



# HEROES UNITED

 **Disability Resource & Advocacy Center**  
My Life My Choice My Right

## Summer 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

# Transition to Independence

by 6<sup>th</sup> Period White Hall Transition Class

The term transition really just means moving from one place to another. In High School, Transition Classes coordinate activities, education and opportunities to promote success when leaving school and going into post-secondary plans. Some of the activities involve applying for college, filling out loans, grants, scholarships, applying for jobs, writing a resume, learning to budget finances and many more daily living skills that are necessary for a successful future.

Some students with disabilities go to college, vocational school or some other academic program. Others get jobs, work as an apprentice or volunteer in the community. This is no different

than any other student graduating from High School.

Transition planning is basically a plan to help you successfully connect with higher education, rehabilitation services, employment or independent living. Based on your needs and goals, supports are available and anyone with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is eligible.

### FACTS VS MYTH

**Myth:** A person with a disability is sick, or has something wrong with them.

**Fact:** A disability is a natural part of the human experience, and it's not the same as being sick. People with disabilities have varying degrees of need, just as people without disabilities.

- Transition to Independence
- IEP & What It Means to ME
- Pine Bluff HEROES Graduation
- Increase your Vocabulary
- Fishin' for HEROES
- Bullying-Be Smart, Don't Start
- White Hall HEROES
- Summer Calendar

## Pine Bluff HEROES Graduation

By 6<sup>th</sup> Period White Hall Transition Class

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, we were invited to attend Pine Bluff High School's HEROES program where lots of students graduated from the program. Autumn Ashburn and Heather Keister were invited to speak. White Hall was the first graduating class of HEROES so they were the special guests. Both of them did an excellent job, and although Autumn could not be there, Mrs. Clark read Autumn's speech to the group. (Autumn's presentation is posted on Facebook on D-RAC's page.)

Billy Altom, Director of the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) was the keynote speaker and sang an inspirational song. He encouraged this group of graduates just like he did the White Hall group back in January at our graduation. Mande Harper with Disability Rights



Arkansas told the group about the services they would provide to enforce and insure your legal rights were protected. Regional Transition Coordinator, Karen Randolph



encouraged students to press on and continue to reach for their dreams. Gail Sidell-Nelson addressed the students wanting to attend Southeast Arkansas College sharing with them on how to access financial aids and programs available. Janice Wilkes with Jenkins Memorial Center sang in a Capella, *The Greatest Love of All*, "I believe the children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the way..."

For those of you who do not know, **HEROES** stands for **Hands-on Education, Resource Options and Enrichment Skills**. This was a training program for high school students with disabilities. The staff, under the direction of SeRonna Rodgers presented activities and lessons on Disability History and Culture, Laws and Legislation, Accepting Your Own Disability, Self-Advocacy and Leadership, and IEP Meetings and Resources.

During the program, we watched videos related to the above topics and participated in fun, but educational games. One of our favorites was the game where we had to guess who the famous person was by hints. All of the people were/are famous leaders, actors, celebrities who have a disability. Many were told that they would never amount to anything, but became leaders in their field. We were shocked to find out that some of our favorite actors, authors or leaders had a disability. Tom Cruise, Walt Disney, Albert Einstein and Leonardo Da Vinci are just a few.

# Increase your Vocabulary

by 6<sup>th</sup> Period Transition Class

There are lots of words and acronyms when you receive special services or have a disability. We are going to give you a list of a few and what they mean in simple terms.

**\*Self-determination**- the ability to direct your own life. It is about taking the person you are and becoming the person you want to be.

**\*Advocacy**- means to speak out for what you believe or want. To advocate means to tell others what you want, the reasons and to take up for yourself or others.

You understand your rights and responsibilities.

**\*IDEA**-is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975- it is the law for public schools to follow for all students with disabilities.

**\*ADA**- The Americans with Disabilities Act-act or law that prohibits or won't allow discrimination because you have a disability.

**\*IEP**- Individualized Education Program-your roadmap to the future, a written plan that tells what you want to do and how you will do it.

**\*Disclosure**-who are you going to tell about your disability. It is good to know that you do not have to tell everyone, but if you need support or help, then you need to be able to choose who you will disclose (or tell) it to. Disclosure is necessary in obtaining accommodations in higher education or in the workplace.

## IEP and What It Means to Me

Maybe if you understood what an IEP is, you would be less judgmental of those who have one. An IEP is basically a written document containing goals and plans, progress, modifications and programming for services needed to meet educational needs. One of our teachers calls it our road map. She means that it shows you where to go and what you need to get there.

Anyone enrolled in Special Education or Resource Class has an IEP. This term simply means Individualized Education

Program. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), an IEP is mandatory. That just means that you must have one according to the law if you receive special services.



# Fishin' for Heroes

by Nick Ames



On Friday, April 22, our class was invited to a Fishing Derby at Martin Luther King Park by D-RAC. It was so much fun! The Family and Community Fishing



Program stocked the pond and the UAPB Fishing Team provided us with fishing poles, bobbers and hooks. They would even bait your hook if you wanted them to with bait provided by UOPM LLC.

