

# the NADE ADVOCATE



A Publication of the National Association of Disability Examiners

Volume 28, Number 2

Spring 2012

## Mid Year Board Meeting Discussions Focus on Program Issues

*by Tom Ward, NADE President*

THE NADE BOARD WAS pleased to have and hear from several guests at our 2012 MidYear meeting. Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Operations Terrie Gruber, Assistant Associate Commissioner from the Office of Disability Determinations Linda Kerr-Davis, Associate Commissioner from the Office of Disability Programs Art Spencer, and Deputy Associate Commissioner for the Office of Disability Programs Sheila Everett presented information to the NADE Board. Representing the National Council of Disability Determinations Directors (NCDDD) was Dr. Tony Jones, Administrator for the Washington DC Disability Office. Highlights from the information shared in these meetings include:



*NADE President Tom Ward introduces SSA Office of Disability Programs visitors to the MidYear Board meeting: (from left) Program Policy Officer Janet Truhe J.D., Deputy Associate Commissioner Sheila Everett, Associate Commissioner Art Spencer, and Acting Associate Commissioner Shirleeta Stanton.*

SSA and the DDS can expect a continued decrease in the national budget. All departments, including SSA, are facing an across the board funding cut of nine percent (9%) next fiscal year barring a legislative change in the law. The projection is that close to 3,000 DDS employees have been lost since Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 to attrition with only the ability to hire 200 critically needed employees nationwide. The loss of each examiner equates to a loss of work on 600 claims. SSA fully realizes that it takes two to three years to get new examiners trained and fully functional. Field Offices will continue to close thirty minutes early so workers may complete their daily pending assignments by the end of the workday. Last FY the DDS had 59,000 staged claims waiting assignment. Currently there are 106,000 staged claims and SSA anticipates there will be 170,000 staged claims by the end of this fiscal year. The Continuing Disability Review (CDR) workload has been set at 435,000 for FY 2012 with the potential for a dramatic increase for CDRs next fiscal year, depending upon the budget. Nationally Cooperative Disability Investigation (CDI) units have worked on approximately 11,000 cases resulting in a savings of \$180 million.

We will begin implementation of the eAuthorization in April of 2012. First party adult internet filers will be given the option of an electronic 827 beginning April 21st. eCAT continues to be rolled out with the intention that it will be in every DDS by September 30th. eCAT will be a part of the DCPS, which eliminates the need to go back and forth between eCAT and the legacy system on many claims work applications. SSA continues to look at the expansion of HIT.

NCDDD appreciates the partnership the Commissioner has shown to try to help Directors regarding furloughs and layoffs in various states. NCDDD is very concerned about the inability to replace staff members. Several states have lost 10 to 40 employees in just the past two years. Both NCDDD and SSA expressed their appreciation for the leadership NADE continues to show that focuses on customer service and quality. Everyone on the NADE Board was appreciative of the chance to frankly and openly discuss many critical work issues with all of our SSA and NCDDD guests.

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**"Take Time to Bask in the Glow of Your Accomplishments"**

June 11-15, 2012

## President's Message

**MYTHOLOGY** – a set of stories, traditions, or beliefs associated with a particular group or history of an event, arising naturally or deliberately fostered. (From Dictionary.com)



“You have to be denied twice before the judge makes the right decision.” How many times do we have to hear that myth? I have heard many people utter that statement in many different public forums. The thought implies the Social Security Administration has purposely designed a process to keep people from obtaining what is rightfully theirs. Moreover, that we, as disability professionals are the key players to pull off this vast conspiracy against the disabled population in America. Behind that statement are these implied questions; “How can you sleep at night knowing you wrongfully deny people their disability benefits?” and “Do you not have a conscience?”

The truth is nearly 70% of all people awarded disability benefits attain those benefits at the initial claim level. The truth is nearly 12% of our reconsideration claims become allowances.

Most of the time those initial awards come within 100 days of the application. Many of those reconsideration awards come within just days of the initial appeal. That does not even account for the number of Quick Disability Decisions, Compassionate Allowances, Military Casualty, and Presumptive Disability claims that we whisk through the process in a matter of days, sometimes in hours.

The truth is many of us lie awake at night wondering if there is not some piece of medical evidence or information that could help make a particular claim an allowance. Conscientious, competent, compassionate, caseload carrying examiners and insomnia do go hand-in-hand. I frequently hear my peers say; “I woke up last night wondering if my client was going to get to his exam.”

The truth is if everyone that filed a claim had their benefits approved, there would be no benefits for anyone. The system SSA has put in place is fair and equitable. The system works not in spite of us but because of us. We are the efficient experts in this process. We are the linchpins that make the process successful. We are the ones that search the thousands of pages of regulations to apply the law correctly. We are the ones that politely listen to that same client that calls every day but provides no new information. We are the ones that track down the social worker to go to the homeless shelter to make sure our client will get to his consultative examination. We are the ones that try to reconstruct lost folders. We are the ones that search through multiple prior decisions in order to apply the correct onset date on the most current application. We are the ones that obtain the client’s own description of his past relevant work. We are the ones that search the vocational profiles to make certain the client does or does not have transferable skills. We are the ones that weigh opinion evidence, that search for credible, consistent medical statements, that clearly write a findings and analysis summary, and have the common sense to ask the medical consultant to look at the claim again when we disagree with her assessment. We do not write the rules but we sure know how to apply them, fairly, accurately, and efficiently. And that is no myth.

*Tom Ward*

Tom Ward  
NADE President

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**Letters to the Editor** are welcomed and may be selected for inclusion in future issues. Please forward ideas for future *Advocate* topics to the editor or your Regional Publications Representative. The next issue will be published in **Summer 2012**.

All correspondence should be directed through your Regional representative or NADE editor by **June 1, 2012**.

