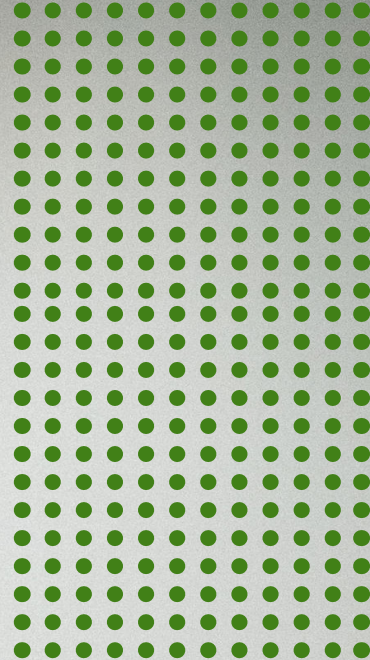


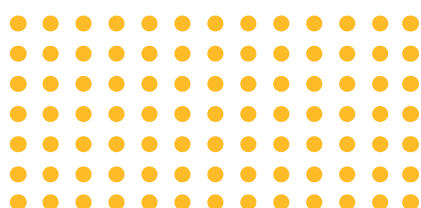
# Department of Disability and Human Development Annual Report 2023





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## Welcome Statement

Starting January 1, 2024, the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) Department of Disability and Human Development (DHD) will have new leadership with Professor Carrie Sandahl serving as the Interim Head and Professor Sarah Parker Harris as the Associate Head. I have had the pleasure of serving as the head for 23 years and am proud of the growth and quality of the department's academic, research, and service programs. DHD began as a department in 1997 and was created by its Institute on Disability and Human Development (Illinois' University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities). The Institute serves as the research and public service arm of the DHD. I will continue in my current role as the Director of the Institute and look forward to the new leadership in the department.



**Dr. Tamar Heller**

A key focus driving our mission this year is accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities. One of our major plans is to revise the master's degree with a proposed title of "Masters of Disability and Inclusion" with two tracks, Disability Studies and Disability Accessibility. Our academic courses are continually working towards universal design and inclusive education. The Co-Operative Career Experience for Students with Intellectual Disabilities provides us challenges in supporting students and enabling accessibility in our classes. The social determinants of health undergird much of this year's research focus. Funded research projects are addressing the accessibility of such important aspects as housing, transportation, leisure, and health promotion sites and programs. Some examples include an evaluation of the state's housing navigation program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and study of accessibility in adaptive sports. Another project will create a machine learning technique to rapidly generate data essential to building a more integrated transportation system for people living with disabilities and explore the role of the built environment on community participation in employment. We are actively promoting inclusive research strategies that include people with disabilities as not only participants but also as key researchers and co-researchers. One of the projects is working with Special Olympics to include athletes with intellectual and developmental disabilities as co-researchers. The Great Lakes ADA Center is a major resource for ADA technical assistance, information dissemination, and research on accessibility. A related project is the Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment.

This summer (August 4-8, 2024) Chicago will be hosting the World Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSIDD). As chair of the local organizing committee, I invite you to take this opportunity to connect with colleagues from around the world, develop new collaborations, and exchange ideas. With its emphasis on inclusive research the conference welcomes the participation of self-advocates, providers, and families. Thank you to all our staff, students, supporters, and collaborators who have jointly worked to promote the accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities, their families, and their communities.

*Tamar Heller*

Tamar Heller, Ph.D. Distinguished Professor,  
Department Head (until December 31, 2023)  
Director of the Institute on Disability and Human Development

## DHD Academic Programs

### Highlights From DHD Students



This summer Sydney Erlikh, DHD PhD student, featured dancing with Maypril Krukowski, an artist from Chicago, and using a wheelchair in the photo to the left, curated performances at the Art Institute of Chicago. "Crippling the Galleries" is a series of programs hosted by the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Art Institute of Chicago in close collaboration with "Bodies of Work: A Network of Disability Art and Culture." Four works took place in the museum galleries examining the histories of disability that the spaces and works evoke. The artists explored different strategies for accessibility in performance such as prerecorded open audio description by the dancers and live scripted or improvised audio description.

In addition to Erlikh, another DHD student, Maggie Bridger, and three other neurodivergent, sick, and disabled artists from Chicago: Anjal Chande, Shireen Hamza, and Kris Lenzo participated in the project. Erlikh is also part of Unfolding Disability Futures (UDF), a grassroots collective for disabled, sick, injured, and neurodivergent artists in Chicago. The artists currently participate in the Southside Artists in Sacred Spaces. Learn more about the performances and UDF:

<https://www.unfoldingdisabilityfutures.com>

<https://thevisualist.org/2023/08/cripping-the-galleries-dance-performance>

<https://chicagoreader.com/arts-culture/the-art-of-access>

<https://www.aam-us.org/2023/10/06/disrupting-museum-behavior-an-exploration-of-the-art-institute-of-chicagos-cripping-the-galleries>

### Want to learn more about our academic programs?



**Graduate Studies in DHD  
PhD in Disability Studies**

[go.uic.edu/DHDPHD](https://go.uic.edu/DHDPHD)



**Undergraduate Studies  
DHD Major**

[go.uic.edu/DHDBachelor](https://go.uic.edu/DHDBachelor)

...



**Graduate Certificate Programs  
Disability Legal Studies  
DLStudies@uic.edu**

**Disability Ethics**

[Go.uic.edu/Dhddecp](https://Go.uic.edu/Dhddecp)



**Undergraduate Studies  
DHD Minor**

[go.uic.edu/DHDMinor](https://go.uic.edu/DHDMinor)

...

## DHD Faculty

### New Faculty Join DHD



**David Camacho, PhD,  
MSW, MSG  
Assistant Professor**

Dr. Camacho joins DHD from the University of Maryland, Baltimore where he served as Assistant Professor in Social Work.

Dr. Camacho earned his PhD in Social Work in Advanced Clinical Practice at Columbia University. His postdoctoral training is in Behavioral Geriatrics from the Weill Cornell Medicine Department of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine. Dr. Camacho's research focuses on developing and testing strategies that enhance the prevention and management of prevalent and morbid conditions associated with aging (e.g., chronic pain, loneliness, cognitive impairment) among Latino (Hispanic/Latinx) and other minoritized older adults. His work has been supported by the Council on Social Work Education Minority Fellowship Program, Columbia Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Alzheimer's Disease Disparities, Cornell's Translational Research Institute on Pain in Later Life, and the National Institute on Aging. His research is informed by his extensive direct clinical practice as a bilingual (English/Spanish) and bicultural (Mexican and American) clinical social worker as well as his personal experiences as a caregiver. Dr. Camacho has held multiple clinical and research appointments across a variety of community settings in Los Angeles and New York.