We fished and could also visit with our friends or make new friends from other area schools. There was a fire truck to tour from the Pine Bluff Fire Department, a bouncy house provided by the Pine Bluff Police Department, volleyball, basketball courts, Baggo and Face Painting provided by The Center for Exceptional Families. Some students in our class won prizes for the largest fish, smallest fish or most fish caught. There were also lots of door prizes from a variety of organizations, Arkansas Statewide Independent Living Council, Jenkins Memorial Center, Delta Rivers Nature Center, and Family and Community Fishing Program.

Disability Resource and Advocacy Center also gave us all a t-shirt

and a bag of goodies from the Jenkins Memorial Center and the Delta Rivers Nature Center. A lunch of hot dogs, chips and drinks were provided by Tyson Foods inside the Coretta Scott King building sponsored by Pine Bluff Parks and Recreation.

When it was over, Mrs. Clark, our teacher, treated us all to a drink at Sonic and then to the White Hall Park to rest and talk. We all had a great time!



# Bullying - Be Smart, Don't Start

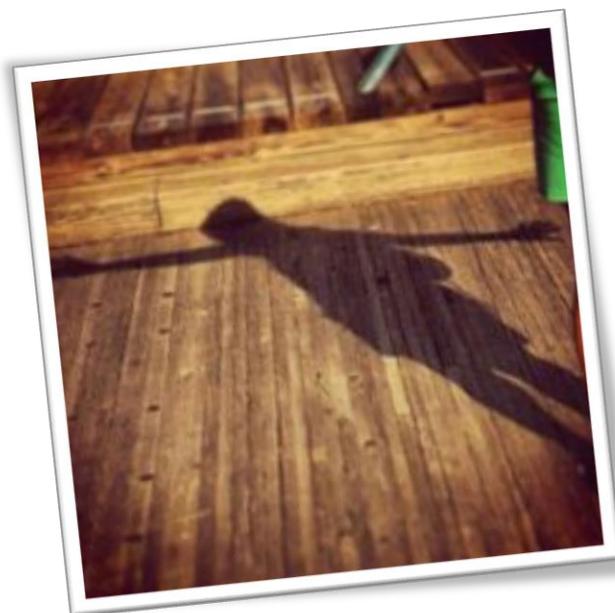
by Autumn Ashburn

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, one definition of bully is "a blustering, browbeating person; especially one habitually cruel to others who are weaker."

As Resource students, we take offense to this term since we are by no means "weaker". If you are a bully, it is because you are the weaker, uneducated person.

As a person who has a Specific Learning Disability, I find it discriminating and disappointing that you think you can make fun of me because I learn differently than you. As a matter of fact, we are all different. We may be the same age, the same grade, but we are all unique. I have problems with math; however, reading and writing seem to come easy for me and I enjoy them. I have friends who are math wizards, but they do not comprehend or like to write like I do.

If everyone was the same, what a boring world we would live in! I cannot imagine making fun of



someone because they were born differently than I was.... It is as ridiculous as making fun of someone with blue eyes just because yours are brown. It does not make sense.

I don't know of anything that is beneficial or good that comes from bullying or being a bully. If you think making fun of someone and hurting them makes you more powerful, you are so wrong. It really makes you a weaker, sadder person.

There is also no way to determine what consequences your actions may have on someone else. They may reciprocate, fight back, injure you or themselves or even take their own life.

There are many types of bullying such as cyber-bullying, written, verbal, intimidation, and the list goes on. Please think twice before you react by being a bully.

You have no idea why or what the other person is going through or dealing with. Everyone needs to learn to practice tolerance and follow the Golden Rule. Treat others as you would like to be treated. It is that simple, people!

## White Hall HEROES

D-RAC's very first HEROES program took place with Mrs. Tamara Clark's 6<sup>th</sup> period Transition Class at White Hall High School. The students participated in a variety of Hands-on activities and Enrichment Skills that helped them understand who they are as students with specific learning disabilities. It was reported that, as a result of the HEROES program, one student learned about his disability and what tools helped him achieve his goals, while another student spoke up for a new student with visible disabilities to prevent her from being bullied. These students were the first to graduate from the program in January 2016. The students are still active even after graduation and agreed to write this newsletter. They are not just our future, but they are our present. A big THANKS to these students for their contribution to this newsletter and to all the readers that will benefit from its content.

# Summer Classes

We will be offering some classes throughout the summer and also will have HEROES Hall where our youth can come play video games and hang out. Please check our calendar of activities and let us know a week ahead if you would be able to attend. For more information, please contact SeRonna Rodgers.

Sign Language	Computer	Spanish	Building Boundaries	Cooking	Game Day
Jun 14	Jun 21	---	Jun 8, 22	Jun 15	Jun 16,23,30
Jul 12	Jul 19	Jul 26	Jul 6,20	Jul 13,27	Jul 14,21,28
Aug 9	Aug 16	Aug 23	Aug 17,31	Aug 10,24	Aug 11,18,25

# HEROES UNITED



Summer 2016

## Disability Resource and Advocacy Center

7300 Dollarway Rd, Suite 111  
White Hall, AR 71602

[www.ar-drac.org](http://www.ar-drac.org) P 870.247.8600 [ilinfo@ar-drac.org](mailto:ilinfo@ar-drac.org)