MSU Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities

2016 Newsletter
Advancing Student Success
Reflecting on the accomplishments of 2016, there is much to celebrate and we are thankful for you and the many friends who aid our pursuit of excellence.

RCPD’s leadership in accessibility originates from the 1934 Tower Guard Honor Organization. Through reading for blind students, the post-polio inclusion of people with mobility challenges, welcoming deaf students to the classroom, and now fully connecting a new generation of people with various hidden disabilities—we have certainly experienced positive progress in the disability community.

Spartan leadership is thriving through signature programs and services, ambitious students, determined staff, administrative leadership, and a growing network of alumni and friends who extend our reach and quality. The RCPD is engaging the Empower Extraordinary Campaign with proactive progress, including a generous gift from the Gilbert family. The Alex Powell Great State Race ran the MSU game ball from Ann Arbor to East Lansing, garnering national press of this positive MSU/U-M partnership while also serving as a vital fundraiser.

We welcome new opportunities including a coaching program aiding student growth courtesy of the Tompkins family, and innovative work using technology to aid campus navigation supported by the late Greg Fowler. We’ve highlighted a few of our ongoing efforts of 2016 in the following pages and seek your continued partnership into 2017 and beyond.

Warmly,

Michael Hudson
Director
Aaron Scheidies is an MSU alumnus who was among the first class of Samaritan Scholars, as well as a member of Tower Guard. He received help from the RCPD as a student to accommodate his visual impairment. In 2016, Aaron continued to defy the odds.

Scheidies and his tandem anchor, Ben Collins, had been training for the Paralympics, and thought their road to Rio was cut short after their bike chain broke on the final lap during the Paralympic trials. However, the International Olympic Committee decided against Russian participation, which paved a unique path to Rio. The cycling duo received an invitation to the Paralympics and arrived at the prep camp just two days later.

Though his road to Rio was difficult, Scheidies persevered with a determined Spartan spirit. As he stated at his October 2016 MSU speaking event, “Michigan State really changed my life. It taught me to just do everything with passion.”

To learn more about Aaron’s Paralympic journey, visit the YouTube video: Aaron Scheidies 2016 MSU Speaking Event
Gilbert Gift Empowers RCPD

The Gilbert family is among the many Spartans going one step further to ensure MSU’s lasting legacy. Dan Gilbert, CEO of Quicken Loans, and his wife, Jennifer Gilbert, officially donated $15 million to MSU in October of 2016.

The donation contributes to the MSU Empower Extraordinary Campaign, which enhances global problem-solving research, endowed faculty positions, enhanced facilities, and student opportunities. This large gift will specifically support three popular and vital programs at MSU: Spartan Athletics, the Detroit Scholars Program, and the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities.

At the donation announcement ceremony in Detroit, MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon praised the Gilberts because they embody the spirit of land-grant scholars, “who will never be satisfied about what’s there today, because there’s so much to do for others tomorrow.”

These new funds for our office bring an opportunity to support the needs of students through three new staff positions. “The Gilbert family’s investment in our students, staff, and mission extends ability and is profoundly uplifting,” RCPD Director Michael Hudson said. “We will elevate our leadership, meet needs more quickly and create new pathways for student success. This will also amplify our ability to utilize our current funds.”

With new staff comes a fresh perspective in our office, and we plan to reframe our Disability Specialist titles into Ability Access Specialists. It also helps improve student-to-staff ratios, which provides more leadership and higher quality innovation for RCPD students.

(left to right) RCPD Director Michael Hudson, Trustee Joel Ferguson, Coach Tom Izzo, Dan Gilbert, Athletic Director Mark Hollis, Coach Suzy Merchant, Jennifer Gilbert, and President Lou Anna K. Simon.
Alex’s Great State Race

Alex Powell was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer, but with the help of the RCPD, he attended MSU and had the full Spartan experience while being treated at the University of Michigan. Sadly, he passed away in May of 2011. This event is in honor of Alex and allows his legacy to live on. Money raised for the RCPD benefits unique student needs and assists with professional development.