### **Azadeh Safaeian, PhD 2023 B2F Scholar**

Dr. Safaeian joins DHD as a 2023 Bridge to Faculty Postdoctoral Research Associate.



Dr. Azadeh Safaeian was a postdoctoral fellow in Comparative Literary Studies for the 2022-2023 academic year at Northwestern University before joining UIC in the Department of Disability and Human Development as a Bridge to Faculty Scholar. Her research and teaching interests include disability and trauma studies, care studies, film theory, and animal studies. Located at the intersection of critical disability studies and trauma theory, her current book project attends to the discursive and non-discursive representations of somatic pain and psychological trauma in the literatures and cinemas of minority groups in the context of the Middle East. Her project examines a selection of multiethnic and multilingual war memoirs, novels, and films. Dr. Safaeian's research has been funded by several fellowships and awards, including the American Council of Learned Societies Dissertation Completion Fellowship (2021-2022) and the Social Science Research Council's Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship (2020-2021).



## Disability Research

### Everybody Moves! Understanding Disparities in Leisure Participation

The well documented benefits of participation in leisure-time physical activity (LTPA) for people with disabilities span physical, mental, and social health. LTPA also promotes social participation, belongingness, and connectedness with peers. Despite these benefits, people with disabilities are less active than their counterparts with out disabilities. Moreover, we know that people with disabilities from racial minority background experience health disparities such as chronic conditions. Participation in LTPA can help reduce those disparities. However, there is limited knowledge of the intersection of disability, ethnicity, and race within the research in LTPA. Therefore, Dr. Delphine Labbé (PI) with her team (Dr. Monika Stodolska at Urbana Champaign, Dr. Casey Herman/UIC, Dr. Yochai Eisenberg/UIC) will be conducting a community-based project to explore access to and participation in LTPA for people with intersecting marginalized identities of disability and Latinos and Black/African American background. It is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) Minority-Serving Institutions grant. Everybody Moves! will explore three different levels of influence on LTPA including learning about the experiences of individuals with disabilities, exploring organizations providing LTPA opportunities, and examining overarching policies impacting LTPA to better understand the needs and factors that impact LTPA participation. Using the findings from these sources, the team will develop evidence-informed priorities and recommendations to support equitable access to LTPA for people with disabilities from ethnic and racial minority groups. For this project, the team is engaging with the Chicagoland Disabled People of Color Coalition (CDPOCC) and other community partners working with and for people with disabilities and Latinos and Black/African American communities.



**Photo caption: A female adult riding a bike with a disabled male adult who is riding an adaptive bike.**

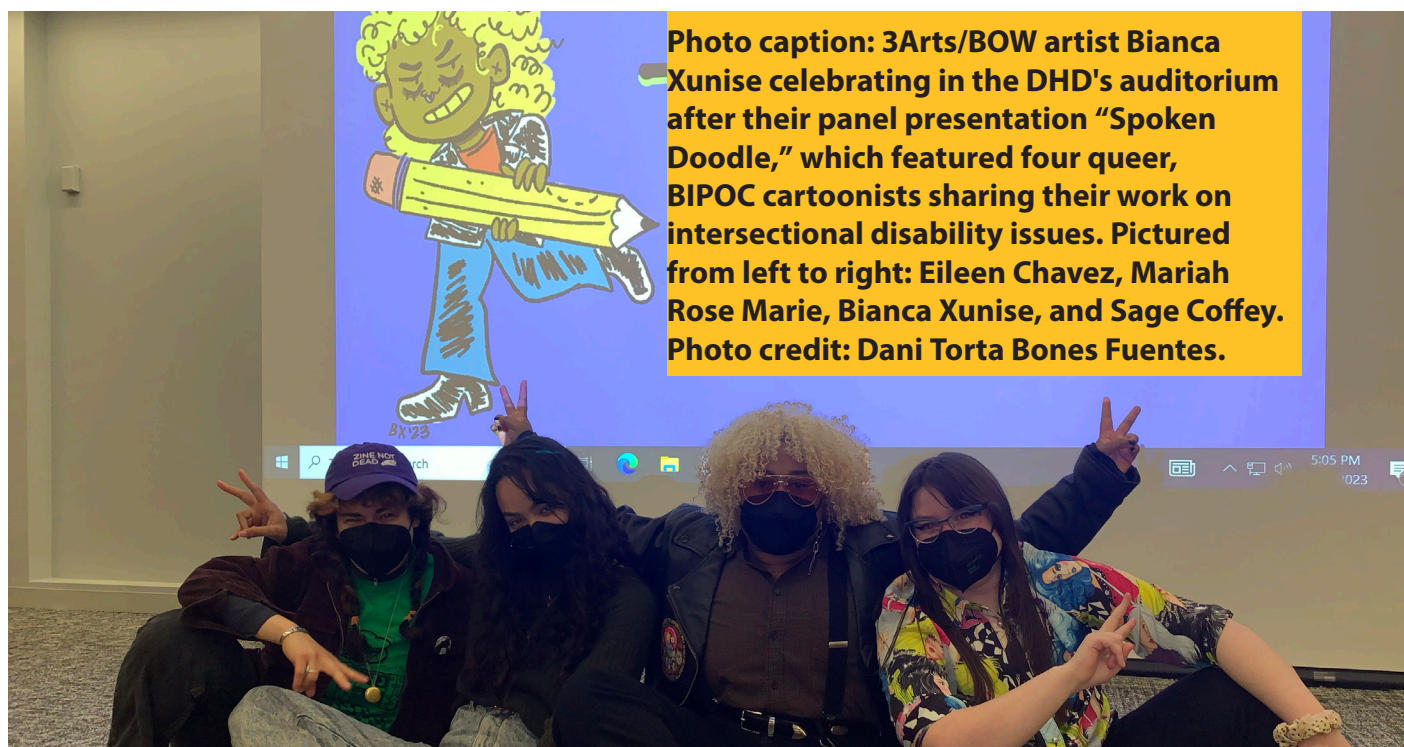
Dr. Labbé has worked on various community-engaged projects on Adaptive LTPA for the past 10 years. She recently worked on understanding the benefits of virtual programming for people with disabilities (<https://ahs.uic.edu/disability-human-development/community-health-and-disability-inclusion-research-and-training-programs/going-virtual>). The study's findings suggest that people with disabilities can achieve physical and emotional health benefits when participating in adaptive online LTPA, including a strong social benefit. Staff attitude and knowledge as well as the staff's ability to adapt to participant needs played important roles in facilitating participation. This study offered insights into how online LTPA could support the health-promoting behavior of people with disabilities during the pandemic and beyond.

