something I think should be high on everyones agenda for the future because this is always going to be a challenge.

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To read the conference call conversation, visit

<http://gcdd.org/blogs/gcdd-blog/2412-gcdd-gets-election-day-feedback-from-across-the-country.html>.

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GCDDs Pat Nobbie Taking on a New Club

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Pat Nobbie, PhD, GCDD deputy director, has been honored with a Joseph P. Kennedy Public Policy Foundation Fellowship and is leaving GCDD after almost 12 years to work on policy on a national level in Washington, DC. Like many parents of children with disabilities, Pat Nobbie's life direction and career was influenced by her daughter Mia, who has Down syndrome.

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Since 2001, Nobbie was instrumental to both Georgia's disability community and GCDD. While working to make numerous improvements and advocate for more supports and services for people with disabilities, Nobbie helped push transition and employment, family support and managed care to the forefront of reform in Georgia's disability community and supports approach.

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I have really loved this job. Everyone I came in contact with, who made me laugh or cry, who yelled at me, persuaded me, dragged me into a corner from a meeting to tell me like it was, called me late at night or who showed up for coalition meetings or Disability Day, you have all contributed to who I am today, Nobbie said. And, I promise to keep working until things are better.

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The cover for this issue features Pat and Mia Nobbie, who are both very active with GCDD, in front of Mia's house in Athens, GA, preparing to take on new challenges ahead in 2013.

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This edition of Making a Difference also offers an overview of GCDD's legislative priorities for the 2013 general assembly. The civic engagement theme continues throughout the magazine with articles by Jon Sanford, director for the Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA), tracking Election Day voting experiences of voters with disabilities in Georgia and Missouri, and Jenna Quigley, a local 19-year-old sharing her experience as a first time voter.

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Don't miss the winter 2013 edition of Making a Difference. Be sure to look inside for details on the 15th Annual Disability Day on February 21 at the State Capitol. Mark your calendar and join GCDD at the annual rally to promote access, opportunity and meaningful community living for Georgians with disabilities and their families.

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GCDD's next quarterly meeting will be held in Atlanta, GA on April 18-19, 2013. All meetings are open to the public.

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Making a Difference is available online in accessible PDF and large print format, as well as on audio by request.

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Making a Difference is published by the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD). Current and past issues can be accessed online at [gcdd.org](http://gcdd.org) and hard copies can be requested by contacting the GCDD Office of Public Information. The mission of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) is to bring about social and policy changes that promote opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities and their families to live, learn, work, play and worship in Georgia communities.

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