

SUMMER
2024

EDUCATOR*

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE INSTITUTE ON DISABILITIES

CELEBRATING

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University**
College of Education
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A MESSAGE FROM ASSISTANT DEAN KIRSTEN HALKER-KRATZ



2024 Summer Educator:

The Institute on Disabilities is celebrating its 50th anniversary this July, and we are excited to celebrate and highlight the Institute as the focus of this Educator. If you are unfamiliar with the Institute, you will have the opportunity to learn more about the breadth and depth of their work in the community. Additionally, we were thrilled to hear from many of you after the fall Educator was received. We hope you enjoy some of the additional features from your fellow Owls.

Ultimately, the Educator magazine is your news, a way to stay connected to the “nest.” If you have a story idea or would like to update your information, don’t hesitate to reach out at alumni.ed@temple.edu.

Kirsten Halker-Kratz
Assistant Dean, Development
and Alumni Relations

A MESSAGE FROM DEAN MONIKA WILLIAMS SHEALEY, PHD



Dear CEHD Community,

I am thrilled to reach out to you on this momentous occasion as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University. As esteemed Temple University College of Education and Human Development community members, your unwavering support has been instrumental in our Institute's journey of transformative advocacy.

For half a century, the Institute on Disabilities has been a guiding light in championing the rights and self-determination of individuals with disabilities. Situated within our esteemed college, the Institute is a shining example of excellence in developmental disabilities education, research and service.

Throughout the decades, we have witnessed remarkable progress in creating inclusive communities and advancing the rights of individuals with disabilities. From our humble beginnings to our current standing as a national pioneer in leadership development, assistive technology, health equity, policy analysis, and inclusive education, our journey has been marked by specific achievements such as our TechOWL Community Space.

As we commemorate this milestone, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you, the CEHD community, for your steadfast support. Your generosity, advocacy, and commitment have played a vital role in shaping the Institute on Disabilities into the beacon of hope and progress it is today. It is your collective efforts that have made our achievements possible.

I would like to recognize Germaine Edwards, our esteemed alumni board chair since 2015, whose term ended in June 2024, for her exceptional leadership and tireless dedication. Germaine's contributions have been invaluable in developing our new mission, vision and values statement, setting the course for our continued success.

As we look to the future, I am excited and optimistic about the journey ahead. Let us reaffirm our commitment to fostering inclusive communities, promoting equality and empowering individuals with disabilities to reach their full potential. Your continued support, as always, will be crucial in the next 50 years. I am confident that with our collective efforts, we will continue to make a significant difference in the communities we serve.

Thank you for your unwavering support and partnership. Here's to the next 50 years of impact and transformation.

Warm regards,
Monika Williams Shealey, PhD
Dean and Professor

LETTER FROM ALUMNI BOARD CHAIR GERMAINE EDWARDS, PHD



Greetings!

The Temple University community celebrated commencement. Our Institute on Disabilities is celebrating a milestone—50 years! The excitement and anticipation of new beginnings and next chapters surround us!

This is so fitting, as my term as Chair of the College of Education and Human Development Alumni Association comes to a close. As I pass the torch to new leadership, I want to briefly reflect on my experience.

I am honored to have been selected to serve as chair over the years. I have followed in the footsteps of some great leaders. I have had the good fortune of being supported by caring, talented, passionate fellow board members. And I have had the pleasure of connecting with our awesome alumni—present and future Owls.

As an alumna, I want to ensure current students and alumni have a system of support as I had. As chair, I've found that I have had as much poured into me as I have given.

I have been nourished by the freely shared wisdom, encouragement and commitment from our CEHD Board Members. We have remained steadfast through the easy times and the bumps in the road. I have witnessed that “perseverance conquers” as the university community adapted and made it through the COVID-19 pandemic.

I have been fortified through the CEHD Alumni Association professional development, college events and social gatherings with affinity groups.

I have been encouraged by meeting outstanding students at career development networking events and by learning of the successes of CEHD alumni.

I have enjoyed spreading our school spirit alongside our CEHD Board Members, staff, and Advancement Office at university signature events such as homecoming and commencement. Whether meeting legacy alumni families at our tailgate tent or helping students at graduation, our school spirit meter is off the charts!

I hope that during my term, the dedication of our CEHD Alumni Association helped others to connect and to stay connected with this great university.