## DHD Arts Program

### Exploring the Disability Experience

Founded and directed by Dr. Carrie Sandahl, The Program on Disability Art, Culture, and Humanities (PDACH) is a creative research lab dedicated to exploring disability experiences through the arts. Dr. Sandahl and her students had an exciting and productive year. The program received funding from the Ford Foundation, 3Arts, and the UI system's Presidential Initiative to support its activities. This program is also the home of Chicago's Bodies of Work, a consortium of organizations that supports the development of new work in disability arts and culture in unexpected ways.

The 3Arts/Bodies of Work Residency program is central to its programming, which includes customized residency experiences with four Chicago-based Deaf and disabled artists. Along with program partners at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Access Living, and UIC's Disability Cultural Center, students and faculty work closely with these artists on projects centered on the creation of new work, public programming, professional development, mentorship, and advocacy for Disability Art & Culture. This year, our artists included graphic novelist Bianca Xunise, playwright Kennedy Healy, percussionist Tommy Carrol, and vocalist Stephanie Alma. This summer also wrapped up a two-year term in the Museum of Contemporary Art's (MCA) Community Partnership Program, which is a mutually beneficial arrangement between local arts organizations and the museum. Bodies of Work advised the MCA on disability representation in the museum, held focus groups on accessibility, and created programming for the Commons Series. Students in Dr. Sandahl's graduate seminar designed and implemented two sensory-friendly mornings for the MCA in consultation with the museum's Education Department, focusing on disability-led experiences related to their exhibition programming. These highlights were among a full roster of collaborative programming that included the annual inclusive dance program Counter Balance, engagements with visiting artist Carmen Papalia, an artist talk by Ghanaian artist Yajim Amadu, an artist exchange with the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, art-making workshops, and The Chicago Inclusive Dance Festival. With each activity, PDACH faculty and students are key contributors to the disability art and cultural movement locally, nationally, and internationally.





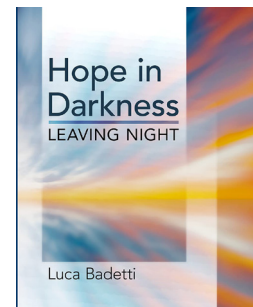
## DHD Alumni Making a Mark



**Dr. Luca Badetti, authored *Hope in Darkness: Leaving Night*, published this year by Paulist Press.**

Dr. Luca Badetti, PhD'16, teaches at Loyola University Chicago's John Felice Rome Center. His interdisciplinary background in disability studies, clinical psychology, theology, and philosophy, and his community leadership experiences inform his book writing. Following his previous book "*I Believe in You: Wisdom from Community with Persons with Disabilities on Believing in Ourselves and the Other* (New City Press, Rev. Ed. 2021)", Badetti's new book "*Hope in Darkness*" focuses on finding hope at night.

Night can be an experience of disorientation and loss, but also of new life and direction. Through stories and reflections, the book journeys through some fundamental questions people grapple with at night—questions of identity, meaning, and relationships—and explores ways in which individuals and communities can grow through them.



**Dr. Amie Lulinski (first from left) with self advocacy specialists Liz Weintraub (standing in middle) and Tia Nelis.**

Dr. Amie Lulinski, PhD'14, has served as The Arc of Illinois' Executive Director since June 2021. She highlighted the pivotal role her time at DHD played in her career. DHD connected her with early-career professionals and mentors through IDHD and the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). In 2011, as AUCD's Policy Fellow, she contributed to efforts to block significant changes to Medicaid policies that would negatively affect people with disabilities. Mentorship from DHD faculty, such as Drs. Glenn Fujiura, Mary Kay Rizzolo, David Braddock, Sarah Parker Harris, and Tamar Heller, significantly shaped her professional journey. Their support not only enabled her to work on meaningful projects but also fostered lasting friendships with colleagues. In her current role, Dr. Lulinski collaborates with advocates and families sharing stories of triumph, frustration, and heartache. She actively educates General Assembly members about the challenges and barriers to successful community living.



**Dr. Benjamin Salentine serves on the Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion.**

Dr. Benjamin Salentine, PhD'23, is honored to be appointed by Governor Pritzker to serve on the Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion. Through his lived experience with disability, as well as his professional and academic endeavors and volunteer experiences within the non-profit and community-based organization sectors, Dr. Salentine has played a pivotal role in realizing positive and impactful change for minority and underrepresented populations. He was the focus of an employee spotlight for disability awareness month at UI Health, while also being featured in 2023 Crain's Notable Leaders in Health Care. He participated in a radio interview on National Public Radio – WBEZ Chicago Reset, reflecting upon the legacy of the ADA. Dr. Salentine has contributed to publications regarding disability and healthcare (The Atlantic and Undark Magazine). The culmination of his media presence, committee appointments, board memberships, academic and professional efforts all seek to add to and further highlight the voice of marginalized groups, while positively impacting efforts aimed at diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.



## DHD Grants

### FY 2023 New Grants and Contracts

**Aging Services Inclusive of Asian American Networks (ASIAAN)**, 9/1/23-8/31/23, (PI: Mansha Mirza, Co-PI: Sumithra Murthy, Co-Is: Kelly Hsieh, Yochai Eisenberg, Rooshey Hasnain).

**Americans with Disabilities Act Participation Action Research Consortium.** National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) 9/1/2022-2027 (Co-PIs: Joy Hammel, Lex Friedan, Co-I: Robin Jones).

**Analysis of Movement Out of State Operated Developmental Centers (SODC).** Illinois Department of Human Services-Division of Developmental Disabilities (IDHS-DDD), 2023-2024 (PI: Kelly Hsieh, Co-PI: Tamar Heller).

**Assistive Technology Services to Williams Consent Decree Members.** IDHS-Division of Mental Health (DMH), 2022-2023 (PI: Glenn Hedman).

**Assistive Technology Services to Colbert Consent Decree Members.** IDHS, 2022-2023 (PI: Glenn Hedman).

**ATU to Clients of Illinois Dept of Human Services-Home Services and Rehab Services combined.** IDHS-Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), 2022-2023 (PI: Glenn Hedman).