## The 2011-2012 NADE Board of Directors



*Board members gathered for the MidYear Board Meeting in Baltimore:  
(front row) Tom Ward, Donna Hilton and Todd Deshong. (middle row) Debi Chowdhury, Mary Dumars,  
Leesa Chalmers, Julie Kujath, Joe Rise, Jennifer Nottingham, and Tonya Scott;  
(back row) Jennifer Pounds, Trish Chaplin, Mark Bernskoetter, Donnie Hayes, and Malcolm Stoutenborough.*

### NADE Goes Totally Green!!

**NADE** has gone exclusively to electronic distribution of the professional journal, *The NADE Advocate*.  
Why? Faster than postal delivery, all photos in color, and save NADE some green!

Please notify the Communications Director Donna Hilton of any email address changes when they occur.  
Questions on distribution may be directed to the Communications Director or your Regional Director.



*NADE is a professional association whose mission is to advance  
the art and  
science of disability evaluation.*

*Our membership base includes members that represent a broad  
perspective of interests regarding the Social Security and Supplemental  
Security Income (SSI) disability programs.*

### NADE CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Great Lakes/Great Plains/Southeast/ Southwest Quad Training Conference	Embassy Suites/Crabtree Valley	Raleigh, NC	April 23-25, 2012
<b>"Due to unforeseen circumstances this conference has been cancelled. Refunds for conference registrations will be sent within the next few weeks."</b>			
Pacific Regional Conference	Harvey's Lake Tahoe	Lake Tahoe, NV	May 6-8, 2012
<b>"Due to unforeseen circumstances this conference has been cancelled. Refunds for conference registrations will be sent within the next few weeks."</b>			
National Training Conference	Hyatt Regency	Columbus, OH	Sept 8-14, 2012





## NADE Top Issues 2012



### I. Program integrity – assuring quality, timely decisions in a fiscally responsible manner.

- Funding for staff replacement is at a critical juncture. The DDS lost 1500 staff members to attrition in FY 2011 and is on track to lose another 1500 staff in FY 2012 while workload has increased over the last four years by 32.5%. Meanwhile, the number of citizens whose cases have been staged and cannot be processed, because of staffing shortages, has risen from 59,647 at the end of FY 2011 to 106,658 in February of 2012, and is projected to reach 170,000 by the end of FY 2012. It takes more than 2 years for new examiners to be proficient at case adjudication, therefore, the longer SSA and the DDSs must wait to do replacement hiring will only complicate any recovery from case backlogs.
- Funding to increase the pace of Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs) will assist in determining if those receiving disability are able to return to work. Historically, CDRs yield benefit savings of \$12 for every \$1 spent. At the end of FY2011, there was a backlog of 1.4 million medical CDRs waiting to be reviewed, which were on track to be caught up within 10 years under the Budget Control Act of 2011 before that funding was curtailed.
- In order to make even better use of the CDR process, the Medical Improvement Review Standard (MIRS) should be revised. When those on the disability rolls are reviewed to see if they still qualify, MIRS prevents ceasing benefits for many individuals who are found to have minimal or no work limitations.
- Funding for additional Cooperative Disability Investigation (CDI) units will enhance the ability of SSA and DDSs across the nation to combat fraud in the disability program.

### II. Unified Process - assuring all citizens who apply receive equal consideration in a more cost-effective manner.

- Return the reconsideration step to all states. DDS reconsideration decisions are cheaper and more timely than ODAR decisions. It will get benefits to deserving citizens much faster while reducing the overall backlog of cases at ODAR.
- Roll out Single Decision Maker (SDM) to all states, enhancing the role of examiners and medical consultants while creating greater efficiency within the program.
- Adequate funding is needed to complete and implement the Disability Case Processing System (DCPS). The timely national rollout of this system will enhance the DDS capability to more effectively and efficiently complete disability determinations. Additionally, there must be a firm commitment to continue enhancing and maintaining current legacy systems until the new DCPS is fully accepted and operational.
- Continued funding is needed for systems such as Electronic Records Express (ERE), as well as Health Information Technology (HIT). It would be beneficial to highlight streams of funding outside of SSA for medical sources to obtain. An increased number of medical sources using acceptable electronic extraction systems will mean faster and more efficient acquisition of medical records which will allow for more timely and effective disability determinations.
- NADE continues to support the elimination of the 5-month waiting period for Title II benefits and the elimination of the 24-month waiting period to receive Medicare.

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## NADE Offers Opinion on ANPRM Criteria for Language and Speech Disorders

*by Mark Bernskoetter, Legislative Director*

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DISABILITY EXAMINERS (NADE) welcomes this opportunity to offer comments on the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) - New Medical Criteria for Evaluating Language and Speech Disorders. NADE is a professional organization whose mission is to advance the art and science of disability evaluation. Our membership base is representative of broad interests regarding the Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability programs, including employees of state Disability Determination Service (DDS) offices (who are directly involved in processing these claims), as well as personnel from across SSA, attorneys, claimant advocates, and physicians. This diversity of membership and hands-on experience provides us with a unique understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing these programs today.

Speech and language deficits are part of several listings, but only as an additional impairment to a primary physical or mental condition. The only way to allow on language alone is to complete the steps to functionally equal, generally a more cumbersome process than meeting a listing, although there do not seem to be cases that we are unable to process at present because of a lack of this listing. Although in severe to profound cases, we can equal the 2.09 listing, a separate listing for speech/language seems appropriate.

NADE believes a new body system might allow for better definition of the various speech and language disorders and pathological origin but the same thing could be accomplished by amplifying the Special Senses and Speech listings with a new and/or revised listing and additional introduction section. Whether we see a new body system or only new listings, communication disorders could (and should) still be considered under other body systems as well when they create functional impairments in those other areas.

New listings could address the use and effectiveness of assistive devices, speech disorders resulting from physiological abnormalities, including hearing loss, head trauma, and neurological impairments like Cerebral Palsy, defects caused by surgery and/or radiation therapy for head and neck cancer, such as laryngotomy, glossectomy, and palatal deficits. Childhood listings could provide specific severity ratings based upon test scores or percentile rankings but could also provide guidance on adjudicating based on findings such as the duration and frequency of dysfluencies such as prolongations and blocks. Childhood listings could also include age and duration of treatment requirements, e.g., children 8 years old or older with dysfluencies despite at least two years of speech therapy.