As the torch is passed, I am confident the CEHD Alumni Association is in good hands. It will light the way for current and future alumni to achieve amazing things.

In gratitude,
Germaine Edwards, PhD
Temple Made and Temple Proud



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

An Evolution from Service to Self-Determination at the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University

This year, 2024, marks the 50th anniversary of the [Institute on Disabilities](#) at Temple University, a milestone that signifies half a century of transformative work in advocating for the rights and self-determination of people with disabilities.

The Institute on Disabilities, located within the College of Education and Human Development at Temple University, is one of the [67 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service](#) funded by the Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This vibrant and diverse center is recognized as a national leader in disability training and technical assistance, research and evaluation, and direct service in areas such as assistive technology, health equity, and inclusive education.

The Institute's staff and faculty team have received honors and awards from regional and national disability organizations. Shawn Aleong, a student researcher and self-advocate, received the [2023 Association of University Centers on Disability Anne Rudigier Award](#) for his commitment to supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Since its inception, the Institute has been a leader in the shift within the disability field from an institutional model of care to one that champions the right of people with disabilities to live

and participate in their communities with support. This journey highlights the evolution of societal attitudes and policies toward people with disabilities, echoing a broader goal of inclusion and equality.

Sally Gould-Taylor, Executive Director of the Institute on Disabilities, says that the proliferation of Institute programs has kept pace with this shift. "The focus and breadth of our programs have expanded exponentially. We now reach more people across Pennsylvania on a wide variety of socially vital issues."

A Legacy of Advocacy and Innovation

The Institute on Disabilities at Temple University was established in 1974 with a mission to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. Initially, the focus was on research and services within the then-prevailing institutional model. This approach often isolated individuals with disabilities from the broader community, emphasizing segregated group care rather than integration.

As advocacy for disability rights gained momentum through the decades, so did the Institute's approach. Influenced by the broader [disability rights movement](#), which fought for legislative changes such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Institute began to embrace and advocate for a strengths-based model of disability, focusing on self-determination. This approach recognizes that people with disabilities have the right and ability to make their own choices and live, work, and participate fully in the community with the necessary support and services.

Gould-Taylor says the Institute's programs encompass a range of topics, from family leadership training to a new urban garden program for people with disabilities. "People should have the opportunity to live precisely how they want. This includes big decisions such as living arrangements and small choices such as what time to get up in the morning and what to have for dinner."

"These decisions are often taken for granted by those without disabilities," Jamie Ray-Leonetti, Associate Director of Policy at the Institute on Disabilities, says. "All of the choices that make a good life for somebody without a disability are the same choices people with disabilities want to have."



“The Institute’s roster of programs and projects is reflected in its vision of a society where all people are valued and respected, and where all people have the knowledge, opportunity and power to improve their lives and the lives of others.”

- Gould-Taylor

Leadership and Career Studies: Empowering Through Education

One of the Institute's hallmark programs is [L&CS](#), a four-year certificate program and innovative initiative designed to provide students with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to experience college life, develop career skills and prepare for community living. Launched in 2008 as a two-year certificate program, L&CS now includes a four-year course of study approved as a comprehensive transition program (CTP) by the U.S. Department of Education.

The program offers a comprehensive curriculum that includes academic courses, work experiences and social activities selected by students. Students are fully included in the university community, attending classes alongside their peers with and without disabilities, participating in internships, and engaging in extracurricular activities. This inclusive environment fosters academic growth as well as social and emotional development.

Katey Burke, Associate Director of the Institute on Disabilities and faculty advisor for L&CS, says, “We’re committed to college access for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, an option rarely available until the last several decades. A major focus of our program is the development of self-determination. Students learn how to set and go after goals, problem-solve barriers, self-evaluate progress and plan for the future. These skills and abilities are valuable to people with and without disabilities, and we are engaged in both [research](#) and [practice](#) on self-determination, with the goal of understanding the instruction, supports and experiences most beneficial for students in the college setting.”

Seniors in L&CS receive their certificates of completion at the graduation ceremony for the College of Education and Human Development, walking across the stage in regalia alongside their peers. Graduates have gone on to secure meaningful employment and live and participate in the community. The program's success underscores the Institute's belief that with the right opportunities and support, people with disabilities can achieve their goals, obtain competitive, integrated employment and fully participate in their communities.