**Bodies of Work Strategic Planning Process.** Ford Foundation, 2022-2024 (PI: Carrie Sandahl).

**Convergence Accelerator Program Track H: Automating Transportation Affordances for People Living with Disabilities Using a Machine Learning Approach,** 1/1/2023-12/31/2023. (Subcontract PI: Yochai Eisenberg, PI: Brent Chamberlain (Utah State University/National Science Foundation).

**Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment,** Ford Foundation, 2023-2024 (Team: Sarah Parker Harris (Professor), Robert Gould (Associate Clinical Professor), Mariana Torres Garcia (Post- doctoral Fellow), Robin Jones (Great Lakes ADA Center Director), Claudia Diaz (Great Lakes ADA Center Associate Director), Oscar Gonzalez (ADA Spanish Language Outreach Project Coordinator), and two graduate student research assistants.)

**MindWalk, Roybal Midwest Center/National Institute on Aging (NIA),** 6/1/2023-5/31/2024, (PI: Sumithra Murthy, Co-PI: Katie Keiling Arnold, Co-Is: Kelly Hsieh & Rooshey Hasnain).

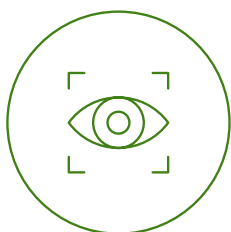
**Patient Instructor Training Program for BIPOC adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.** WITH Foundation, 2022-2023 (PI: Kiyoshi Yamaki).

**Special Olympics Research and Evaluation Translation and Dissemination Project Year 3.** Special Olympics, 2022-2023 (PI: Lieke Van Heumen).

**Strive to Thrive: Supporting Families across the Aging and Developmental Disabilities Networks,** 5/1/2023-4/30/2025, Florida Council on Developmental Disabilities (PI: Katie Keiling Arnold, Co-PIs: Tamar Heller & Sumithra Murthy).

**Supportive Housing Evaluation. Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities,** 2022-24 (PI: Kelly Hsieh, Co-PI: Tamar Heller).

**The Arc2022 FY 2022 AmeriCorps State and National Public Health AmeriCorps.** The Arc US Health and Fitness for All and HealthMatters Program Scale-Up with AmeriCorp Members, 2022-2024 (PI: Jasmina Sisirak, Co-I: Beth Marks).



## Bridging Aging and Disability in Research

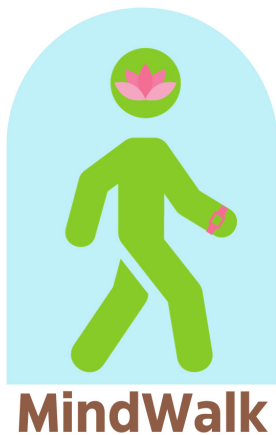
### Strive to Thrive

Strive to Thrive is an investment of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council to help understand ways that aging family caregivers of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Florida thrive. Researchers from the Institute on Disability and Human Development at UIC, Dr. Katie Arnold (PI) and Dr. Sumithra Murthy (Co-PI), are exploring what can help advance the person with IDD and the whole family to thrive. An environmental scan of the literature on this topic was conducted as the first step. Next a survey and focus group instruments will be developed to gather information from families across Florida. Findings will help inform the development of family-focused resources for individuals with IDD and their aging family caregivers to thrive.



**Photo caption: An aging mother and her adult daughter watering plants.**

### MindWalk Project



Older South Asian family caregivers of adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities experience elevated psychological stress due to caregiving responsibilities, service access and cultural/linguistic barriers, and stigma/discrimination. A pilot trial to assess the feasibility and preliminary efficacy of a 12-week mindful walking intervention (combining physical activity and cognitive training) for this population (age  $\geq 50$  years) is being conducted to explore the preliminary efficacy of the intervention that includes 1) self-paced downloadable training modules, 2) a prescribed mindfulness walking regimen, 3) self-reporting of regimen adherence by the participants, and 4) motivational/ reminder texts with weekly accountability check-ins. This one-year study, funded by the Midwest Roybal Center for Health Promotion and Translation (through the National Institute on Aging), is led by Dr. Sumithra Murthy (PI), Dr. Katie Arnold (Co-PI), and Co-I's Drs. Kelly Hsieh, Rooshey Hasnain, and Mark Dixon.

### Virtual Future is Now

The Future is Now has developed and is testing a virtual version (VFIN) with funding from the National Institute on Disability Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (PI: Tamar Heller, Co-PI Katie Keiling Arnold). The VFIN is a 6-week online training to help families of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities plan for the future; especially, as parents age. V-FIN uses a person-centered and family-centered approach that balances the needs of both the individual with disabilities and their family. Families discuss various topics during the Zoom session including building relationships and self-determination, supporting community living, choosing education, work, and retirement, and identifying a successor of support for when the current caregivers can no longer fill the role. The training helps families break down the planning process into sections and identify an action plan and priorities specific to their family. V-FIN has also developed a train the trainer program that expands the reach to more families across the country. We have launched it in Illinois and California and will provide more opportunities for families in Illinois. If you are interested, please contact Katie at [kkeiling@uic.edu](mailto:kkeiling@uic.edu).