At the present time, there exists a good foundation to adjudicate child cases with speech and language disorders. Gathering this information into the new listing along with better descriptions of possible underlying causes for both adults & children and acceptable testing instruments for specific age groups would be helpful.

If new listings or new body systems are created for adults and children, these two sets, will, of necessity, be very different. Not only are test instruments significantly different for adults and children, but levels of ability will have dramatically different impacts on the function of an adult versus a child.

For adults, special considerations should be addressed when reviewing overall functional communication skills. It is important to assess the overall language abilities and functional communication skills versus just the ability to speak (articulate). Although an adult may be able to clearly articulate a single word, are they able to make requests, combine meaningful words into sentences, or carry on a meaningful conversation? NADE supports additions to the listings to provide clearer direction as to the meaning of effective verbal communication.

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## NADE Remembers Past President Marty Blum

NADE LOST A GREAT advocate and friend with the sudden passing of Martin “Marty” Blum on Feb 17th at his home in Greenridge, Staten Island NY.

A charter member of NADE, Martin Blum was one of the first vocational specialists in the country and worked at all levels of adjudication, showing single-minded dedication to the principles of professionalism. He served in many capacities of NADE (Legislative Committee, Membership Director) and provided strong leadership as NADE president (1978-79) to help guide the association as an independent organization. He remained an active member throughout the intervening years, having a positive impact on his colleagues, friends and co-workers and serving the disabled public. Blum was recognized for his long career and commitment to the DDS as well as NADE with the Lewis Buckingham Award.

His wife, Sharon, died in 2000. In addition to his son, Matthew, surviving are a daughter, Andria Matthews; a sister, Elanor Rappe, and three grandchildren.

Expressions of sympathy can be sent to Marty’s home at 52 Berry Ave., Staten Island, NY 10312.

The membership responded with these tributes to Marty:

*I first met Marty at the NADE National conference in Sioux Falls SD, which I think was my 1st National Conference. He was one of the reasons why I looked forward to attending conferences after that. He was a larger than life kind of guy, always with a story to tell. Had a genuine interest in people and in helping out those still plugging away at the DDSs and in making NADE an organization to be proud of.*

**Crystal Bach, South Dakota DDS**

*Every conference I attended with Marty, we had to find a sports bar and as soon as we sat down, he would have to order chicken wings whether any one was ready or not. Will miss him a lot.*

**Joe Rise (Unit 24 Supervisor), Washington DDS - Seattle Region**

*Few names are more familiar to NADE members across the country than Marty Blum. Marty was a legend, a mentor and a friend. He was the ultimate “uniter” during difficult times. And, as more than one person has said, “Conferences will never be the same without Marty.” He will be missed!*

**Marty Marshall (NADE Past President), Michigan**

*Marty Blum was the first President of NADE after NADE became a fully independent professional association in 1978. Toward that end, he devoted his tenure to ensuring NADE’s decision to become an independent association, rather than existing as a tag-along group to the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA), was the correct decision and that NADE would survive as an independent association. Marty worked tirelessly to ensure NADE’s success, not only during his term as President (1978-1979) but for 34 more years, during which he frequently offered advice to NADE’s leadership. After retiring from the DDS, he served for many years as the Chair of NADE’s Retiree Committee and was actively involved in NADE until his untimely death. Marty holds the record for attending the most NADE conferences (40+) and for the most consecutive NADE conferences attended. Marty was committed to NADE but, even more so, he was committed to his friends in NADE. He was the type of person who would literally give you the shirt off his back if you needed it and he was never too proud to offer to help someone in need. I consider myself fortunate to have known Marty and to be one of the many people he called, “Friend.” He and his longtime sidekick, Frank Giordano, were the two people I contacted first when I was deciding to run for NADE President-elect in 1997 and Marty and Frank were adamant in their support for my decision to run and both were adamant in offering advice and counsel during my two terms as President, regardless of whether I asked for their advice or whether I accepted their advice. I trusted both of them completely because I knew they had NADE’s best interests at heart, even if I chose not to follow their advice. We remained friends throughout and this friendship is one of the most valuable of benefits I have gained from my membership in NADE. Marty will be missed by his friends and NADE will truly miss a member who loved this Association and what it represented. I will treasure my many memories of Marty and the experiences we shared as NADE members and friends.*

**Jeff Price (NADE President, 1998-99 & 2001-02), North Carolina**

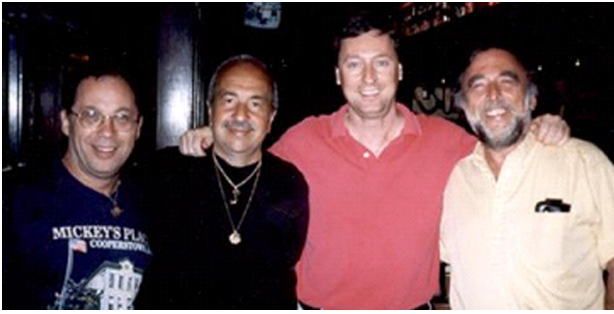
*I remember when I announced that I was going to run for President. Marty was the first one to call me and tell me how proud he was that I would be representing the Northeast as a candidate for National President and he would help campaign for me and when I was elected he came up to me and said he was glad that I followed in his footsteps to be President. He was always so supportive and truly a professional who cared about the people he served and so, so very proud to be a NADE member. I will miss him.*

**Susan LaMorte (NADE President 1996-97), New Jersey DDS**



*NE Bi-regional conference in Albany, NY 1998: Susan LaMorte, Debi Chowdhury, Marty, Edie Peters-Liguori.*





*The Four Musketeers – Boys from New York: Left to right: Tony Inness and Frank Giordano, Tom Broderick, and Marty.*



*Marty Blum, Tom Broderick, 1997-98 NADE President Debi Gardiner, Tony Inness and Frank Giordano.*



