

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

Delivered to the Membership of USICD
at their Annual Meeting, April 26, 2010

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2009 was an active year for USICD, with rapid growth in our capacity. Our excitement at these developments for the organization was further heightened by the United State's signature to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The culmination of years of national and international advocates' efforts to reach that important day was highlighted by President Barack Obama's affirming words on the occasion of the signing: "Disability rights aren't just civil rights to be enforced here at home; they're universal rights to be recognized and promoted around the world."

USICD celebrates our country's participation in the international treaty community. We are committed to the significant work ahead of us in organizing advocacy for the U.S. ratification of the treaty.. The USICD Board of Directors and the agency's staff worked hard in 2009 to expand the capacity of the organization, raise awareness of the CRPD and engage advocates across the country in planning for ratification advocacy, and serve as a resource to the global disability community. Our roles as the U.S. members in Rehabilitation International and Disabled Peoples' International deepened due to the expansion of our staff personnel this year. These roles continue to guide our purpose and foster our international relationships.

2009 began with the hiring of USICD's first full-time staff Executive Director, David Morrissey. His experience in disability organizations, disability policy, and nonprofit management at the local and national levels, as well as his international fieldwork and conference experiences, made him a perfect fit for this position. David's approach to developing USICD and his philosophy of collaboration have aligned well with the Board's vision. His first year of tenure resulted in ambitious progress on all fronts. His hire as full time Executive Director has brought new energy to USICD's initiative areas and longstanding relationships.

In March 2009, David announced the hire of Katherine Guernsey into the role of Education and Outreach Director, under grant support for the USICD Education and Outreach Initiative. Kathy's legal experience in the CRPD drafting process at the United Nations, and her broad fieldwork experience with international and disabled people's organizations, also made her a perfect fit for this position.

With its expanded staff capacity, USICD implemented the vision of the Board and their committees to convene, educate, and serve our members and constituents. A complete overhaul of the usicd.org website, a series of national teleconferences on CRPD advocacy, a roster of conference and speakers bureau presentations, and the dissemination of CRPD resources are some of the 2009 efforts highlighted throughout this report. As we ended the year and entered 2010, we were pleased to announce our partnership with the WiderNet Project at the University of Iowa to develop a Global Disability Rights Library. This project will provide vital disability rights information and resources to people around the world. We have just launched a new monthly e-newsletter and are

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moving forward optimistically toward U.S. ratification of the CRPD. Furthermore, in January we were pleased to welcome two additional staff members to the USICD team: Andrea Shettle as Program Manager of the Global Disability Rights Library, and Sara Laney as USICD's first Program Assistant.

I wish to thank you, our members and supporters, for seeing value in the USICD board's vision for an expanded USICD and collaborating with us to make it become a reality.

Marca Bristo, President

TREASURER'S REPORT

USICD entered 2009 with two supporting grants. Together, the staff and board focused on running high performance programs on a lean budget, and worked to increase membership and grant revenues. The important and ongoing relationship between USICD and the National Council on Independent Living provided USICD office space and administrative systems, bookkeeping support, and an enriching work environment, allowing USICD to continue expanding our capacity at an affordable cost. Outreach to new funding partners continued in 2009, resulting in two new grant relationships that now support program and general operating expenses, as well as the confirmation of a new USAID funded subcontract to develop the Global Disability Rights Library.

An independent audit of USICD's 2009 financial statements conducted in March 2010 by AAL Certified Public Accountants found that all financial records were accurate and maintained in conformity with standard accounting principles accepted in the United States. A copy of this audit is available upon request.

Finance Committee: Jeff Rosen, Chair and Treasurer; Lee Schulz and Barbara Leroy. Ex officio: Marca Bristo, Board President.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Working with the Executive Director, the Resource Development Committee in 2009 built upon the sponsorships with which USICD entered the year, securing grants to further our CRPD advocacy and convening efforts, as well as a two-year general operating grant commitment. The successful proposal to partner with the University of Iowa WiderNet Project in development of the Global Disability Rights Library has provided additional support. New funding relationships are being fostered, and the committee in 2010 will continue to convene to identify and develop relationships between USICD and potential partners.

Resource Development Committee: Randy Rutta, Chair; Diana Samarasan, Eric Rosenthal, Lex Frieden, and Judy Heumann.

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CRPD-FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Chairpeople of the CRPD and Foreign Relations Program Teams decided to unify their committees in early 2009 due to shared focus areas and to most efficiently coordinate advocacy efforts.

In July, USICD joined colleagues across the United States in celebrating President Obama's historic order for the U.S. to sign the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)—an important first step in the U.S. ratification process. USICD was a strong advocate in support of U.S. signature to the CRPD throughout the CRPD negotiation and adoption process. July's signature by U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice therefore represented the successful culmination of many years of USICD advocacy.

As the Administration continues its Inter-Agency review process to prepare a CRPD transmission package for U.S. Senate consideration, USICD has reached out to Administration officials to provide its perspectives on the importance of the CRPD to Americans with Disabilities. In anticipation of the completion of a transmission package this year, USICD has continued its outreach to members of Congress and their staff to introduce them to the CRPD.

Building on USICD's previous community-wide national CRPD Ratification Strategy Sessions, the CRPD-Foreign Affairs Committee has continued to engage disability advocates in the process to move forward U.S. ratification of the CRPD. In this process the Committee has worked closely with USICD's Education and Outreach Initiative. In June, USICD again convened a high-level stakeholder strategy session, concurrent with the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Annual Conference. Four national teleconferences over the past year have brought together disability advocates across the country to strategize CRPD advocacy and engage U.S. advocates from other human rights treaty ratification processes. USICD and the CRPD-Foreign Affairs Committee look forward to continuing to work with colleagues across the U.S. disability and human rights communities as we push for swift and successful U.S. ratification of the CRPD.