## Bridging Aging and Disability in Research

### Aging Services Inclusive of Asian American Networks

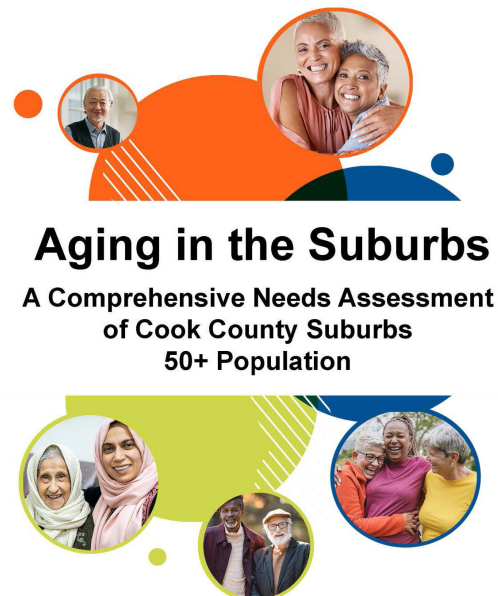


**Photo caption: An older Asian couple holding hands.**

The ASIAAN (Aging Services Inclusive of Asian American Networks) project is developing a technical assistance and resource development center for caregivers, service organizations and community groups who work with Asian American older adults. Led by principal investigator Dr. Mansha Mirza, Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy (OT) and Co-PI Dr. Sumithra Murthy, Visiting Clinical Assistant Professor of Disability and Human Development (DHD), it is funded by a three-year grant from the Administration for Community Living in the Department of Health and Human Services. The project team is working with a broad range of community and service organizations, including the Illinois Department on Aging, Chinese American Service League, Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community, South Asian American Policy and Research Institute, Metropolitan Asian Family Services, and the South East Asia Center. ASIAAN will develop culturally sensitive health literacy curricula in multiple Asian languages for older Asian Americans and their caregivers and an interactive map of age-related community resources. Undergraduate DHD students will create intergenerational social media resources about aging and age-related needs for Asian Americans to generate more awareness among communities and families. Additional DHD and OT collaborators on the grant include Drs. Kelly Hsieh, Yochai Eisenberg, Rooshey Hasnain, and Jenica Lee. Article credit to Sonya Booth.

### Aging in the Suburbs

Aging in the Suburbs was a needs assessment for adults ages 50 and older who are living in Cook County suburbs (PI: Dr. Kelly Hsieh, Co-PI: Dr. Tamar Heller). The assessment concluded in summer 2023 with intakes from older adults, caregivers, and providers, with more than 600 participants surveyed and 100 participating in focus groups. The results showed variations in how people access services including technology, nutrition, and housing based on education, race, and geographic location. People who are Black and live in south suburbs tend to have less access to services compared to those who live in the north. Linguistic need was an issue highlighted by immigrants. One of the Korean participants explained "We rarely reach out to the government offices because it's hard to get the language services." An Arab immigrant explained the lack of knowledge of existing services stating, "We didn't plan to age early. We are not like other Americans who plan ahead." The full needs assessment can be accessed using the following link: <https://bit.ly/2023aging>



# Fostering Research Exchanges

## European Union Center Funds International Disability Projects

The European Union Center at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has provided funding for three international disability projects through the Department of Education Title VI funds. These projects enabled exchanges with faculty in the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and Belgium.

### Connecting with Inclusive Research Teams

DHD faculty Dr. Lieke van Heumen and Special Olympics athlete Courtney Krueger have worked together as an inclusive research team since 2019 and developed a virtual training to support people with intellectual disabilities to work as inclusive researchers. They will take their work internationally with travel to the Netherlands in spring 2024 to guest lecture at the University of Amsterdam and exchange experiences with other inclusive researchers at the University of Humanistic Studies in Utrecht, hosted by Professor Alice Schippers and Disability Studies in the Netherlands. In addition to the European Union Center funding, Dr. van Heumen and Courtney’s work is sponsored by Special Olympics International through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Golisano Foundation.

Courtney Krueger



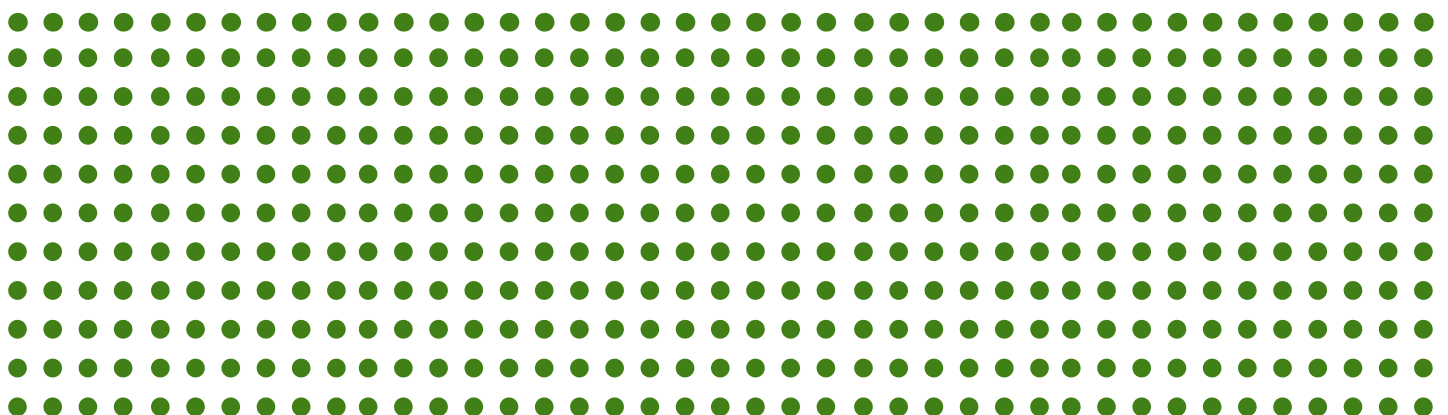
Lieke van Heumen



### Making Curricular Adaptations

Curricular Adaptation: Disability, Hollywood Films, and Cultural Context” explored how the feature-length documentary film "Code of the Freaks" (2020) which offers a disability cultural critique of Hollywood representations of disability, and its accompanying university curriculum ‘travels.’ With funding through the European Union Center, Dr. Alyson Patsavas, and Dr. Carrie Sandahl partnered with Dr. Kateřina Kolářová of Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic to develop and pilot lesson plans that brought "Code of the Freaks" into two different classes within the Gender Studies program in the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University.

These lessons facilitated a discussion of the relationship between the history of disability representation traced in Hollywood cinema and representations found within other cultural and historical contexts. Classroom discussions led to rich dialogue about the role of social, cultural, and historical contexts in shaping both disability representations and their reception among viewers. The lessons were taught in English within two courses in the Gender Studies program at Charles University, “Intersectionality: Theory and Methods” and “Feminist Cultural Studies.”





## Fostering Research Exchanges

### Exchanging Ideas with Leuven University

With funding from the European Union Center, Dr. Tamar Heller, DHD faculty, and Dr. Patrick Devlieger, DHD adjunct faculty and anthropology Professor at Leuven University Belgium, led the initiative "International Seminar Series and Symposium on Disability Inclusion." Dr. Devlieger came to Chicago to work on a proposal to study a leprosy colony still in existence in Hawaii. Dr. Heller provided a lecture in an anthropology class at Leuven University and was a jurist in an international disability film festival featuring films from Poland, Australia, and Canada. The winning film titled "Out of Water" from Polish director Gracjana Piechula is about a hearing child of deaf adults (CODA), Zosia, who together with her dad sets off to fight for her dream swimming competition. Along the way, they encounter complications that put Zosia in the role of interpreter and intermediary between her deaf father and the rest of the world. Having a voice starts to be not only a privilege for the girl, but also a burden. More exchanges are planned for this year including the showing of the film "Code of the Freaks" accompanied by one of its producers, Dr. Alyson Patsavas, and participation of Dr. Devlieger in DHD classes.