*1994 Denver conference at dinner (from left): Edie Peters-Liguori, Dr. Mark Berkowitz, Jack McCormack, Marty Blum, Tom Broderick, Susan LaMorte and Frank Giordano.*

*On my desk I have a picture of Marty. His arm around me, the ocean behind us. Frank Giordano had taken the picture. Marty is whispering something outrageous to me to make me smile. I am laughing in the picture so it worked. At conferences we would catch up talk of work, family and gossip. Lately it was how few of the old timers were left. Most of our friends had retired and never attended another conference. Marty made new friends easily. At the drop of a hat he would recite all the NADE presidents in order. He was a treasure house of NADE history both formal and informal. Even after he retired his enthusiasm for our organization and the work we do never diminished. He still attended conferences and workshops. He shared his opinion and outlook on life and the future of where SSA was leading us. When discouraged he had a word to help make it on to the next few steps.. I will truly miss Marty as will all the friends who's life he touched. Yanuach Beshalom Al Mishkavo (Hebrew for May he rest in Peace).*

**Gloria H Emmons, Michigan**

*I was extremely saddened to learn of the sudden death of Marty. I wish to convey to all members of NADE my deep sympathy upon the loss of this remarkable man. I had the privilege of meeting Marty in all the NADE conferences that I attended, from the time that he has served as the president of our organization, and kept in touch with him till my retirement in 2005. He was a man of unlimited energy and highest devotion to the organization. He attended all session during our conferences and always provided his input. He was also the last one to leave the hospitality room NADE has lost a great supporter. It is with a full heart that I offer my deepest sympathy to his family.*

**Mark Frances (Hearings Officer), Miami Office of Disability Determinations (retired)**

*Marty loved life and he loved NADE. Over the years of taking photos at conferences, I can't recall ever catching even an impromptu photo of him where he wasn't smiling. Every photo of Marty that was sent to me for this memorial shows him with a huge grin on his face! He loved people and he looked forward to making new friends at each conference.*

*A short conversation with him revealed the depths to this man, his many interests and, of course, his wealth of knowledge of the disability program. Even after retiring, he continued to attend conferences and ask questions, wanting to know where the program was headed and how it was evolving. I'm pretty sure he's organizing a party or a NADE discussion group in heaven right now. Shalom, dear friend!*

**Donna Hilton (NADE Communications Director), Missouri**

*Marty always tried to encourage people to participate in NADE. He and Frank were the ones that encouraged me to run for Treasurer way back in 1982. They were there to support us when we were troubled and always reminded us that NADE was what was important-not just the individuals who made it up. I will miss Marty's smile and good humor.*

**Karen Gunter (Past President 1988-89), Florida**

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## 2012 NADE National Awards Criteria

by Anne Graham, Awards Chair

IT'S TIME AGAIN TO think about honoring NADE members who stand out among the many hard-working disability professionals involved with the Social Security Disability Programs. The specific criteria for each of NADE's nine national awards are listed below. Please take the time to nominate someone you believe meets these criteria. The nominees will be evaluated by the Awards Committee and the awards will be presented at the Awards Breakfast at NADE's National Training Conference, Columbus, Ohio, in September.

### Nomination Procedure:

- Each chapter may only submit one nomination for each award.
- Nominations must be typed on the awards form (link) and explain in detail how the nominee meets all the criteria for the specified award. A one-page attachment may also be submitted.
- Do not refer to the individual's name or chapter's name on the nomination form. Any nomination including this information will be disqualified. The absence of identifying information on the nomination form permits more objective evaluation by the Awards Committee.
- Please send in nominations to the Awards Chair:  
Anne Graham ([bluewindow@verizon.net](mailto:bluewindow@verizon.net)) or 1316 Glenmont Rd., Baltimore, MD, 21239
- **All nominations must be received on or before July 1, 2012.**

Please make the effort to honor an outstanding individual NADE member or NADE chapter.

### 2012 NADE National Awards Criteria

The **PRESIDENT'S AWARD** is to be given annually and presented by the NADE President in recognition of an *outstanding Chapter*. The recipient will be any organized NADE Chapter which has enhanced interactions among its professional and community partnerships through:

- (a) Outstanding achievement in innovation of programs, such as panel presentations, speeches, publication and distribution of literature, other efforts to improve the quality of medical reporting and vocational assessments, etc., to promote the factual and effective documentation of disability determinations, AND
- (b) Exemplary outreach to community service and charitable organizations through activities such as promoting cause-awareness, volunteerism, charity benefits or fundraisers, donations, or any other philanthropic initiatives.

The **CHARLES O. BLALOCK AWARD** is a service award to be presented annually and on a continuing basis in the name of the founder of NADE. It is made in recognition of an *individual* who has made extended efforts and major contributions toward the organizational advancement of NADE. The recipient:

- (a) May be any professional member of the National Association of Disability Examiners who is employed either full or part-time.
- (b) Shall have provided outstanding leadership in the development and substantial expansion of his/her State Chapter, Regional, and/or the National organization.
- (c) Shall have shown consistent efforts over a period of at least three years toward the organizational advancement of NADE.
- (d) May be a Committee Chairperson, a National Board Member, a Chapter President or any Member who has promoted the advancement of NADE to an outstanding degree.

The **NADE AWARD** is to honor and recognize the *disability professional of the year* who has made outstanding contributions not only to the service of the claimant in accordance with his/her expertise, but also has contributed substantially of his/her time and talent to promote harmonious and more effective working relationships among his/her immediate professional community. The award shall be presented annually at the National Conference. The recipient shall be:

- (a) Anyone who is professionally identified as a disability professional, employed full or part-time.
- (b) Any NADE member engaged as a professional in any capacity, i.e., Medical Consultant, Adjudicator, Vocational Evaluation Consultant, Supervisor, etc.
- (c) Anyone who has consistently shown outstanding achievement by the use of initiative and humanitarian efforts and ability to effectively assist in the Social Security disability process.