When President Obama announced his intention for the U.S. to sign the CRPD, he and Secretary of State Clinton simultaneously announced a new disability position at the State Department – a position for which USICD had advocated. This new position will provide advice to the President and Secretary on the inclusion of disability in U.S. foreign policy. USICD looks forward to working with this person on the successful implementation of USAID's disability policy and the inclusion of the CRPD's standards and principles in all U.S. foreign policy.

CRPD-Foreign Relations Committee: Eric Rosenthal and John Kemp, Co-Chairs; Marca Bristo, Board President; David Oaks, David Hutt, Jeff Rosen; Judy Heumann and Tony Coelho.

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EDUCATION & OUTREACH INITIATIVE

Recognizing the increasing importance of the CRPD to USICD's membership, USICD decided to expand the range and scope of its education and outreach activities related to the CRPD and human rights. USICD sought and obtained funding to formalize and support such initiatives. As a consequence, USICD was able to create the position of Education and Outreach Director, constitute a new Education and Outreach Committee, and launch a new USICD Speakers Bureau.

Over the past year USICD has advanced an ambitious and ongoing program of education and outreach activities related to the CRPD and the ratification process. Some highlights of these activities include:

- **A complete re-design of the USICD website and electronic outreach tools** - the new website improves accessibility for all users, facilitates more timely updates, and provides a framework for developing additional resources in the future. USICD developed pages devoted to CRPD Education and Outreach, CRPD Resources, and International News. USICD also launched a new electronic newsletter in early 2010 and disseminated it to an expanded database of over 1000 constituents. These electronic outreach tools have complemented written materials that USICD developed and distributed at in-person advocacy trainings, workshops, and Speakers Bureau events.
- **Organizing and delivering CRPD advocacy training events at major domestic disability conferences** - USICD has provided six advocacy trainings/workshops, including sessions at the Pacific Rim International Forum and Conference, the Southwest Conference on Disability, and the APRIL Conference. In November, USICD facilitated a workshop on the CRPD for members of the State of California Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC). Since this workshop the State of California has created a section on its website for consumers specifically dedicated to the CRPD. USICD also has worked with the CAC in the creation of plain language materials on the CRPD.
- **Participating in speaking events on the CRPD for members of USICD's Speakers Bureau at major disability conferences** - USICD representatives have participated in over fifteen separate Speakers Bureau speaking events during 2009. Of particular note was the co-hosting by USICD with the Federal Transportation Administration and American Public Transportation Association of a conference specifically focused on the CRPD – the first such CRPD-related conference to be co-sponsored by a U.S. Federal agency.
- **Community-wide teleconference calls** – working closely with the CRPD-Foreign Affairs Committee, USICD Education and Outreach Initiative has provided CRPD content for four national teleconference calls. These calls have included high-level strategy discussions, as well as the provision of basic CRPD information for advocates new to the treaty. In September, USICD speakers presented for an IL Net teleconference call dedicated to raising awareness of the CRPD amongst advocates for independent living.

In 2010, USICD will continue to expand its range of online resources, and anticipates provision of CRPD content at the VSA, Society for Disability Studies, InterAction and NCIL conferences. We look forward to working with the USICD membership to find more ways to expand knowledge of the CRPD and increase involvement in the U.S. CRPD ratification effort.

Education Committee: Glen White, Chair; David Hutt, Judy Heumann, and David Baquis.

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GLOBAL DISABILITY RIGHTS LIBRARY

In 2009, USICD coordinated efforts with the University of Iowa's WiderNet Project to submit a proposal to jointly initiate the Global Disability Rights Library (GDRL) Project. The GDRL Project will build an extensive digital library of materials responsive to the human rights concerns of disabled people's organizations (DPOs) in developing countries. The library's collection will include resources related to independent living, advocacy, education, transportation, public policy, employment, vocational rehabilitation, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and other topics.

The library will be stored using innovative off-line information storage technology that will allow users to share digital resources without the Internet. The GDRL Project will particularly focus on reaching DPOs, service providers, and policy makers in developing countries who have no Internet access. Recipients will receive a hard drive to be installed in their local- (LAN) area network or wide- (WAN) area network so they can access GDRL materials without the Internet. The library also will be available on-line for users who do have Internet access.

In early 2010, a program manager, Andrea Shettle, was hired to implement the day-to-day activities of the GDRL project through the USICD office. One of the first of these major activities has been to build an International Advisory Board for the GDRL. Advisory board members will help determine priorities for the type of information to be gathered for the library. They also will help identify potential partners who can gather materials for the library or deploy the library in developing countries.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

2009 allowed USICD to sustain its current membership base while also recruiting new members. We met our budget goal for membership dues revenue for 2009 and have cast a higher goal for 2010. The staff has begun developing benefits to enrich members' experience in USICD and support the USICD community. Examples include linking website visitors to organizational members' websites, featuring member profiles on our website, and engaging members in speakers' bureau activities.

The membership of USICD is our strength, and your support and involvement is key to our work. We will be sending members some more surveys in 2010 to learn how we can best enrich your work and serve the USICD member community.

Membership Committee: Susan B. Parker, Chair; David Hutt, Joan Durocher, Judy Heumann and Lee Schulz.

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