

# Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC)

## 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Educators Forum

### MEANINGFUL INCLUSION FOR STUDENTS WITH DOWN SYNDROME

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#### REGISTRATION and CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST (8:00am-8:30am)

#### WELCOME (8:30am-8:45am)

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#### SELF - ADVOCATE KEYNOTE (8:45am-9:00am)

Patrick Myshrall, Self-Advocate, St. Peter-Marian High School, Worcester, MA

#### KEYNOTE (9:00am-10:15am)

#### Including All Students with Down Syndrome in the General Education Classroom

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Dr. Richard A. Villa, Bayridge Consortium, Inc., San Diego, CA

*Participants become familiar with the characteristics of inclusionary schools, rationales for change, organizational, and instructional strategies to support inclusionary schooling, and successful examples from elementary, middle and high school.*

**Dr. Richard A. Villa** has worked with thousands of teachers and administrators throughout North America and the world, to develop and implement organizational and instructional support systems for educating all students within general education settings. Rich has been a middle and high school classroom teacher, special educator, special education coordinator, pupil personnel services director, and director of instructional services. Rich works with schools, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and advocacy organizations. He has authored over a hundred articles and book chapters regarding inclusive education, differentiated instruction, collaborative planning and teaching, and school restructuring. Dr. Villa has co-edited twelve books and developed three multimedia kits for teachers, administrators, and parents. Rich possesses the conceptual, technical, and interpersonal skills required to work effectively with others and facilitate change and progress in education. He has presented at numerous national and international conferences, and is known for his enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and humorous style of presenting.

#### BREAK (10:15am-10:30am)

#### BREAKOUT SESSION (10:30am -12:00pm)

#### Differentiating Instruction: Access to the General Education Curriculum for All

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Dr. Richard A. Villa, Bayridge Consortium, Inc., San Diego, CA

**(Note):** This is a 2 part “in-depth” session. Please register for both sessions.)

*Topics include approaches to differentiating the content students learn, the process through which they learn it, and how they demonstrate what they have learned. A Retrofit and a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach to differentiation will be learned, practiced, and viewed via DVD footage of actual classrooms. Participants also will explore whole class, group, and individualized instructional strategies designed to meet the needs of a diverse student body.*

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### **Using Technology to Support Best Practice in Literacy for Students with Down Syndrome**

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**Elizabeth Stringer Keefe, Assistant Professor, Special Education, Lesley University**

**Stephanie Spadorcia, Ph.D., Associate Professor Language and Literacy, Lesley University**

*In this session, best practices for literacy using technology as a vehicle for instruction will be explored. The focus will be on easily accessible and thoughtful methods to improve access to the literacy curriculum for students with Down Syndrome (DS). Common literacy challenges of students with DS, best practice, and classroom responses will be discussed. Participants will be exposed to strategies, tools, and solutions which are easy, free or very low cost and readily available to improve learner engagement.*

**Elizabeth Stringer Keefe** is an Assistant Professor of Special Education at Lesley University. She began teaching in a private setting for children with severe disabilities, then as a public school special educator until forming a private educational consultation practice in 2001, which she maintains today. Elizabeth began working in higher education in 2001 at Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts, where she held her first faculty appointment as Assistant Professor /Special Education Coordinator. She joined the faculty of Lesley in 2005 as Co-Director of Graduate Special Education, and has since served as Coordinator of Severe Disabilities and Autism Intervention Specialization programs, which she designed. Her areas of expertise include autism, assistive technology, early intervention/early childhood special education & the IEP. Elizabeth is a member of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Autism Society of America and the Massachusetts Autism Commission 6-17 subcommittee. In 2006 she was honored by the Arc of Massachusetts with their Educator of the Year Award. She is currently a doctoral student at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, MA, studying Curriculum and Instruction.

**Stephanie A. Spadorcia, Ph.D.**, is an Associate Professor of Language and Literacy in the school of Education at Lesley University. Her research and teaching focuses on literacy instruction for students across disability continuum; assessment of reading and writing difficulties; and using technology to support literacy instruction. She has published several articles and book chapters, and presented nationally around these topics. She has most recently published a book—*Learning to Write with Purpose*- with Lesley University colleagues on the topic of writing instruction. She is a researcher with the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, conducting research and development work on the issues around literacy instruction for students with disabilities. She does work in schools in the area of providing literacy instruction for all students, and the role of assessment in a literacy program and has presented locally and nationally.

## **Educator Strategies for Facilitating Friendship Opportunities Between Kids With and Without Disabilities**

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**Zachary S. Rossetti, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Special Education, Boston University**

*All children should develop meaningful and reciprocal social connections in their classrooms and schools. This interactive session will explore key issues around the potential development of friendships between and among K-12 students with and without Down syndrome. The focus will be on specific educator strategies to facilitate increased social interactions and friendship opportunities. A general framework for organizing and tracking friendship facilitation efforts will be shared.*

**Zachary Rossetti** is a former special education teacher and inclusion facilitator from New Hampshire. He is an assistant professor in the Special Education program at Boston University. His research emphasizes the belonging of people with disabilities, and it focuses on school and community inclusion, social relationships in schools, and augmentative and alternative communication methods. He is also interested in pre-service teacher perceptions of diversity (including disability), family/sibling experiences and perspectives on disability, autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and cultural representations of disability.

He is co-author (with Carol Tashie and Susan Shapiro-Barnard) of *Seeing the Charade: What We Need to Do and Undo to Make Friendships Happen* (2006, Inclusive Solutions: Nottingham, UK). He co-directed (with Douglas Biklen), *My Classic Life As an Artist: A Portrait of Larry Bissonnette* (2005), an award-winning video documentary about an artist from Vermont who has autism and types to communicate.