The **JOHN GORDON AWARD** is presented in the name of John R. Gordon, to a *supervisor* in the disability program, and is designed to honor and recognize superior performance in a supervisory capacity. The recipient shall be:



- (a) Any supervisor who is professionally identified as a NADE member.
- (b) Any supervisor who by his/her initiative and resourcefulness promotes cohesiveness in his/her work group.
- (c) Any supervisor who provides further incentive for personal growth and professionalism among the individuals he/she supervises.
- (d) Any supervisor who acts in his/her executive capacity in the promotion and maintenance of morale.
- (e) Any supervisor who exceeds the requirements of his/her role in facilitating the workloads of his/her Agency.

The **LEWIS BUCKINGHAM AWARD** recognizes a *leader* of the National Association of Disability Examiners at either the Regional or National level. The recipient shall:

- (a) This person must consistently have shown outstanding achievement by the use of initiative and humanitarian efforts to further advance the professionalism and goals of the National Association of Disability Examiners.
- (b) The recipient must have contributed at least ten (10) years of continuous service to the organization.
- (c) The recipient should have served on the National Board of Directors.

The **DIRECTOR'S AWARD** is to honor and recognize an outstanding member of the *support staff* who demonstrates work performance efficiency and characteristics which contribute to the efficient operation of the unit and the morale of coworkers. The recipient shall:

- (a) Be any clerical or paraprofessional employee who is employed either full or part-time and is a member of NADE.
- (b) Have shown outstanding leadership and work performance among his/her peer group.

The **EARL B. THOMAS AWARD** is to be presented annually in the name of a charter member of NADE, who actively supported NADE as an association of disability professionals. The recipient must:

- (a) Be a member and active supporter of NADE.
- (b) Be (i) the *administrator* of a State or Federal agency OR (ii) the top *administrator* of a Regional or Satellite DDS AND (iii) must have been so for three years.
- (c) Have contributed significantly to the program in ways consistent with the policies of NADE, beyond the normal administrative duties of his/her position.

The **FRANK BARCLAY AWARD** is presented annually in recognition of an individual who has demonstrated exceptional ability to personally, or through the development and promotion of programs, motivate and challenge personnel in (1) a disability program and/or (2) personal and professional growth. The recipient must:

- (a) Be a member of NADE.
- (b) Be assigned to job duties on a full or part-time basis. Examples of potential nominees include, but are not limited to, training officers, civil rights office employees, human resource management personnel, etc.
- (c) Have *notable accomplishments in the area of human resource development*, consistent with policies and objectives of our professional organization.

The **ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD** is to be given annually to honor and recognize a disability professional who has made a significant contribution on a local, regional, and/or national level to the National Association of Disability Examiners. The recipient must have:

- (a) Been a member of NADE for less than two years, at the time of nomination, regardless of the number of years of service in a DDS.
- (b) Made a significant contribution to his or her local, regional, and/or national level of NADE.

## Join the Crowd – Get Certified!!

by Ellen Cook, Professional Development Committee Chair

THE APPLICATIONS FOR NADE Certification of Disability Professionals are pouring in. You need to get in line right now before the crowd gets away from you and leaves you behind!!

NADE offers Professional Certification to Examiners, Support, and Medical members. But the only way to obtain this Certification is to apply for it. Your attainment of Certified Disability Examiner status places you in a unique position as a highly qualified expert in the profession of disability adjudication. Advanced training and service will enable you to bring a higher level of expertise to the field of disability adjudication and provide more effective and efficient service to the population we serve.

All NADE members, whether you are a support professional, medical professional or disability professional, can be certified. All the information you need to apply is on our website at [www.NADE.org](http://www.NADE.org). Choose Certifications under the MEMBERSHIP ISSUES heading in the middle of the home page. Even the forms that you need to complete are there, whether it's for certification or recertification.

If you have never been certified as a NADE professional, it's time to see if you qualify. If you have been a NADE member at least one year, and have held a position with your DDS for at least 3 years, you qualify. Just complete your certification form, including listing all your training hours, and have it signed by either your Agency Director, your Regional President, or your local Chapter President. (You may be surprised to see how much training you have had.) Send it in, and your certificate will be on its way back to you soon.

If you have been previously certified (anytime before 2006) it is time to be re-certified. To maintain your certification you need to have had 15-25 additional hours of training every three years, depending on your member classification. In this way NADE Certification remains current at all times. No resting on our laurels in this program! We keep learning and growing and we should be recognized for that.

Chapter Presidents: have you appointed a certification chair? This position can perform a real service for your chapter by checking the certification status of your members against the master membership list sent each month. That way, any errors or oversights can be corrected, and you will have an updated record of the certification status of all of your members. This chair can also make sure everyone keeps records of their continuing education credits.

I encourage each member to solidify his/her dedication to this profession and apply to be certified today. Then display the certificate proudly as a testament to your achievement.

I look forward to hearing from all our members this year. Please contact me at [ellen.cook@ssa.gov](mailto:ellen.cook@ssa.gov), 217-741-8151, or by mail at:

Ellen Cook

4805 Greenbriar Dr, Springfield, IL 62711.

Remember, at this time there is NO COST involved (other than postage) for certification and recertification.



The following members have been Certified as Disability Professionals under NADE's Certification Program from August 2011 through January 2012.

Congratulations to:

Thomas Martin	NY	Sept 2014
Penny Dahl	TN	Sept 2014

These members have successfully met the requirements for Re-Certification as Disability Professionals from August 2011 through January 2012.

Jennifer Howe	MO	Sept 2014
Dean A. Crawford	OK	Sept 2014
Robyn B. Rohwedder	WA	Sept 2014
Debi Chowdhury	NY	Sept 2014
Jamie B. Simpson	AL	Jan 2015
Gabriel Barajas	WY	Jan 2015
Theresa Klubertanz	WI	Jan 2015
Tom F. Shadid PhD.	OK	July 2015

Please see the NADE website under MEMBERSHIP ISSUES, then choose "Certifications" to obtain complete information about NADE's Certification Program.