For the third year in a row, MSU’s RCPD and U-M’s Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) came together for Alex’s Great State Race to raise money for each program. The day before the rivalry football game, ROTC cadets from both universities ran 64 miles from Ann Arbor to East Lansing to deliver the game ball.

Autism Initiatives: Building Opportunities for Networking and Discovery (BOND)

BOND Vision

- Connect with others who share similar interests and/or challenges
- Enhance and practice social and communication skills
- Build self-esteem and personal concept
- Pursue new experiences in a safe and supportive environment
- Develop academic skills and effective support systems

BOND originated in 2010 with the intent of connecting MSU students with Autism Spectrum Disorders to develop new friendships and grow interpersonal skills.

The Baldwin Foundation, personal gifts, and a partnership with the Office of Inclusion made it possible for the first five years. Now, the Kindzierski family has started the Autism Initiatives Endowment to ensure that the services can continue and evolve.

The program makes a favorable difference that families are seeing and students are identifying as they systematically address challenges with their disabilities.
Innovative Program: Coaching for Success

A Spartan registered with the RCPD can persevere at Michigan State with the tools we offer. As of 2016, a coaching initiative offers students a comprehensive and creative partnership that addresses their well-being inside and outside of the classroom. Students are able to receive individualized attention, which promotes self-awareness and goal setting with consistent accountability and feedback.

With an RCPD coach, students explore relevant topics such as disability acceptance and awareness, professional identity development, higher-level academic skills, and life skills management. Students leave each coaching session having identified what is most impactful to them as a student, considered where a change in mindset or behavior can be powerful, and set a concrete goal around creating that change.

This new development at the RCPD is available at no cost to students due to the generous support from the Tompkins family. These RCPD partners sought a way to positively impact a member of their family and his MSU college experience with a disability. His generous nature inspired his family to implement a platform for students to move beyond expectations.

Tower Guard Honorary Organization

Tower Guard members assist RCPD students by reading exams, translating books to e-text and Braille, and tutoring to complete 120 volunteer hours during their sophomore year. Established in 1934, Tower Guard is among the oldest active student organizations at MSU. Tower Guard members had great success in their fundraisers in 2016, most notably with the annual Shamrock 5k Run-Walk-Roll in March. A member also applied his creativity in remodeling the Tower Guard office inside of Beaumont Tower. The new, distinguished look was partially funded through the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Fund. Seven outstanding members were awarded the Tower Guard Scholarship, totaling $2,700.
Careers Collaborative

We offer a unique Careers Collaborative initiative with private gifts matching state and federal funds in partnership with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS). The Bosco family has been a vital donor in building this innovative program.

Students gain a full-time, on-campus vocational rehabilitation counselor and specialized guidance with new synergies among several campus departments intent on strong student outcomes. This partnership enhances student outcomes through employer partnership for internships and careers, connecting academics with practical experience, and deliberate vocational rehabilitation approaches.

Corporate partnerships include Meijer, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and MSU Federal Credit Union.

Students Gain New Mobility

Thanks to collaboration between the RCPD, MSU Bikes, and Recreational Sports and Fitness, students are gaining more freedom and independence through accessible bikes called hand cycles. These bikes allow people with mobility disabilities to operate a bike using their hands and will help students get around campus with ease. RCPD’s Emerging Opportunities Endowment helped bring these hand cycles to campus.

Carlson Accessible Media Program (CAMP)

CAMP allows MSU to be a leader in the production of accessible textbook and academic materials by providing specialized book supplies and equipment. The Braillenote Touch (a note-taking tablet) was purchased for blind and visually impaired students. It allows users to take notes, write essays, read textbooks, and utilize other apps that can be found on a regular tablet.

To read more about the stories featured in this newsletter and others, visit www.rcpd.msu.edu/blog
During his time as a student in the 1970s, Greg Fowler carried a large tactile map with him while navigating through campus. Though it was helpful, it proved to be unwieldy at times. With MSU Guide, current students have a compact, innovative type of guidance available via their iPhone.