### Continuing Practicums with Taiwanese Students

The Department of Disability and Human Development (DHD) has maintained an MOU with the Taipei Medical University's College of Nursing and the School of Gerontology and Long-Term Care since 2016. As part of its International Practicum course, 2-4 upper undergraduate or graduate students majoring in Gerontology and Long-Term Care engage in mentorship, research, and educational events facilitated by DHD. Dr. Kelly Hsieh coordinates this program, crafting a four-week curriculum emphasizing the intersection of disability and aging. This initiative provides students with knowledge and practical experience in disability research, advocacy, culture, policy, and assistive technology. This year, our participants included four students: Mau-Yuan 'Johnny' Cheng, Tsung-Yu 'Neo' Li, Tsai-Ching 'Callista' Tsai (undergraduates), and Nan- Ching 'Nancy' Li (graduate). The program entailed field trips to the Chicago Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, Chicago City Hall, Access Living, and Northshore Senior Center. Additionally, they led a health education class for older adults at a Taiwanese church and received enthusiastic applause from the participants. Students were thrilled to visit DHD's Assistive Technology Unit, where they had the opportunity to operate powered wheelchairs. At the end of the program, students presented to the DHD community, fostering engaging discussions with faculty and staff. Overall, students heartily expressed their positive experiences and gained insights into disability and aging, with a particular appreciation for the informative site visits:

"Through this course, I not only gained knowledge and skills, but also developed confidence in the future. I firmly believe that I can become a more influential and professional nurse practitioner and provide better support and care to people with disabilities and developmental disabilities."

"I not only participated in the House of Welcome program, which supports individuals with dementia and provides respite care for caregivers, but also joined elderly ladies in knitting for children in hospitals and played table tennis with senior gentlemen."



**Photo Caption: TMU students visited Chicago City Hall, from left to right: Nancy Li, Anna Campbell (Executive Assistant to MOPD Commissioner), Neo Li, Rachel Arfa (MOPD Commissioner), Jae Jin Pak (DHD staff), Callista Tsai, and Johnny Cheng.**

## Developmental Disabilities Family Clinic

### New Staff Joins the Developmental Disabilities Family Clinic

Joyce Chau graduated with her Master of Science in Speech, Language, and Learning at Northwestern University. She is a licensed speech-language pathologist in Illinois and a credentialed provider and evaluator for the Illinois Early Intervention Program. Joyce is passionate about helping young children meet their full potential in the early years of development and is dedicated in making a positive impact on their families. With experience in both outpatient clinic and home-based settings, she specializes in working with medically complex children including those with extreme prematurity, failure to thrive, genetic syndromes, cleft lip and palate, tracheostomy/ventilator dependence, feeding tube dependence, and autism spectrum disorder.

Joyce uses a caregiver coaching model and child-led approach in her therapy sessions to address family concerns and assist families in achieving their goals. She takes the time to understand each family's priorities, tailoring interventions to their unique needs by recognizing strengths, interests, and building a foundation of trust.



Joyce Chau

Joyce's goal is to empower caregivers to advocate for their children and provide strategies to support home carryover of therapy activities. Joyce aims to help children access communication through various modalities so that they can build relationships and communicate with their loved ones. In addition to supporting children with their communication needs, Joyce has specialized in training, evaluating, and treating feeding and swallowing difficulties. She collaborates with families to understand their culture and routines around mealtimes to create positive mealtime experiences. She strives to foster a nurturing environment where children can safely consume and explore new foods.

At UIC, Joyce sees Early Intervention children at the Developmental Disabilities' (DD) Child and Family Development Center and in their home. She also sees children over 3 years old at the DD Family Clinic to support speech, language, and feeding development. Joyce also supports the Assistive Technology Unit team with completing augmentative and alternative communication evaluations in the community.

### DHD Family Clinic - We're here for you

Hours:  
Monday–Friday: 9 am to 4 pm  
Saturday–Sunday: closed

Address:  
1640 W. Roosevelt Rd.  
DHSP 103  
Chicago, IL 60608

#### You can contact us at:

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## The LEND Program

### IL LEND Program Receives Grant to Improve School Safety

IL LEND and its partner, Advocate Children's Hospital and the Pediatric Developmental Center (ACH/PDC), have been awarded a \$50,000 grant by the Health Resources and Services Administration to address school safety for autistic students. Even though injuries pose a serious threat to the health and well-being of autistic children and adolescents, very few professionals in educational settings, where children spend a large amount of their time, have the skills and confidence to screen, identify and appropriately intervene to decrease wandering nor the training to counsel families about safety. With this grant, IL LEND in collaboration with ACH/PDC will pilot ECHO Autism School Safety (EASS) to prepare a new population of interdisciplinary providers in school settings to address the safety needs of children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder and developmental disabilities (ASD/DD) across the state.



**Dr. Laura Mattie**

### Introducing New Central Illinois LEND Faculty

Dr. Laura Mattie is an Associate Professor in Speech and Hearing Science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). She received her doctorate in education and human development from Colorado State University. Dr. Mattie's research focuses on early social, cognitive, and communicative development in infants and young children with neurogenetic disorders (e.g., Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, Williams syndrome) and autism spectrum disorders. Her work examines syndrome-specific patterns of early development and developmental trajectories. She leads the Development in Neurogenetic Disabilities Lab.

Dr. Marie Moore Channell is also an Associate Professor in Speech and Hearing Science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). She received her doctorate in developmental psychology from the University of Alabama. Dr. Channell's research focuses on the development of language, cognition, and social-emotional skills in individuals with Down syndrome or other neurodevelopmental disorders associated with intellectual disability, particularly during middle childhood and adolescence. The long-term goal of this work is to improve postsecondary education and employment opportunities and support independent living outcomes for people with Down syndrome and intellectual disability in general. She leads the Intellectual Disabilities Communication Lab (IDCL). Together, Drs. Mattie and Channell will direct the IL LEND Central Illinois training site and be a resource to LEND trainees in the region.