Promoting Health Equity and Assistive Technology

Health equity and access to assistive technology are critical components of the Institute's mission. People with disabilities often face significant barriers to accessing healthcare and the technologies that can enhance their quality of life. The Institute addresses these challenges through a variety of programs and services.

The Institute is home to [TechOWL, Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Act program](#). TechOWL helps people living with disabilities explore, find, and acquire the tools and technology they need to lead a productive life in the home, community, and at work. This includes everything from speech-generating devices to mobility aids and adaptive software. By offering assessments, training and equipment loans, the assistive technology program ensures that individuals can find the right technology solutions to meet their needs.

Taye Hallock, Assistant Director of Health Equity at the Institute, says, “TechOWL helps people with disabilities learn about and access what they need to participate fully in education, employment and community life. During the COVID-19 pandemic, TechOWL started an initiative, ‘Connect with Tech,’ funded through the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to

reach individuals without access to technology in their homes. With most community spaces closed during large portions of the pandemic, access to the internet for telehealth services, news and public health information, and social engagement was essential. The project's initial goal was to distribute 5,000 devices (tablets) across Pennsylvania, and the team quickly saw the need and opportunity to reach more households. As of January 2024, the program has delivered 7,240 device kits and expects to reach 10,000 in the next several months. Like the Institute, TechOWL is focused on responding to the needs of the community, which means being flexible and innovative, and Connect with Tech is a great example.”



In addition to providing technology, the Institute is also a leader in advocating for [health equity](#). This includes research and initiatives aimed at eliminating disparities in healthcare access and outcomes for people with disabilities. Through partnerships with healthcare providers, policymakers and community organizations, the Institute works to ensure that everyone has access to the healthcare and services they need. Early in the pandemic, Burke and external partners of the Institute conducted [an analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on infection and mortality rates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities](#), finding an increased probability of mortality in comparison to the general public. The Institute then began efforts to improve public health messaging and provide education for healthcare providers on the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities during a public health emergency like COVID-19.



THE TECHOWL COMMUNITY SPACE: A HUB FOR INNOVATION & SUPPORT

In 2023, the Institute on Disabilities unveiled the [TechOWL \(Outreach, Wellness, and Learning\) Community Space](#) at Temple University. This space was selected as an accessible community hub for innovation, education and support for individuals with disabilities, their families and professionals in the field.

The TechOWL Community Space offers a welcoming and accessible environment where visitors can explore the latest in assistive technology, participate in workshops and training sessions, and connect with resources and support networks. The space includes demonstration areas, a lending library of devices, and collaborative workspaces designed to foster creativity and problem-solving. Visitors can decompress with noise-canceling headphones in the sensory area, try out adaptive gaming devices or explore the range of tools that can be created with TechOWL's 3D printers.

[At the community space's grand opening on April 18, 2024](#), Alanna Raffel, an assistive technology specialist with TechOWL, explained, "We've asked ourselves the following question: How can the TechOWL Community Space help fulfill the vision of a more accessible Pennsylvania? We hope that it will serve as a hub for learning and community building for people with disabilities across the state."

One of the unique features of the TechOWL Community Space is its focus on user-centered design. Individuals with disabilities are actively involved in developing and testing new technologies, ensuring that the solutions created are practical and effective. This collaborative approach leads to better outcomes and empowers individuals by valuing their input and expertise.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

As the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University celebrates its 50th anniversary, its staff and faculty reflect on its history of advocacy, innovation and community, and look ahead to the needs and opportunities within the disability field.

The evolution from an institutional model to one that embraces self-determination reflects broader societal changes and a commitment to justice and equality.

Looking ahead, the Institute aims to continue leading the way in research, education and advocacy. Future plans include seeking newly available accreditation for Leadership and Career Studies, enhancing health equity initiatives to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities who are multiply marginalized and further expanding the work of TechOWL across the state. By working in partnership with people with disabilities, the Institute will continue to significantly impact the field.

As Gould-Taylor states, "A key phrase in our mission statement is to 'work with and for people with disabilities,' and therefore people with disabilities, their families and their supports will continue to drive our work. We will listen and let the voices of disabled people guide our work while maintaining our position as thought leaders in the field locally, state-wide and nationally."