Appreciation to Associate Commissioner Office of Disability Programs Art Spencer was shared by President-elect Todd Deshong (far left), President Tom Ward, and Legislative Director Mark Bernskoetter (right).



## Visitors at MidYear Board

*President Tom Ward thanks Dr. Tony Jones, Washington DC DDS Director for his visit representing the National Council of Disability Determinations Directors.*

*NADE was honored to have speakers from SSA to the MidYear meeting: (from left) President-elect Todd Deshong, Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Operations Terry Gruber, Assistant Associate Commissioner Office of Disability Determinations Linda Kerr-Davis, and NADE President Tom Ward.*



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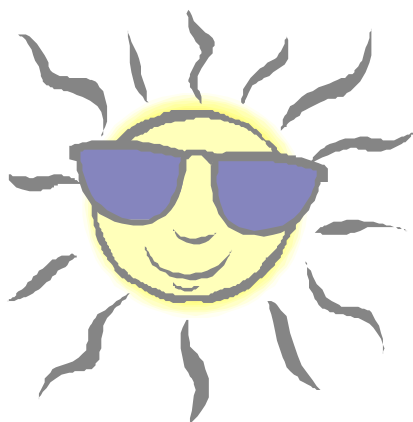
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## National Disability Professionals Week – Coming To An Office Near You June 11-15, 2012

*by David Kramer, NDPW chair*



IT HAS BEEN A LONG day of combing through medical records for that key piece of information that will allow that aging case to close with an accurate decision, punctuated by ringing phone calls, followed by forms to complete, amplified by intent buzzing half-conversations with claimants in nearby cubicles, flavored by not-fresh-enough-coffee, and where-has-the-time-gone, and how-many-receipts-today? and I-really-do-not-have-enough time.

### **Deep breath.**

Wouldn't you enjoy some time for a break to refresh, recharge, invigorate and reconnect with your friends and coworkers?

National Disability Professionals Week (NDPW) is just what we need to celebrate our accomplishments, renew our energy, connect with one another and prepare for another year of valuable service to the citizens of our state and nation. NDPW is a time for all this and more.

## **“TAKE TIME TO BASK IN THE GLOW OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS”**

The winning entry was submitted by Janet Geeslin of Madison, WI DDS. Way to go, Janet!

This theme received the most votes for first place as well as the most votes in the top three, making it a clear winner.

Now we can ramp up our planning for NDPW. Look for ways to encourage your members, attract new members, bless the community, refresh your spirits and more. Take time to plan now and we can bask in June.

During your celebrations in June, document your NDPW activities with a summary and photos that your chapter can submit as your NDPW award entries. Send entries to:

David Kramer, NDPW Chair  
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## Chapter Warms Up Winter with Chili Cook-Off

*by Lindsay Tjugum, Wisconsin DDS*



FOR OUR FEBRUARY FUND raising event, WADE hosted the first-ever Wisconsin DDS Chili Cook-off. Everyone in the office was invited to make a 6 quart Crockpot of chili. We had a total of 9 contestants. Each chef paid a \$5 entry fee, with that money going toward cash prizes.

On the day of the cook-off, the entire office was invited to purchase chili, which was available for sale both by the bowl and as a sampler platter of all the chili. The chili ranged from mild to spicy, from vegetarian to extra-meaty, each of them with different and unique tastes. Many of the cooks also lured in buyers by supplying delicious accompaniments, including the traditional sour cream and cheese, as well as some more creative accompaniments such as fritos and cinnamon bread. To round out the meal, WADE sold tasty, made-from-scratch cornbread for an additional 50 cents a piece.

There were two \$50 cash prizes – one for the people's choice and one for the judge's choice. The buyers that opted for the sampler platter were encouraged to vote for their favorite chili to win the people's choice award. There was also a panel of three WADE members (all dressed up in formal judging attire, a.k.a. old graduation gowns) who diligently tasted each chili and, after much deliberation, came to an agreement on the best overall chili. The winner of the judge's choice was a thick, meaty, Cajun-inspired chili, while the winner of the people's choice award was a sweet cinnamon chili accompanied by home-made cinnamon bread.

The event turned out to be a big success. Many employees commented on how much fun it was and suggested that we do more events like it! What's next? Cake wars? Salsa competition? We will keep you posted.

---

## GLADE Regional Officers Meet to Plan Conference



*On Saturday, March 17, 2012, the Great Lakes Regional Board held their Mid Year Board meeting In Schiller Park, IL. to plan the next Regional Training Conference, plan for awards, and discuss current issues.*

*Front Row: Janet Geeslin, Wisconsin Chapter President; Ellen Cook, Regional Membership Chairman..*

*Back Row: Claudette Benser, Great Lakes Regional President; Rodney Roth, Regional Secretary; Jennifer Nottingham, Great Lakes Regional Director; Liz Livingston, Illinois Chapter President; Brenda Hairston, Michigan Chapter President.*

## **“Survivor” Membership Recruitment Quiz**

*by Trish Chaplin, St. Louis MADE Chapter Treasurer*

EVERY YEAR, THE ST. Louis MADE Chapter tries to come up with new ideas to recruit members. Last year, we had MADE in Paradise with a beach theme. This year, our chapter held a membership drive entitled Survivor 2012 DDS/MADE. At this event, our local president provided a brief presentation about NADE’s mission and history. We had a taco luncheon with all the fixings provided by MADE and current members. For our Survivor challenge event, we had participants hold their arms out while we put a ream of paper in each hand. That doesn’t seem too challenging, right? WRONG! Give it a try; it is a lot more difficult than you think! The first participant dropped her paper reams after about 60 seconds. Shortly thereafter, everyone else started to drop their paper. The participant who held onto the paper the longest was our winner, holding on to his paper for about two minutes.