**Dr. Marie Moore**

## Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Center

### HOPE – Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment

The Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment (HOPE) is part of a broader national Spanish Language Outreach Project (SLO), which is a new five-year collaborative initiative between the ADA National Network (ADANN) ten regional ADA Centers and the ADA Knowledge Translation Center. The SLO project is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) and the Ford Foundation, and aims to coordinate ADA outreach with Spanish-speaking communities, identify national and regional ADA-related training, information, and product needs, and develop and sustain new community partnerships.

#### What community does it reach?

The HOPE project connects with Spanish-speaking communities in the six states that are part of the Great Lakes ADA region, which includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Overall, this region has a diverse population, with Latinos being the second-largest minority group in the region with a population of approximately 4.5 million people and 10% of these with a disability.

#### What are the specific activities and products of this project?

HOPE focuses on creating, delivering, and evaluating an outreach/training program involving information dissemination, in-person workshops, and webinar training on employment rights and responsibilities under the ADA (Title I of the ADA). This project targets a broad audience including people with disabilities and their families and local community leaders (e.g., from non-profit and service agencies, churches, schools, etc.) in Spanish speaking communities. The outreach/training activities are presented in both Spanish and English both in-person and via webinar in each of the six Great Lakes region states.

The webinar trainings include topics such as: foundational concepts of disability, laws, policies, benefits, and rights; disability in Latino communities; the role of family; barriers and facilitators to implementing disability rights in employment for Spanish-speaking communities; employment and Title I; disability advocacy and awareness; applied case studies and scenarios; and tools for application.

#### What is the progress so far?

The HOPE project has conducted a series of Webinars in the Great Lakes region, presented in local and state conferences and community events targeting Spanish-speaking communities, and disseminated new bilingual information and products on the rights and responsibilities under the ADA for this community. We aim to create and sustain new partnerships to better facilitate knowledge translation of employment and ADA-related information, products, tools, and resources to Spanish-speaking communities. We anticipate increasing the empowerment of community members and community leaders by providing increased awareness and knowledge about employment and the ADA.

The team in DHD at UIC is Dr. Sarah Parker Harris (Professor), Dr. Rob Gould (Associate Clinical Professor), Dr. Mariana Torres Garcia (Post-doctoral Fellow), Robin Jones (Director of the Great Lakes ADA Center), Claudia Diaz (Associate Director of the Great Lakes ADA Center), Oscar Gonzalez (ADA Spanish Language Outreach Project Coordinator), and two graduate student research assistants.



Contact the Center Monday-Friday from 8:00am-4:30pm CT at:  
phone#: 800-949-4232 or by email [adagreatlakes@uic.edu](mailto:adagreatlakes@uic.edu)

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## Assistive Technology Unit (ATU)

### Assistive Technology Academic Opportunities Expand

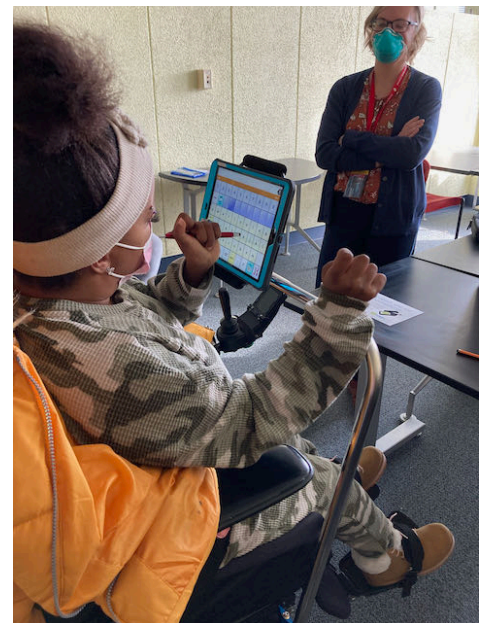
UCEDD academic options in Assistive Technology (AT) continue to expand. In addition to the popular Assistive Technology Certificate Program (ATCP), AT will be one of the two Areas of Concentration in the re-designed DHD Master of Science degree program. The ATCP has 70 active students, and over 250 graduates. Areas of Focus include Augmentative and Alternative Communication, AT for Learning, and Comprehensive AT. The Comprehensive AT focus area is especially appropriate for professionals hoping to broaden their AT knowledge base, as they work toward achieving the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) professional credential.



The ATCP is an approved UIC campus certificate and is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). Following the Introduction to the Assistive Technology course, all coursework is graduate level. Courses are online and asynchronous, enabling students and working professionals to review the material when it fits their schedule. The Master of Science degree AT Area of Concentration will enable students and working professionals to dive deeper into specific AT topics and makes available expanded field experience opportunities.

### Assistive Technology Unit Mobile Capacity Expands

Through continued support from the Illinois Department of Human Services – Division of Rehabilitation Services, the Assistive Technology Unit (ATU) has expanded its mobile unit fleet to 10 vehicles. The vehicles range from sedans to cargo vans, giving the ATU the capability of bringing both evaluation equipment and shop machinery to clients at their home, school, or work environments. The ATU provides services to approximately 1,100 consumers annually, in areas that include Augmentative and Alternative Communication, AT for Learning, Computer Access, Seating and Wheeled Mobility, and Worksite Modification. If you see a mobile unit being driven on the street, it's being driven by one of our occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, rehabilitation engineers, or architects. For more information on the ATU's academic and clinical services programs, please visit our website at : [www.uicatu.org](http://www.uicatu.org) or ATU Director Dr. Glenn Hedman [ghedman@uic.edu](mailto:ghedman@uic.edu).



Visit the following website or scan the QR code for more information about the Assistive Technologies Certificate:

[Go.uic.edu/Dhdacp](http://Go.uic.edu/Dhdacp)



## Support DHD

### Albrecht Global Disability

Rachael Wanjagua is a recipient of the Albrecht Global Disability Impact Award and a current PhD student in DHD's Disability Studies program. She spent fifteen years providing physiotherapy and assistive devices to children and youth with disabilities in rural Kenya where it is difficult to access healthcare services. During eight of the fifteen years, she lived with and supported adults with intellectual disabilities in a communal setting.