The Institute on Disabilities at Temple University continues to be a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change. Over the past five decades, it has improved countless lives and contributed to creating a more inclusive and equitable society. As the Institute embarks on the next 50 years, its legacy of empowerment and innovation will continue to drive progress.



FILE/LIFE: WE REMEMBER STORIES FROM PENNHURST

File/Life - We Remember Stories from Pennhurst is a community-led creative exploration of the Pennhurst archives by seven archivists, all people with disabilities and/or family members, including two former Pennhurst residents.

In collaboration with artists, including a filmmaker, an oral historian, an archivist and a community arts producer, the File/Life community archivists spent two years learning, creating and sharing stories from the Pennhurst files.

File/Life - We Remember Stories from Pennhurst is recognized as a 2024 Honorable Mention by the National Council on Public History 2024 Outstanding Public History Project Awards. Last year, the exhibit was installed for a week in Philadelphia and later in the Senate Rotunda in Washington, D.C.

This past spring, the Helix Gallery at Thomas Jefferson University hosted File/Life: Community Conversations, a series of community events that merged community members with File/Life artists and archivists to learn more about their processes and discoveries.

The material held in the Pennhurst archives includes administrative reports, court testimony, diagnostic forms, medical logs, field notes and institutional correspondence. Some files include more personal documents such as letters from family members. The community archivists chose to share stories that made them listen, feel, imagine and remember; and, in doing so, ask the question: Can a file ever contain a life?

The File/Life project aims to honor the humanity of the residents of Pennhurst by imagining their lives beyond the files, making connections with our own lives and noticing the throughlines from this history to the present.

Support for File/Life - We Remember Stories from Pennhurst was provided to the Institute on Disabilities by the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

To learn more about the Institute's Media Arts and Culture program, please visit the Institute's website,

disabilities.temple.edu

ALUMNI NOTES

We would love to hear from you! We welcome the opportunity to celebrate with you. Please submit your news and accomplishments so we can continue to share them with the college community. Submissions may be included in our newsletters and/or on our website, calendar, and social media. Contact us at alumni.ed@temple.edu.

Tori Berenato, EDU '18,

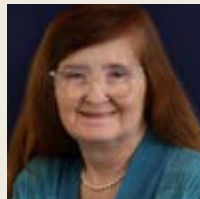
is a school counselor at Charles Street Elementary School in the Palmyra School District. She was recognized as one of the New Jersey Governor's 2024 Educators of the Year in the Educational Services Professionals category. Berenato credits her time at Temple University for helping her become a caring and empathetic advocate.

Mary Ellen Bowlby, EDU '18,

a registered nurse at Clinton Public School, was honored as an Education Services Professional of the Year. In addition to her day-to-day duties, Bowlby coordinates various events such as blood drives, health and safety assemblies, and staff CPR training.

Sydney Butler, EDU '17,

is a consultant specializing in restorative justice, arts education, and diversity, equity, and inclusion in education. She conducts professional development workshops for educators in the Baltimore/DC area. Recently, she was featured in the college's alumni newsletter for her work with the Human Development Community Engagement Program.



Helen Hoffner, EDU '84,

serves as a professor and coordinator of the Reading Specialist Program at Holy Family University. In addition to her work at the university, Hoffner has authored four books for teachers. Sophia Institute Press published her most recent book, *Catholicism Everywhere*, in February 2024.

Benjamin Herold, EDU '03,

wrote and published *DISILLUSIONED: Five Families and the Unraveling of America's Suburbs* with Penguin Press. Through the stories of five American families, the book demonstrates how hope, history, and racial denial collide in the suburbs and their schools. *DISILLUSIONED* was featured in the New York Times Book Review.



Amy Lewis, EDU '16,

was recently promoted to full professor at the Community College of Philadelphia where she also serves as Associate Chair of the English department. Lewis has given presentations at conferences across Europe and was invited to create and

deliver a workshop on Universal Design for Learning to faculty, staff, and admin at the Volkshochschulverband, a network of adult schools throughout Germany.



Afia Lewis, EDU '01,

is a member of the Temple University Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2020. Throughout her teaching career, she has received numerous accolades. Notably, she was recognized as a Fox 29 Top Teacher in 2017 and received recognition

from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in 2019 for her community service. Recently, she was included in the first sports mural of its kind in Lansdowne, PA, where she currently serves as a sixth-grade teacher. Lewis credits her success to her time at Temple University, where she developed her teaching and community service abilities, making a lasting impact on her students' lives and careers.