After our physical challenge, we challenged people’s brains with a little NADE Q&A time. We presented questions to staff from our president’s presentation. MADE St Louis challenges your NADE knowledge with our Survivor questions:

- 1) NADE was formed at a DDS directors meeting in:
  - A) New York in 1969
  - B) Philadelphia in 1963
  - C) Boston in 1965
  - D) Chicago in 1967
- 2) NADE was originally formed in 1963 as a division with NRA (National Rehabilitation Association). This represented professionals such as physicians, DDS examiners, rehab counselors, nurses and therapists. Due to growing philosophical differences with the NRA, the NADE Delegate assembly voted in Salt Lake City to separate from the NRA. What year did NADE become independent?
  - A) 1967
  - B) 1969
  - C) 1972
  - D) 1978
- 3) NADE’s current membership consists of:
  - A) DDS examiners administrator and supervisors
  - B) MCs and support staff
  - C) Others interested in improving the disability claims process (SSA HQ, OHA and advocates in the private sector)
  - D) All of the above
- 4) Who was NADE’s first president?
  - A) Lucian Zadronzny
  - B) Marty Blum
  - C) Charles Blalock
  - D) Thomas Spence
- 5) Executive Officers of NADE are elected by the membership at large at the annual general membership meeting. How many executive Officers are on the NADE Board?
  - A) 4
  - B) 7
  - C) 9
  - D) 5
- 6) NADE members elect Regional Directors for 2-year terms. How many Regions are there?
  - A) 5
  - B) 7
  - C) 8
  - D) 9
- 7) NADE has established recognition awards recognizing individual and chapter contributions to the enhancement and promotion of the professional organization. The winners are determined by votes of an award committee. There are nine (9) different awards. Which award is for “an Individual who has shown exceptional ability to motivate and challenge or to develop or promote programs, which motivate and challenge others toward personal and professional growth and human resource development?”
  - A) Earl B. Thomas Award
  - B) John Gordon Award
  - C) Lewis Buckingham Award
  - D) Frank Barclay Award
- 8) Since 1979 NADE has sponsored an annual training conference. It is an opportunity to network with others, learn new information and grow professionally. This year, the 2012 National Conference “Exploring New Directions with NADE” will be held September 8-14 in what city?
  - A) Salt Lake City Utah
  - B) Savannah, Georgia
  - C) Columbus, Ohio
  - D) San Antonio, Texas
- 9) The NADE *Advocate* is the primary tool for sharing information with members. It is published four (4) times a year and contains a wealth of information about NADE activities as well as informative and professional articles about current updates in medicine and treatment. Donna Hilton, from Springfield, is our current NADE *Advocate* editor. She is always looking for articles and information and what you would like to see in future editions. When was the first NADE *Advocate* published?
  - A) 1966
  - B) 1971
  - C) 1979
  - D) 1981



10) NADE membership continues to grow. How many members does Missouri have in NADE currently?

- A) 75
- B) 89
- C) 168
- D) 204

These questions appeared to be quite challenging as staff did not get too far in answering these questions! The Survivor received a \$5 gift card to a local restaurant.



Our winner was LaTascha Parker (above), Great Plains Regional Treasurer.

Here are the answers:

- 1) B
- 2) D
- 3) D
- 4) C
- 5) D
- 6) B
- 7) D
- 8) C
- 9) A
- 10) C

MADE St. Louis was please to give away two memberships during our membership drive. We hope we challenged other NADE members with our Survivor 2012 Q&A!



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## Holiday Spirit Alive at Illinois DHS

THE ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF Disability Examiners (IADE) and employees of the Disability Determination Services (DDS) in Springfield, raised money, shopped and wrapped gifts for the angels (students) at the Illinois School for the Deaf (ISD) and the Illinois School for the Visually Impaired (ISVI). This is their sixth year participating in the Angel Tree Program.

Fundraising activities included a book sale, a holiday bazaar, and a sloppy joe luncheon raising almost \$900. IADE and DDS employees and their families shopped at Target for twenty-five angels and wrapped gifts while enjoying dinner at Applebee's.

A very, very special thank you goes out to these caring and generous staff.



*Members Robbie Johnston, Erin Vincent, and Andrea Prosperini deliver gifts to their parent agency for the "Angel Tree 2011".*



*Shoppers Bem Williams and Ryan Keith are loading their carts with gifts.*



*Wrapping gifts at Applebee's.  
Foreground: Kathy Full, IADE President Elect  
Background: Elizabeth Livingston, IADE President*

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## Helping Paws International

by Lisa Hayes, THADE, Vice President

FEBRUARY'S LUNCH AND LEARN featured Jeani Gray from Helping Paws International. Jeani was accompanied by Titan, a beautiful Greyhound who is a certified Therapy Dog. As Jeani introduced DDS staff to the various therapies provided by therapy dogs, Titan explored the DDS conference room and introduced himself to members of the audience by personally checking each one of us out and giving his seal of approval. Every member of the audience showered Titan with love and affection and this, perhaps, triggered his desire to continue his explorations throughout the room, making sure he paid a personal visit to each audience member.

Jeani explained that Titan is a retired racing Greyhound and a hero! Jeani shared with us that Titan was the recent recipient of the President's Volunteer Service Award (Gold Level). As a Therapy-assistance dog, Titan works in hospitals, elder care homes, hospice, schools and home health. And very notably, Titan also recently captured three thieves who were robbing stores along Creedmoor Road in Raleigh. Some of Titan's other awards include Service Dog of the Year, AKC Canine Good Citizen and numerous 1<sup>st</sup> place awards for his service hours.

For more information on Helping Paws International, go to [www.helpingpawsintl.org](http://www.helpingpawsintl.org).