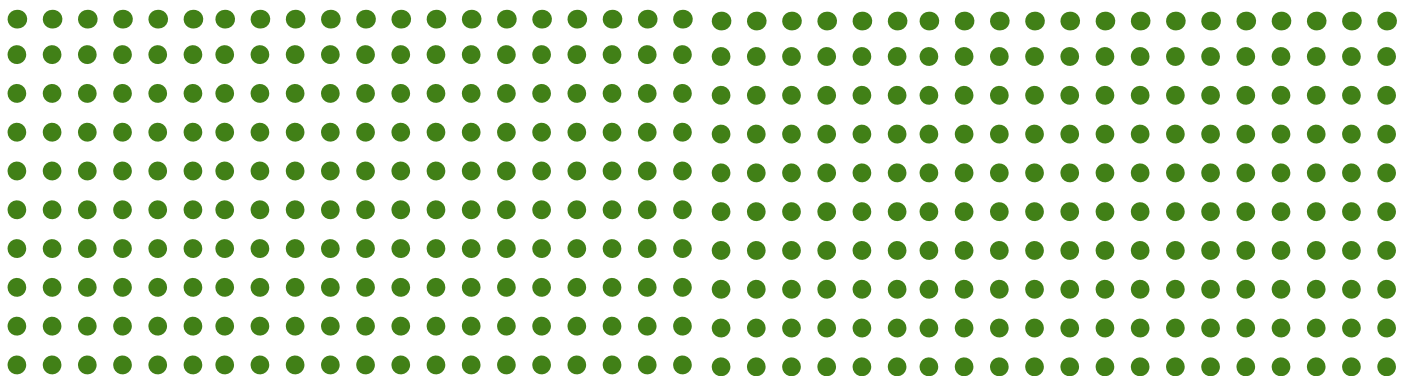


**Photo caption: Rachael Wanjagua presenting with her research assistants Francis Maiki and Winnie Wanjiku (left to right).**

Engaging with disability studies revealed knowledge gaps on experiences of people with intellectual disabilities from the global south. This led to implementing research in Kenya to determine services for families and people with intellectual disabilities. Rachael trained and employed two research assistants with intellectual disabilities who helped interview ten people with intellectual disabilities and ten caregivers and conduct four focus groups. Data analysis is ongoing. Preliminary findings of the study with the host disability agency and some of their target parent and teacher groups are: the study increases the knowledge around researching with people with intellectual disabilities in global south contexts and contributes to the improvement of local services for people with intellectual disabilities in Kenya. The Albrecht award facilitated Rachael's travel from the US to Kenya to train the research assistants and conduct the research.

### Disability Research in Zimbabwe

Kudzai Shava, with funding from the Albrecht Global Disability Impact Fund, is a recent graduate of DHD's PhD in Disability Studies program and a blind disability rights activist from Zimbabwe. His "Rethinking human rights and citizenship for blind people in Zimbabwe: A qualitative analysis of the visually impaired community and the struggle for social inclusion" research is the first Zimbabwean study that analyzes blind people's knowledge, beliefs and experiences; and explores how these could be leveraged and translated into that community's increased sense of empowerment, self-determination and the capacity to formulate strategies for engaging in activism and advocacy in the face of overt and covert discrimination and exclusion. It will immensely contribute to the body of knowledge in disability studies from an African perspective given that the southern African region is particularly grossly understudied in this field. Various stakeholders can utilize evidence from this research in mainstreaming disability in their programming, policy formulation and practice. Kudzai's ultimate career goal is to ensure that the Disability Studies program is also offered at universities in Zimbabwe to enable the training of more scholars in this discipline locally. To this end, he endeavors to promote institutional partnerships and networking between Zimbabwean and American academics through collaborative disability research.



## We appreciate your in-kind donations to our DHD funds

**Anne Hopkins Scholarship Fund.** For DHD graduate students interested in disability and sex, relationships and dating, social model of disability, and social entrepreneurship.

**Carlos Drazen Memorial Research Award.** To support educational opportunities for DHD graduate students interested in the intersection of race and disability.

**Edward Page-EI Fund MD Student Award Fund.** To support educational opportunities for DHD graduate students interested in social or medical aspects of neurological disabilities.

**UIC Albrecht Global Disability Impact Fund.** To support DHD Disability Studies doctoral students conducting evidence based global research, scholarship, practice, education, and policy.

**UIC Assistive Technology Unit (ATU) Fund.** For support of the ATU, including but not limited to equipment purchase and modification, community distribution, and educational efforts.

**UIC Bodies of Work Support Fund.** For the Bodies of Work Project, which is a network of artists and organizations whose art showcases and celebrates the disability experience, housed in DHD.

**UIC Disabled People of Color Coalition (DPOCC) Fund.** For support of the collaborative work between DHD and the Chicagoland DPOCC including a DHD scholarship fund, accessibility, accommodations, travel costs, and seminar support.

**UIC Disability and Human Development Annual Fund for Excellence.** For unrestricted use in the Department of Disability and Human Development.



**UIC DHD/OT Black and Latinx Student Scholarship Fund.** For support of DHD and Occupational Therapy students. Preference is given to students who contribute to the diversity of each unit, with further preference given to students that aim to serve or do research with Black and Latinx communities or that are involved in or interested in student organizations at UIC that promote Black and Latinx interests in society.

**UIC Neal H. Gottlieb Memorial Scholarship Fund.** For junior or senior undergraduate students enrolled in the BS in DHD program who have a physical disability.

To support DHD go to:

<https://ahs.uic.edu/alumni/give-to-ahs>



**DHD Department Head (till December 31, 2023) and IDHD Director**

Tamar Heller, PhD [theller@uic.edu](mailto:theller@uic.edu)

**IDHD Associate Director**

Kueifang (Kelly) Hsieh, PhD [hsieh@uic.edu](mailto:hsieh@uic.edu)

**DHD Associate Head and Incoming Interim Head (starting January 1, 2024)**

Carrie Sandahl, PhD [csandahl@uic.edu](mailto:csandahl@uic.edu)

**DHD Associate Head, IDHD Training Director, Director of Graduate Studies**

Sarah Parker Harris, PhD [skparker@uic.edu](mailto:skparker@uic.edu)

**DHD Director of Undergraduate Studies**

Robert Gould, PhD [rgould3@uic.edu](mailto:rgould3@uic.edu)



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Jessica Buettner	Marty Fox	Nora Handler	Brittany King
Michael Grice	Stevie Hopkins	Dorelia Rivera	Cathy Saunders
Monica Thorns	Jada Mercedes Thompson		

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 Rachel Arfa/Lauren Hooberman, Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities  
 Kathy Carmody (Chair), Institute on Public Policy for Persons with Disabilities  
 Ryan Croke, Illinois Department of Human Services  
 Lori Clampitt, Illinois Board of Education, Special Education Department  
 Donald Dew, Habilitative Systems, Inc.  
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 Amie Lulinski, The Arc of Illinois  
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