### **Preparing Massachusetts students with intellectual disabilities for inclusive postsecondary education**

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**Maria Paiewonsky, Ed.D. Transition Specialist, Institute for Community Inclusion**

**Karen Zimbrich, M.Ed., Transition Specialist, Institute for Community Inclusion**

**Lori Cooney, M.Ed. Instructional Designer**

*Massachusetts is leading the country in creating opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to attend college. Staff from ICI have provided training to both K-12 and college personnel to support these efforts. Now, staff's attention is drawn to students. A new online curriculum has been developed that reflects a strong foundation in self-determination and self-advocacy instruction. Presenters will highlight how they use inclusive research to prepare curriculum for middle and high school students (and their teachers).*

**Maria Paiewonsky, Ed.D** is a transition specialist at the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at UMass Boston. She has focused on the transition of students with disabilities from middle school to high school to adult life for the past 14 years, with a particular focus on ensuring that students with disabilities are equal partners in research, as well as in program and professional development.

**Karen Zimbrich, M.Ed.** is also an ICI transition specialist with experience as a special educator, inclusion specialist, and university instructor working to include and support students with disabilities in inclusive school and community settings.

**Lori Cooney, M.Ed.** is an instructional designer who has experience collaborating with educators across the curriculum on instructional resources, universal design techniques, lesson plans and assessment strategies.

All three presenters focus their work on initiatives that promote transition to inclusive secondary and postsecondary education.

## **LUNCH and NETWORKING (12:00pm-1:00pm)**

## **BREAKOUT SESSION (1:00am -2:30pm)**

### **Differentiating Instruction: Access to the General Education Curriculum for All (Part 2)**

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**Dr. Richard A. Villa, Bayridge Consortium, Inc., San Diego, CA**

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### **Constructing Meaning in Counting and Numeracy**

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**Tim Whiteford, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education, St. Michael's College, Vermont**

*This presentation will explore ideas for helping students with Down syndrome construct meaning in selected areas of elementary and middle school mathematics. We will focus on developing a robust understanding of the basic ideas of counting and numeracy as well as the exploration of strategies and tools such as the Nintendo Wii system, the iPad2, and on-line interactive math activities for helping students develop their use of the selected concepts and skills.*

**Tim Whiteford** started his teaching career in England as a 4th grade teacher in 1972. He came to the US in 1977 to do graduate study at the University of Illinois. He received my Ph.D. in 1982 and took a teaching position at Trinity College in Burlington, Vermont. When the college closed in 1999 he started working as a professional development specialist in math and science education at local school districts. Tim returned to Higher Education at St. Michel's College in Colchester, Vermont 2005. His primary research area is in teaching math to students with diverse needs (e.g. English Language Learners, students with special needs, students in poverty and students with math disabilities. He has a wonderful son, Andrew, who turned 19 this summer and has Down syndrome. Andrew has learned most of his conceptual math through the use of the Wii system (Tim can very rarely beat him in most of the Wii Sports games).

## **The Role of the Related Service Provider in Inclusive School Settings**

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**Sharon A. Ray, ScD, OTR/L, Clinical Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy, Stony Brook University**

*Special education law and policies set the stage for students with Down syndrome to be an integral part of their public school community. Related services such as OT, PT, and SLP provide educationally relevant supports that facilitate this process. This session will focus on the practical application of providing educationally relevant related services within the classroom context in light of current legislation and guidelines. The focus will be primarily for the elementary school classroom.*

**Sharon Ray, Sc.D., OTR/L** received her B.S. degree in occupational therapy from the University of Pennsylvania and received her graduate degrees from Boston University with a specialty in pediatrics. She is a clinical associate professor of occupational therapy at Stony Brook University. She has also taught at Boston University, the University of Hartford, and Tufts University.

Dr. Ray has over 30 years' experience working with children diagnosed with Down syndrome including in the school setting. She provides training and consultation to administrators, educators, related service providers, and families both locally and nationally with a focus on enabling the student's effective participation within the school. She co-authored the Guidelines for Provision of Occupational Therapy in Massachusetts Public Schools, is an editor of the Journal of Occupational Therapy, Schools, and Early Intervention and is a cofounder of the Partnership for Advancement of School Service Providers, LLC.

## **Using Visual Strategies to Support Positive Behavior in Students with Down Syndrome**

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**Anne M. Howard, Ph.D., Professor, Fitchburg State University**

**Dina A. Traniello, Ed.D., Educational Consultant & Visiting Assistant Professor, Fitchburg State University**

*Students with Down syndrome are known to have stronger visual memory than verbal memory, and respond very well to the use of visual supports. Presentation will examine practical strategies to build on this learning profile to support positive behavior in students of all ages with Down syndrome. Focus will be on designing and implementing teacher mediated approaches such as Social Stories, and student mediated self-management approaches to supporting positive behavior in a variety of educational environments.*

**Anne M. Howard, Ph.D.**, is a Professor in the Education Department at Fitchburg State University. Dr. Howard coordinates the undergraduate and graduate programs in severe disabilities, and provides consultation to families and school systems to facilitate inclusion and optimal educational programs for students with disabilities. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Federation for Children with Special Needs and is the parent of two children, one of whom has a disability.

**Dina A. Traniello, Ed.D.**, works with schools and families to support students with disabilities, learning differences, and challenging behaviors in general education settings. Dr. Traniello is also a Visiting Assistant Professor at Fitchburg State University, where she teaches a course on implementing individual, classroom and school-wide positive behavior support for ALL students. Dr. Traniello is on the Board of TASH New England. She is the parent of two children, one of whom has a significant disability.