*Titan, a certified therapy dog*



*Jeani Gray from Helping Paws International introduces Titan to Lisa Hayes.*

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## The Gift of Love

by Jennifer Pounds and Bennie Sharpless, THADE

IN THE EARLY 1980s, Maureen Halsey-Wright, NADE member from Kentucky, became actively involved with Organ Donation Awareness. She lost her daughter to organ failure while awaiting for a transplant. Ms. Halseywright came before the NADE board and asked them to help increase awareness. NADE eagerly became involved and each April promotes National Donate Life Month. Individual chapters are encouraged to promote awareness in their office environments in creative fashion. Many have lunch 'n' learn programs with speakers from local Organ Donation Centers or sometimes, recipients come and speak on this important topic. This year, THADE is honored to celebrate the life of Mrs. Brenda Johnson. Here is her story:



Thomas Gautier (donor) with  
Brenda Johnson

*"I have been diabetic for 30 years. I did not have any kidney disease until almost nine years ago when my appendix ruptured. I became deathly ill and went into chronic kidney failure from the release of toxins and infection into my system for my kidneys to filter. I received massive doses of IV antibiotics which also put a huge strain on my kidneys since they are excreted through the kidneys. I was told by physicians at Duke Hospital that I would be on dialysis in 2-10 years depending on how I took care of myself. I was followed by a Nephrologist over the next nine years until I reached end stage renal disease. The Nephrologists decided about a year ago that I needed to be worked up for a kidney transplant. He also sent me to have a dialysis fistula put in, in case I didn't get a transplant donor in time. The kidney donor list has an average 5 year waiting list, unless you have a donor. My workup for transplant was completed last October. My soon to be*

*son-in-law, Thomas Gautier, had expressed interest several months earlier that he wanted to see if he was a match when it was time. None of my immediate family could be kidney donors due to health issues. Two weeks after Thomas and my daughter, Julie, were married Thomas went to Chapel Hill for testing. He received a call the next day from Chapel Hill transplant clinic that he was a match to me. Over the next several weeks, Thomas was worked up with many x-rays and tests to make sure he was in perfect health.*

*Finally, a date was set for February 28, 2012 and we both completed pre-op tests the week before surgery. We both entered the hospital together on the morning of February 28<sup>th</sup>. Thomas was taken to surgery first, and when they were almost through with his surgery, they took me to the operating room. The whole surgery process took about 9 hours. Thomas remained in the hospital for 3 days and I remained there for 4 days. He and I are still being followed close by UNC Hospital. Thanks to Thomas's unselfish act of love, I did not have to go on dialysis and I feel like I have my life back."*

Thomas is an active THADE member. He is someone that humbly works behind the scenes of any function THADE sponsors to assure its success. Thomas is our hero this month. Read his story :

*"I have known Mrs. Brenda for a little over three years, since Julie and I started dating. Julie told me about all of her physical problems and everything she was going through but I wasn't sure I believed it at first based on her appearance and attitude. Most people who do not know her very well, do not even know she is/has been sick because of the way she is so full of life and personality. She never complained about her health or how severe her health had diminished. Over time, her conditions continued to get worse and her kidneys were starting to shut down completely. Once I found out that no one in her family was able to donate a kidney, I was more than willing to step up and go through the process. My wife and I were constantly praying that Gods' will would be done through this situation and we would put everything in His control. We were happy to find out that I was a match for Mrs. Brenda, which is rare since we are not related. I was a little nervous going through the process because I was not exactly sure what to expect. The doctors and nurses at UNC Hospital made it easy for me and the surgery went well.*

*Mrs. Brenda is a very strong person and her character speaks volumes about how remarkable of a person she truly is on a continuous basis. She has a strong faith in God and puts everything in His hands. I'm just happy that God chose me to be the one to fulfill this need of someone so close to me and to hopefully extend her life here on earth."*

It is very important that we all choose to be a donor. It is so simple. When renewing your driver's license make your wish known to be a donor. You should also tell your immediate family of your decision. Thomas is the hero of this story. We look forward to his return to work and send wishes of a speedy recovery his way.

**Sheila Jones**  
OAR Division President



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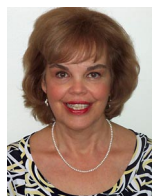
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Check the appropriate  
box in each section.

<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	
<input type="checkbox"/> Full	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Support	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Retiree	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate	\$200.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Corp.	\$350.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold Corp.	\$500.00

## NADE Membership Application

(Please print name, title & designation as desired  
on your Membership Certificate)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Prefix First Middle Last Suffix

Professional Designation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Local Chap # \_\_\_\_\_ Wk Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ @ssa.gov

NADE's membership year runs from July 1st through June 30th each year. Your membership will expire on the June 30th following your join date.

Exception: All new memberships received between January through June will receive an expiration date of June 30th of the following year. NADE does not prorate dues.

**Mail to: National Association of Disability Examiners Whitaker Bank NADE Account PO Box 599 Frankfort KY 40602**  
**(Make check payable to NADE)**

**CHANGES: (ONLY ENTER CHANGED DATA)**

### Change Of Information Form For: (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Professional Designation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\*Local Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ @ssa.gov

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail or email to: Membership Chair**

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DISABILITY EXAMINERS



PO BOX 50006  
SPRINGFIELD MO 65805-0006

Address Service Requested



### NADE Supports Success



FOR MANY YEARS, NADE has spoken out to Congress and SSA about issues important to our membership. NADE's voice is strong because of our membership. Reach out and recruit members. Let's see what we can do together!

The big question is whether NADE's voice has been heard. Many of our positions have found support and had a great impact in the disability process, while others have been partially considered. Of course, there is always the issue of how any

Below is a list of some of the positions NADE has taken over the past decade that have seen implementation:

- A system for national Quality Assurance review rather than by region.
- Medical Consultants (MCs) can be board eligible or board certified.
- MCs should be available in the DDS to discuss case issues in person.
- There was no need to add nurses as an additional level of medical consultant.
- Quick Disability Decisions (QDD)
- QDD should be done in the DDS
- QDD does not need MC signatures on fully favorable decisions
- Electronic folders, also known as eDIB
- Dual monitors at workstations.
- Development of more vocational expertise in the DDSs
- Expansion of Cooperative Disability Investigation (CDI) units.
- eCAT improvements
- Disability Claims Manager (DCM) is not feasible
- An additional level known as the Reviewing Officer is not needed
- Streamlining steps 4 and 5 in sequential evaluation



*NADE is working today for a better process tomorrow.*

Rest assured, the NADE Board continues to pursue many other important initiatives to develop the art and science of disability evaluation and enhance public awareness.