Wanda Lewis-Campbell, EDU '03,

has been inducted into the 2023 UNCF Leaders Hall of Fame at Livingstone College in Salisbury, NC. Recognized for her continued community service via her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Phi Beta Omega Chapter in North Wales, PA, Lewis-Campbell made history in 2019 as one of the first African Americans elected to the North Penn School Board, completing four years of service in December 2023.

Lynnette Mawhinney, EDU '03,

was promoted to Senior Associate Dean for Strategic Academic Initiatives at Rutgers University-Newark. Mawhinney will also be joining the college as the inaugural Urban Teacher Education Scholar-in-Residence for the 2024-2025 school year.

J. Cynthia McDermott, EDU '86,

completed her eighth book *Democracy Deficit Disorder: Learning Democracy with Young People* co-authored with Adam Fletcher. The text offers a prescription to counter our retreating democracy in our nation and others and focuses on the role young people can play to strengthen it. McDermott is a two-time Fulbright Scholar, a Professor Emeritus from Antioch University and a "granny" to five. Her many publications and textbooks are related to teacher education, democracy and Foxfire practices. She is the founder of the Progressive Teacher Network, a learning collective designed to provide support for all practitioners who engage in a child-first perspective and want to engage with others in this essential work.



Loria McIntyre-Mixson, EDU '97,

recently represented President Englert as an institutional delegate at the inauguration of Mark R. Ginsberg, the fifteenth president of Towson University, on April 5, 2024. McIntyre-Mixson has been teaching in Baltimore City Schools

for 10 years and was awarded the Teacher of the Year Award by the Metropolitan Baltimore Alliance of Black School Educators and the Baltimore Teachers Union in 2016.



Torrence Rothmiller, KLN '04,

has been honored as a winner of the 2024 Lindback Award for Principal Leadership. Since 2011, the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation of Philadelphia has recognized and rewarded school principals who have

made significant leadership and humanitarian contributions to their school community. Rothmiller's dedication to promoting learning at the highest levels has earned him this prestigious accolade.

Jim Scanlon, EDU '89, '97,

has been named interim superintendent of the Central Bucks School District. A former district student, Scanlon is dedicated to supporting Central Bucks during this transitional period. His aim is to offer strong leadership and assistance as the district finds a permanent superintendent.

Carmina Taylor, EDU '16,

director of campus and community engagement at Thomas Jefferson University, has been selected as one of 40 women leading in higher education by *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*. This honor, part of the publication's 40th anniversary celebration, was featured in the February edition during Women's History Month. Taylor is renowned for her exceptional leadership, addressing the most challenging issues in higher education and creating a positive impact in her community.

Shawn Thomas, EDU '02,

was named one of Southern New Jersey's Executives of the Year. Thomas is the Executive Director of Adult and Continuing Education and Business Engagement at Rowan College-Burlington. In her current role, Thomas and her team are responsible for developing non-traditional educational pathways to ensure students can reach their employment and educational goals.

Tynecia Wilson, EDU '20,

program coordinator for leadership and service at Temple University Student Activities, has been crowned Miss Philadelphia 2024. In 2022, Wilson was honored as the graduate speaker for commencement. Her social impact initiatives range from teaching to wellness and financial education.

Sally Wojcik, EDU '13,

a teacher at Benjamin Rush Arts Academy in the School District of Philadelphia, was a finalist for the 2024 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year Award. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has recognized Wojcik for her exceptional teaching in theater and creative writing, her dedication to her students, and her outstanding academic contributions.

IN MEMORIAM



Michelle Benns-Cook, EDU '15, '20,

was a dedicated friend, colleague and mentor to many in the Temple community. She was the college's associate director of administration and staff, an adjunct instructor and the college's DEI liaison. In 2021, Benns-Cook served as the graduate speaker for Commencement. Her genuine spirit and unwavering support are greatly missed at the college.



Make a Gift Today

Every gift to the College of Education and Human Development is an investment—in the college, in the work that it does, in the work it aspires toward, and in the ability of its students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends and neighbors to transform the world around them.

YOUR GIFT IS THE KEY.