MSU Guide allows users to point their iPhone at a campus building or structure and the device will audibly and visually identify it. For blind users, it works in tandem with a text reader. For those with physical challenges, the app provides accessible information on buildings to determine door accessibility and wheelchair ramp availability.

While most advantageous to those with disabilities, MSU Guide is beneficial to all, especially new students or visitors. The app reached – and is exceeding – 10,000 downloads as of January 2017. Aditya Mathew, an Engineering masters student, started designing the app in 2014 as an undergraduate senior.

A few of Guide’s main features: (left to right) Wand, Map, and Compass Lock.

To download the Guide App, visit the iTunes store and search: MSU Guide App

---

In Memory of Greg Fowler

While working toward a bachelor’s degree in Electrical Engineering, Greg received support from the RCPD in overcoming challenges with blindness. He retired in 2003 after a successful career in the software development industry. Greg appreciated the efforts of the RCPD to eliminate student stress related to disabilities, and he added his personal contribution. He donated to the Emerging Opportunities Endowment in 2014, which supports a variety of enhancements including the successful MSU Guide App.

For Greg, it was truly personal. “Having a good education, and having the opportunity to gain that education, is the reason I was able to do all the things I’ve done... You want to be able to work on your education, and have your decision to come to MSU be based on your abilities, not on your disabilities.”*

Sadly, Greg passed away in September of 2016. Although he is no longer with us, his generous spirit lives on through his impact. Because of people like Greg, the RCPD remains an innovative leader in supporting those with disabilities. The Emerging Opportunities Endowment supports our ability to meet unexpected and large-scale issues with creativity and flexibility.

*Quote originated from MSU Today article published on 6/13/16.
Project Venture

Project Venture is a unique on-campus, pre-college experience. It offers high school students with disabilities the chance to “try on” university life through an interactive stay at MSU. RCPD hosts the Project Venture program thanks to the generous contributions of the Wochholz Endowment, which encourages students with disabilities to pursue higher education at an inclusive university such as MSU.

Project Venture Participants Will:

- Speak with current MSU students with disabilities who have “been there” and understand the journey
- Consult with university disability specialists to gain skills for college
- Experience the latest assistive technology through breakout sessions
- Attend a college class, stay in a dorm, and connect with other high school students with disabilities
- Become aware of self-advocacy skills and resources for a successful transition to higher education

Council of Students with Disabilities (CSD)

CSD is an organization for students with disabilities and their supporters in the MSU community. Their goal is to focus on awareness, advocacy, support, and removing barriers to full participation on MSU’s campus. CSD organizes annual events such as Adaptive Sports Day, which raises awareness about disabilities in the sport community. This interactive event is supported by the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Fund. People of all abilities participate in bocce ball, adaptive tennis, adaptive basketball, rowing, adaptive volleyball, goal ball, wheelchair hockey, and cycling.
Christopher Dunckle graduated from MSU with three degrees: Physics, Math, and a minor in Secondary Education, and earned near-perfect grades. He served as the President of MSU Tower Guard, as well as a member of both the Mortar Board Honor Society and the Glee Club. He also dedicated his time as a Physics Teaching Assistant and an RCPD Electronic Text Manager.

After graduating from MSU, he went on to receive a two-year National Science Foundation grant to earn his Master’s and Ph.D. degrees. He currently works at Intel Corporation in Hillsboro, Oregon as a Senior Process Engineer where he develops cutting-edge processes in microchip production.

Shawn Koch was known for his avid appetite for knowledge. With support and guidance from his parents, Koch’s intellectual curiosity enriched his ability to learn from his environment. He lost a brave 18-month battle with brain cancer in 2011 at just 34 years of age. Although he isn’t physically here, his legacy continues as an embodiment of Spartan leadership.

Koch’s family and friends created the Shawn M. Koch Memorial Scholarship in 2013. It benefits students who have been directly impacted by cancer, whether personally or through a family member. Scholarship recipients demonstrate intellectual curiosity, leadership skills, strong work ethic, and tenacity, much like Shawn did throughout his life.

Since becoming fully endowed, recipients of the Koch Scholarship have been feeling its success.

“I am extremely proud to be graduating in four years, despite my illness. This scholarship gives opportunity to those facing an already tough journey in their college careers,” said Kate, 2015 recipient. In 2016, one student was awarded $2,000 from this scholarship.
This scholarship was established by alumni Jim and Judy DeLapa to provide educational support for students with disabilities. Five students were awarded this scholarship, each receiving $3,500.

**Katrina Tagget Fellowship**

This fellowship was created in memory of Katrina Tagget who passed away in 2008. One high-achieving scholar was awarded $4,000 to help mentor STATE Program students.

**Robert L. Decker & Benjamin Muns Friendship Memorial Scholarship**

Three graduate students were each awarded $7,000 for their professional and academic achievements.

**Anita Giampalmi Scholarship**

One student was awarded $3,800 for their academic goals and achievements, leadership ability, and strong writing skills. This award was established to recognize a student with cystic fibrosis in honor of Anita Giampalmi.

**Victor Troubalous Scholarship**

Two students received this award totaling $1,500. This scholarship is awarded to students who have a learning disability and excel in the STATE program.

**Study Abroad Scholarship**

Five students each received this $3,500 scholarship to help them study abroad in countries such as Germany, Ireland, Scotland, and England.

In 2016, 27 students were awarded scholarships totaling $71,500.

(Left) Student Leadership Award recipient and Shani Feyen. (Right) Samaritan Scholar Award group with Virginia Martz.
The RCPD Vision

Together, we create a welcoming environment, fortify capacity and compassionately challenge people to redefine disability. We grow ambition into personal and professional success by fostering self-advocacy, connected knowledge, innovative technology and community partnerships.

We thank you for being part of this vision through your generosity, kindness, and Spartan determination. The RCPD is grateful for your contribution to this year’s success!

RCPD Staff

Office
Michael Hudson, Director
Liz Fuller, Operations Coordinator/Alternative Testing Coordinator
George Morrison, Career Services Consultant
Al Puzzuoli, Information Technologist
Beverly Stehlik, Budget/Personnel & Assistant to the Director

Ability Access Specialists
Stephen Blosser, Assistive Technology
Shani Feyen, Learning Disabilities
Lindsay Hill, BOND Coordinator
Leslie Johnson, Psychiatric Disabilities
Virginia Martz, Deaf/Hard of Hearing & Mobility Disabilities
John Pedraza, Psychiatric Disabilities & Disability Resource Coordinator for Employees
Virginia Rutan, Brain Injury & Learning Disabilities, Student-Athlete Liaison
Caleb Sandoval, Chronic Health Disabilities
Angela Sebald, Visual Impairment Disabilities & Media Access
Darryl Steele, Learning Disabilities
Grace Tong, Autism Spectrum Disabilities & Psychiatric Disabilities

Real-Time Captioners
Denise Hartman
Susanne Hoffmann
Shelly Martinez

General Office
Allison Bertram, Public Relations Coordinator & Editorial/Design
Breanna Buckner, Reception Assistant
Paola Delaj, Reception Assistant
Arianna Dickason, Reception Assistant
Lauren Edlbeck, Assistant Project Coordinator
Sarah Ford, Reception Assistant
Erica Kaschalk, Public Relations Coordinator & Editorial/Design
Aditya Mathew, Accessible Applications Developer
Melissa Trujillo, Reception Assistant

Carlson Accessible Media Program
Kristin Hanzek, E-text Assistant Manager & Technology Trainer
Victoria Marinas, Alternative Format Production
Emma Weil, E-Text Assistant Manager & Technology Trainer
Lina Wu, Media Access Assistant

MSU Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities

Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities
434 Farm Lane #120
Bessey Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824
517-884-7273 (RCPD)